

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS AMONG  
GCE ADVANCED LEVEL STUDENTS IN THE KANDY  
AND ANURADHAPURA DISTRICTS**

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Adolescents go through many behavioural changes. This study aims to compare the prevalence of behavioral disorders and their socio-economic associations among adolescents in urban schools in the Kandy district and in rural schools in the Anuradhapura district.

This descriptive study was carried out using the Standard Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). It consisted of 25 questions that covered 5 categories such as symptoms of emotional disorders, conduct disorders, hyperactivity disorders, peer problems and prosocial behavior. The grading was done on a scale of 1-5. The questionnaire also contained several questions intended to sum up overall distress and social impairment or the impact scores. Seven hundred and sixty two, Sinhala speaking students from the Kandy district and 219 from the Anuradhapura district were selected at random from urban and rural areas respectively.

The total "borderline or abnormal" score percentages were significantly ( $p = 0.03$ ) higher in the Kandy district (21.9%) when compared with the Anuradhapura district (15.7%). However, when individual categories were considered only peer problems were significantly higher in Kandy ( $p < 0.001$ ). The hyperactivity and pro social categories were abnormal in less than 5% in both districts. Impact scores were significantly higher ( $p < 0.001$ ) in Anuradhapura district (25.5%) when compared with the Kandy district (17.3%). Friendships ( $p = 0.017$ ), classroom learning ( $p = 0.026$ ) and leisure activities ( $p = 0.028$ ), were affected significantly more in the Anuradhapura district.

In the Kandy district there was a significant association between males and conduct disorders ( $P < 0.05$ ) and peer problems ( $p < 0.005$ ) while females showed a significant relationship with emotional problems ( $p < 0.05$ ). The father being employed abroad during the past year was significantly associated ( $p < 0.05$ ) with emotional problems and a high impact score (Kandy). Use of alcohol by fathers was significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) associated with conduct disorders (Kandy), hyperactivity (Kandy), and the total impact score (Kandy and Anuradhapura). The interest shown by family on the education of their adolescents was inversely associated ( $p < 0.05$ ) with conduct, peer, pro social and emotional problems in both Kandy and Anuradhapura. A low home appliance score was related to ( $p < 0.05$ ) hyperactivity in Anuradhapura.

Alcohol use and foreign employment of parents cause behavioural problems among adolescents. Parents showing interest in the education of the adolescent child leads to acceptable, positive behaviour.