



Peer Pressure

For Mains: Effect of Peer Pressure on Different Sections of Society

Why in News

There is still much disagreement over whether peer pressure is a genuine phenomenon.

What do we understand by Peer Pressure?

▪ About:

- Peer pressure is the process in which individuals within the same group influence others in the group to engage in a behavior or activity that they may not otherwise engage in.
 - A peer can be any individual who belongs to the same social groups or circles as you and has some type of influence over you.
- Peer pressure or influence is **when you do something because you want to feel accepted** and valued by your friends.
- Peer influence can be **positive or negative**.
- **Coping well with peer influence is about getting the right balance** between being yourself and fitting in with your group.

▪ Effects:

◦ Positives:

- Positive peer influences **might refer to peers who inspire constructive outcomes**, offer moral support, motivate us to do well in life, stimulate interest in reading or extracurricular activities, always teach us something new, speak against bullies, and, above all, respect our boundaries.

◦ Negatives:

- This form of **peer pressure can include ridiculing someone's choices or values, forcing them to do things against their principles**, leading to bad habits or even disagreeable acts like stealing, cheating, indulging in alcohol and drugs, skipping classes, using the internet for inappropriate activities, or other risky behaviours.

▪ Reasons:

- Desire to Fit in
- To Avoid Rejection and Gain Social Acceptance
- Hormonal Inconsistencies
- Personal/social Confusion and/or Anxiety
- A Lack of Structure at Home

How does Peer Pressure affect Young People?

- **A young person's academic performance, educational choices and career (one may quit one's dream career** and go after what their friends are doing), concentration levels, and overall personality and behaviour might alter due to peer pressure.
- These are all but a cumulative effect of negative peer influences.

- According to developmental theorist Erik Erikson, “When there is a similarity among peers, it provides us with a sense of security,” which causes the **crisis of identity vs identity confusion**.
- Adolescents modify their thinking patterns, speech, dressing, behaviour, and other choices to those of their friends. Instead of cherishing their individuality, they try to be someone else.
- They fail to understand that each person is unique and trying to emulate someone else can reveal low self-esteem.

Way Forward

- **Accepting the fact that Every Child is Unique:**
 - First, we need to understand the fact that peer pressure is not an external factor.
 - It is a fear conjured up by our brain due to our lack of self-esteem, which if realised will never allow us to think what others will think of us.
 - Parents need to **accept the fact that each child is unique and not here to fulfil their expectations**.
 - They need to nurture the child’s individuality. Then, coming generations will be free of peer pressure.
- **It’s okay to Make an Excuse:**
 - It’s best to **stay away from peers who encourage dangerous behaviour**. Instead, it is wiser to spend time with kids who resist peer pressure or refuse indulgence in unwelcome activities.
- **Avoid the Situation:**
 - Find friends who respect each other’s boundaries and it’s good to stay away from friends who are a bad influence.
- **Be firm:**
 - One must know **how to say ‘no’ when anything is inappropriate**, or when it feels uncomfortable or unsafe.
 - Talking it out with a grown-up that one can trust – like a parent, teacher, or school counsellor can be helpful.
 - **Encouraging open and honest communication** is therefore imperative.
 - That way kids will be comfortable discussing and telling how they feel before things have gone too far.
 - At the same time, parents must teach their children to be assertive and resist any inappropriate situations.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Q. Our attitudes towards life, work, other people and society are generally shaped unconsciously by the family and the social surroundings in which we grow up. Some of these unconsciously acquired attitudes and values are often undesirable in the citizens of a modern democratic and egalitarian society. **(2016)**

(a) Discuss such undesirable values prevalent in today’s educated Indians.

(b) How can such undesirable attitudes be changed and socio-ethical values considered necessary in public services be cultivated in the aspiring and serving civil servants?

Source: [TH](#)