

# ATTITUDE TOWARDS VIOLENCE AMONG COLLEGE GOING YOUTH

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**Abstract:** Violent activity is one of the leading causes of death among young population in diverse groups and is a serious threat to public health. Youth or adolescents are the crucial stage of life who strives for independent living in the society in order to fulfill their needs. Any acute and persistent deprivation can lead to engagement or involvement in anti-social behaviour in the community. In the present study violence related to ethnicity has been the focus particularly in the North-eastern state of Manipur where people from diverse ethnic groups experience violent struggle on a day-to-day basis. **Aim:** The aim of the present study is to determine the attitude towards violence among college going youth. **Method:** A survey research design was conducted which is descriptive in nature. Simple random sampling (lottery method) was used for selecting six colleges and a sample of 300 respondents was selected through total enumeration method. **Results:** It was found that majority of youth reported to have negative attitude towards violence (80.3%) which reveals most of the youth in the current study did not support the use of violent measures. **Conclusion:** Based on the findings, the concept of unity of diverse populations can be enhanced through awareness creation and cultural programs in college and community levels towards cultivation of a sense of fraternity and harmony among youth belonging to diverse ethnic groups.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Violence, ethnicity, youth.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts or violence are often fought in and around communities rather than on well-defined battlefields. In many settings, ethnic conflict constitutes a grave threat to human security and emotional well-being. (Horowitz 1985) Conflicts or violence have far more negative than positive impacts on all aspects of life in the community.

However, it is apparent that when disagreement arose between the groups, there is likelihood for occurrence of violent conflict despite living together in harmony.

Therefore, when conflict or violence in any form occurs, young population especially children and youth are the most vulnerable groups and are at high risk of being victimized to participate in violent activities. The phase of early adolescent development is a critical period for decision making which has lasting consequences as youth enter adulthood (Kiang & Fuligni, 2009). Young adolescents not only experience physical change (puberty), but also emotional, psychological and social changes. It is the crucial stage in which the youth or adolescents strive for independent living in the society in order to fulfil their needs. Any acute and persistent deprivation can lead to engagement or involvement in anti-social behaviour in the community. These behaviours often are a precursor to violent activities in later life.

**Rationale for the study:**

It has been found that majority of people in the state of Manipur have been directly or indirectly experiencing the trauma of ethnic violence. The bonding relationship of living together earlier with peaceful and harmony in the society regardless of distinct diverse groups have been diminished in today’s life. Many of the younger generations in the state are more interested to stick in their own ideologies, and certain set of norms and beliefs as far as their attitude is concerned. Their (youths) mindset and outlook towards violence is one of the chief areas of concern that needs to be focused in this study. Therefore, the researcher postulates that the study will have it significance in future research by educating the youths with regards to ethnic violence and understanding the importance of developing fraternity amongst diverse ethnic groups.

**Objective:** The aim of the study was to determine the attitude towards violence among college going youth.

**2. MATERIAL AND METHOD**

The research setting was selected at Government colleges (6 colleges) of Imphal city, Manipur. The sample population for this study was college going youth pursuing graduation who were in the age group of 18 years and above. And youths who did not give consent were excluded. Simple random sampling (lottery method) was administered for selecting colleges and a sample of 300 respondents had been obtained through total enumeration method from six colleges.

**3. ASSESSMENT TOOLS**

**1. Socio-Demographic Information Sheet:** A semi-structured self-constructed questionnaire which contained fourteen close ended questions. The questionnaires were specifically designed to gather socio-demographic information from the respondents consisting of gender, age, education, community, ethnicity, caste, religion, community, marital status, type of family, socio-economic status, substance use, exposure to violence/conflict and involvement in youth groups.

**2. Attitude towards violence:** The scales consist of 6 items out of which item 4 was modified and item 6 added by Bosworth and Espelage, 1995. Respondents rate statements on a scale of (a) to (e) that is; 1 to 5 with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree, (Houston community demonstration project, 1993, adapted by Bosworth and Espelage, 1995). Items 2 and 5 are reversed scored. A total score of 30 is possible by summing across all items. Higher scores indicate a positive attitude toward violent strategies and limited use of non-violent strategies.

**4. ETHICAL ISSUES**

The permission letter submitted was approved and accepted by the principals of the said six Government colleges of Imphal for conducting the study in the college premises without objection and consent was obtained from the respondents. The objective of the study was clearly explained to the respondents, maintained confidentiality and informed consent was taken from the respondents.

**5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

Data was coded and entered into master chart. With the help of SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) version 20, data was analysed using descriptive statistics like mean, standard deviation and frequency.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic details**  
 N=300

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	300	20.89	1.72
		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	179	59.7
	Female	121	40.3
Caste	General	77	25.7
	SC	19	6.3
	ST	155	51.7
	OBC	49	16.3
Ethnicity	Meitei	128	42.7
	Naga	106	35.3
	Kuki	30	10.0
	Kom	7	2.3
	Hmar	2	.7

	Paite	2	.7
	Others	25	8.3
Religion	Hinduism	120	40.0
	Christianity	163	54.3
	Others	17	5.7
Community	Rural	185	61.7
	Urban	83	27.7
	Semi-urban	32	0.7
Type of family	Nuclear	151	50.3
	Joint	137	45.7
	Extended	12	4.0
Socio-economic status	Upper	27	9.0
	Upper-middle	80	26.7
	Lower-middle	67	22.3
	Upper-lower	113	37.7
	Lower	13	4.3
Substance use	Tobacco	30	10.0
	Alcohol	28	9.3
	Cannabis	1	.3
	Opium	3	1.0
	Other drugs	2	.7
	Nil	236	78.7
Exposure to violence	Yes	248	82.7
	No	52	17.3
Involvement in groups	Political	13	4.3
	Cultural	49	16.3
	Religious	94	31.3
	Nil	144	48.3

The above table shows that the mean age of respondents was 20.89 and standard deviation 1.72. A higher percentage of males (59.7 %) participated in the current study than females (40.3 %). Majority of the respondents were belonging to scheduled tribe (51.7 %), general (25.7 %) followed by other backward class (16.3 %) and scheduled caste (6.3 %). In ethnicity, the highest percentage of respondents were belonging to Meitei ethnic group (42.7 %) along with a greater proportion of Naga (35.3 %) followed by respondents belonging to Kuki (10.0 %), Others (8.3 %), Kom (2.3 %), Hmar (.7 %), and Paite (.7 %). By religion, majority of the respondents followed Christianity (54.3 %), Hinduism (40.0 %), and others (5.7 %). Rural community outnumbers (61.7 %) respondents belonging to urban and semi-urban that is 27.7 % and 10.7 % respectively.

Most of the respondents belonged to nuclear family (50.3 %) followed by another large proportion of joint family (45.7 %) compared to extended family (4.0 %). Maximum number of respondents belonged to upper lower socio-economic status (37.7 %) whereas upper middle (26.7 %) and lower (4.3 %). In substance use, 10.0 % of respondents consumed tobacco followed by alcohol (9.3 %), opium (1.0 %), other drugs (.7%) and cannabis (.3 %) respectively. However, majority of the respondents did not use any kind of substances (78.7 %). Maximum of the respondents had been exposed to violence/conflict (82.7 %) compared to respondents who had not exposed (17.3 %). Majority of the respondents (48.3 %) were not found to be involved in any of the groups whereas political group (4.3 %) compared to cultural (16.3 %) and religious groups (31.3 %).

**Table 2: Distribution of attitude towards violence in respondents**

n=300

Attitude towards violence	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	300	6.00	30.00	15.24	3.72

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Low	241	80.3
High	59	19.7
Total	300	100.0

The mean value of the attitude towards violence was found to be 15.24 and standard deviation 3.72. Majority of the respondents (80.3 %) had negative attitude towards violence which indicates that they did not support violence and opted for non-violent strategies compared to respondents (19.7%) who were having positive attitude towards violence.

**Table 3: Association between socio-demographic variables and attitude towards violence**  
 n=300

S.L. No	Demographic variables	Attitude towards violence	
		Chi-square value	P value
1.	<b>Gender</b>	1.264	0.26
2.	Religion	16.135	0.000
3.	Ethnicity	11.750	0.068
4.	<b>Caste</b>	22.464	0.000
5.	Community	1.508	0.471
6.	Type of family	4.637	0.98

The above table displays there were no significant association found between gender, ethnicity, community, and type of family except for religion ( $p < 0.05$ ) and caste ( $p < 0.05$ ) which were associated with attitude towards violence.

**Table 4: Kruskal wallis hypothesis test summary of religion, caste and attitude towards violence**  
 N=300

Religion	Mean rank	K. test value	P value
Hinduism	3	15.08	0.001
Others	2		
Christianity	1		
<b>Caste</b>			
General	3		
Scheduled Caste (SC)	2		
Scheduled Tribe (ST)	1		
Other Backward Class (OBC)	4		

A Kruskal-Wallis H test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in attitude towards violence between the different groups of religion, Chi-square = 15.08,  $p = 0.000$ , with a mean rank attitude towards violence of 3 for Hinduism, 2 for others and 1 for Christianity. It was also found a statistically significant difference in attitude towards violence among different groups of caste, Chi square = 20.34,  $p = 0.000$ , with a mean rank attitude towards violence of 3 for general, 2 for scheduled caste, 1 for scheduled tribe and 4 for other backward class.

## 6. DISCUSSION

In the present study it was found that majority of the youth were in their young adults and more number of males (59.7 %) participated in the study than their female counterparts. The result also showed large percentage (61.7%) of youth population hailed from rural community. Despite the study being based on Imphal city where the urban population is more, the present study shows higher number of youth of rural origin participated in the study. It is postulated that a major section of youth of rural areas belonging to the tribal background migrate to the cities for education and better opportunities. This is in line with 2011 census report of Manipur. More than half of the youth populations in this study were scheduled tribe (51.7 %), general (25.7%), Other Backward Class (16.3%) and scheduled caste (6.3%) which was found to be the least. Though majority of college going graduate students in Imphal city belong to General, the present study finding revealed youth belonging to scheduled tribe were more in number comparatively. The possible reason could be the availability of better opportunity of educational infrastructure or institutions in the capital (Imphal) city and in search of future job opportunity etc. All these demographic factors might drive youth to move from rural to urban city.

In socio-economic status, highest number of youth was found to belong to upper-lower socio-economic background (37.7%) whereas the least were found to be lower socio-economic background (4.3 %). By religion, most of the youth professed following Christianity (54.3%) and less than half the respondents professed to follow Hinduism (40.0%). This is in consistent with Economic survey of Manipur (2015-16); Centre for policy studies (2016).

More than half the youth population in the study (50.3%) was from nuclear families and a little less than half the youth (45.7 %) were from joint families. Extended family system was seen to be least as they may not be existent among tribal society. It is nowadays seen among various tribal communities in Manipur that most of the youth are in search of lucrative

job for livelihood and better standard of living have migrated to cities and traditional way of family living together has declined. The present finding is in accordance with the previous studies conducted by Niranjana, Saritha and Roy (2005). It was found in the present study that majority of youth (78.7%) were not abusing substances, large percentage of youth (82.7) had been exposed to violence or conflict and majority (48.0%) of the youth had been reported they did not involve in political, religious and cultural, groups.

In determining attitude of youth towards violence, majority of them (80.3 %) accepted to have negative attitude towards violence which clearly indicated that they did not support violence and opted for non-violent strategies compared to least number of youths (19.7%) who reported to have positive attitude towards violence. The state of Manipur is known to be one of the disturbed areas in north-eastern states, and apart from the currently ongoing internal conflict in different parts of the state where people manifest their demands in different forms like bandh, strike, curfew etc. However, the present study finding is not in consistent with previous studies (Garbarino, Bradshaw and Vorrasi, (2002); Qouta and Sarraj (1992); Barber (2008) and Narzary (n.d) where they found increasing exposure to violence lead people to be more aggressive.

It was found that a statistically significant difference in attitude towards violence between the different groups of religion, Chi-square = 15.08,  $p = 0.000$ , with a mean rank attitude towards violence of 3 for Hinduism, 2 for others and 1 for Christianity. This is in contrast with previous studies (Silberman, Higgins and Dweck (2005), Institute for Economics and Peace (2014), Sharma (2016)). Hence, it is not conclusive that religious status as a single factor to contributing violent attitudes. A statistically significant difference was also found in attitude towards violence among different groups of caste, Chi square = 20.34,  $p = 0.000$ .

## 7. LIMITATIONS

A larger sample of youth based on stratified method from all the colleges would have revealed more conclusive findings. Use of qualitative measures alongside quantitative means may have further contributed to the quality of the study. Statistical generalization is limited due to smaller sample size. A time period constraint for data collection was a limitation in the study. Also an organization of awareness program could not be done due to limited time availability of the researcher and the examination and other curriculum schedule of the colleges.

## 8. CONCLUSION

The present research study laid stress on youth population to determine their attitude towards violence. The study finding overall indicated majority of youths had negative attitude towards violence which revealed most of the youth were not in favor of violence and supported use of non-violent strategies. The concept of unity of diverse populations can be enhanced through awareness creation and cultural programs in college and community levels towards cultivation of a sense of fraternity and harmony among youth belonging to diverse ethnic groups. Hence, the similar in-depth studies are further needed to throw light on the mental health aspects of violence which is rarely explored in the state. This can help plan for promotive and preventive initiatives to reduce the risk involve in psychological related problems due to violence and thus help in promoting mental health of youth in near future.

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