



International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies (IJHSSS)
A Peer-Reviewed Bi-monthly Bi-lingual Research Journal
ISSN: 2349-6959 (Online), ISSN: 2349-6711 (Print)
Volume-II, Issue-II, September 2015, Page No. 303-319
Published by Scholar Publications, Karimganj, Assam, India, 788711
Website: <http://www.ijhsss.com>

Vicissitudes of Youth Culture: Primary Epoch to the New Fangled World

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Abstract

In historical terms, the study of "youth cultures" is a relatively new of area of sociological analysis. The term youth culture is used generally in reference to the ways adolescents set themselves apart from the adult culture. The study of youth culture in the social and human sciences has become a major academic enterprise since the 1960s. Hip hop culture or hip-hop is a cultural movement that formed during the late 1960s among African American youths residing in the South Bronx in New York City. Punk "started out as a music-based subculture"; that much is agreed upon by all, whether they laud punk or deplore it. In sociology, the jock is thought to be included within the socialite subculture, which also contains the preps and Ivy-Leaguers. Geoffrey Pearson in his work namely "Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears" published in 1983 gives us a solid historical perspective on the "recurrent problem of youth" in Britain throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. In recent developments in identity theory, identities are organized as control systems that act to maintain congruency between the internalized self-meanings (one's identity standard) and perceptions of the meaning of the self in ongoing social situations. Also, "emo" culture is another revolution among youth which has its roots in the mid-80s. Cliques too hold utmost importance in the contemporaneous world. Mean Girls brought the portrayal of teen girls as socially aggressive to the forefront of popular discourse about female adolescence. Adolescent sexuality is sexual feelings, behavior and development in adolescents and a stage of human sexuality. Sexuality is often a vital aspect of teenagers' lives. The sexual behavior of adolescents is, in most cases, influenced by their culture's norms and mores, their sexual orientation, and the issues of social control such as age of consent laws.

Keywords: enterprise, recurrent, internalized, discourse, orientation.

Introduction

Youth culture now really looks back and embraces the past, but keeps it contemporary but not sticking to one particular style.

- Alexander McQueen

In historical terms, the study of "youth cultures" is a relatively new of area of sociological analysis. Early studies in this area were mainly produced by Functionalist sociologists (the dominant sociological perspective in 1940's/50's) and tended to focus upon "youth" as a distinctive form of culture. For example, general themes in this "sociology of youth" tended to be things like:

- Youths holding norms and values that were significantly different to the norms and values held by their parents.

- The idea that "youth" represents a period of "ambivalence" - a distinct phase in human social development that represents a transition period from childhood to full adulthood.¹

Research on youth is still one of the less developed fields of sociology. As an area of systematic sociological investigation it is about six decades old. The beginning of scientific interest on youth could be traced to the West. The interest on the scientific study of youth sprung up during the industrial revolution and had been influenced by introduction of mass education at the peak of the industrial period. Rosenmayr (1979: 53), in his paper "Historico-Comparative Sociology of Youth: The Case of Europe", observes that the basic stimulus for the constitution of youth as a separate group in society had been provided by the educational philosophy of Rousseau in the 19th century Europe wherein he expounded the necessity of extending the period of education so that "culture" which was seen by him as a liberating force could be fully and completely transmitted.²

Cultural study writers are in agreement that the concept of youth has no universal meaning to it. It is a shifting cultural classification marked by difference and diversity. As a cultural construct, the meaning of youth alters across time and space. Youth remains a contested ambivalent classification wedged between the boundaries of childhood and adulthood.

Eisenstadt in his essay "Archetypal Patterns of Youth" (1972) asserts that "youth first of all is a biological phenomenon, but one always defined in cultural terms". He further states that however great the differences among various known societies, the youth stage is one focal point that has emphasized: "the period of transition from childhood to full adult status". The individual is no longer a child and is ready to undertake many attributes of an adult and to fulfill adult role but he is not fully acknowledged as an adult rather he is being prepared or preparing himself for such adulthood. As such youth is seen as a stage of preparation for leaving home and joining the world of adults. Youth are granted greater responsibility than children yet they are still subject to adult control. The specificity of youth as a social position between childhood and adult responsibility can be seen in the institutions of the family, education and work.³

Culture is among the most complicated words in the English language. It refers to the processes by which the symbolic systems (e.g., common sense, "usual way of doing things"; traditions and rituals, frameworks for understanding experience, etc.) characteristically shared by a group of people are maintained and transformed across time.⁴

Youth culture refers to those processes and symbolic systems that young people share that are, to some degree, distinctive from those of their parents and the other adults in their community.

Youth cultures have not been part of all societies throughout history; they appear most frequently where significant realms of social autonomy for young people become regularized and expected features of the socialization process. Most scholars would agree that the conditions necessary for the mass youth cultures recognizable today appeared after the formation of modern nation-states and the

¹ www.sociology.org.uk/devy1.pdf (Last Assessed on July 30, 2015 @4:13PM)

² http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/10603/12563/6/06_chapter%202.pdf (Last Assessed on July 29, 2015 @4:54PM)

³ http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/10603/12563/6/06_chapter%202.pdf (last accessed on 28th July, 2015)

⁴ Austin, Joe, "Youth Culture", "Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society", 2004. Retrieved on 26th July, 2015 from Encyclopedia.com: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G2-3402800448.html>

routinization of the human life course in the industrializing nations of the nineteenth century. The mass institutions of the nation-state, which separate young people from adults and gather them in large numbers for education, religious instruction, training, work, or punishment, have been consistent locations in which youth cultures have developed. There is some evidence suggesting that youth cultures may have existed in certain circumstances during the medieval period. Also, it is important to recognize that there are significant gaps in our historical understanding, particularly for populations outside of Europe and the United States. Youth cultures have been clearly evident in the twentieth century, particularly since the end of World War II. The history of this period is notably marked by significant social and cultural influences of youth cultures on society at large, a trend that continues in the contemporary period.⁵

Emergence

The term youth culture is used generally in reference to the ways adolescents set themselves apart from the adult culture. Although age-based cultural differences have existed since the beginnings of recorded history, it was only in the 1950s, after the crystallization of “teenagers” as distinct social personae with their own music, lifestyles, fads, and characteristic slang, that the concept of a “youth culture” as separate from adult culture materialized in North American and European society.

The emergence of an autonomous youth culture was heralded in fictional form by the American novelist J. D. Salinger (1919–) in his still popular and controversial novel *The Catcher in the Rye*, published in 1951. Salinger provided the first portrait of the new teenage persona—a portrait that was shortly thereafter enshrined in all kinds of media (magazines, songs, television programs, and movies), taking on a social life of its own. Since the mid-1950s youth culture has evolved independently and primarily through lifestyle designations associated primarily with youth-generated musical trends and styles (rock and roll, disco, punk, and rap). This is why cultural historians tend to characterize the evolving forms of youth culture with terms such as the hippie era, the disco era, the punk era, and the hip-hop era. Each era is in fact marked by its own pattern of symbolism, ritual, slang, and overall lifestyle (clothing and body decorations) derived from attendant musical styles.⁶

Theories of Youth Culture

The study of youth culture in the social and human sciences has become a major academic enterprise since the 1960s. Three major cultural theories have come forth relating specifically to youth, as separate from the psychology of adolescence. One of these posits that any youth trend is perceived initially by the adult culture as subversive or transgressive, constituting a sign of impending apocalyptic danger or threatening societal values, but which gradually dissipates and blends into the larger cultural mainstream.

- Known as “moral panic theory,” the concept was proposed by Stanley Cohen (1972) in his insightful study of mods and rockers in the mid-1960s. An early twenty-first century

⁵ *Supra* 4

⁶ “Youth Culture”, “International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences”, 2008. “*Encyclopedia.com*”. (Last assessed on July 26, 2015 @6: 25 PM) <<http://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

crystallization of moral panic surfaced as a result of the trend of many youths to “network socially” on the Internet at sites such as Myspace and Friendster.

- Another main theory is that youth culture has become the default form of all North American and European culture, spreading throughout the social landscape independently of age. As the social critic Thomas Frank (1997) has skillfully argued, youth has become a social and economic commodity since the 1960s. Because youth sells, trends in the adolescent world quickly become the cultural norm, dictating look, taste in music, and fashion.
- A third major theory of youth culture is that it constitutes a form of carnivalesque theater in which the sacred, perceived to be anything authoritative, rigid, or serious, is “profaned” or mocked simply for the sake of it. This theory has been inspired by the work of the social critic Mikhail Bakhtin (1986). It would explain why, for example, emerging youth forms of culture seem to fly in the face of the adult official “sacred world” while at the same time not posing any serious subversive political challenge to it.⁷

Hip Hop Culture in the 80's, 90's and 2000's

Hip hop culture or hip-hop is a cultural movement that formed during the late 1960s among African American youths residing in the South Bronx in New York City. It is characterized by four distinct elements, all of which represent the different manifestations of the culture: rap music (oral), turntablism or “DJing” (aural), b-boying (physical) and graffiti art (visual). The origin of the hip hop culture stems from the block parties of the Ghetto Brothers, when they plugged the amps for their instruments and speakers into the lampposts on 163rd Street and Prospect Avenue and used music to break down racial barriers, and from DJ Kool Herc at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue, where Herc mixed samples of existing records with his own shouts to the crowd and dancers. Kool Herc is credited as the “father” of hip hop.

DJs such as Grand Wizard Theodore, Grandmaster Flash, and Jazzy Jay refined and developed the use of break beats, including cutting and scratching. The approach used by Herc was soon widely copied, and by the late 1970s, DJs were releasing 12-inch records where they would rap to the beat. Nevertheless, the popularity of rap steadily increased.

Street gangs were prevalent in the poverty of the South Bronx, and much of the graffiti, rapping, and b-boying at these parties were all artistic variations on the competition and one-upmanship of street gangs. By the late 1970s, the culture had gained media attention, with *Billboard* magazine printing an article titled “B Beats Bombarding Bronx”, commenting on the local phenomenon and mentioning influential figures such as Kool Herc.

The New York City blackout of 1977 was what allowed hip hop culture to expand. Initially the African-American community could not afford expensive music making equipment, but then came the blackout. The blackout had widespread looting, arson, and other citywide disorders especially in the Bronx where hip hop began. During the blackout, a number of looters stole DJ equipment from electronics stores. As a result, the hip hop genre, barely known outside of the Bronx at the time, grew at an astounding rate from 1977 onward.

In late 1979, Debbie Harry of Blondie took Nile Rodgers of Chic to such an event, as the main backing track used was the break from Chic's “Good Times”. The new style influenced Harry, and

⁷ *Supra* 4

Blondie's later hit single from 1981 "Rapture" became the first major single containing hip hop elements by a white group or artist to hit number one on the U.S. Billboard Hot 100—the song itself is usually considered new wave and fuses heavy pop music elements, but there is an extended rap by Harry near the end.

Hip hop as a culture was further defined in 1982, when Afrika Bambaataa and the Soulsonic Force released the electro-funk track "Planet Rock". Instead of simply rapping over disco beats, Bambaataa with producer Arthur Baker created an electronic sound, taking advantage of the rapidly improving drum machine Roland TR-808 synthesizer technology, as well as sampling from Kraftwerk. Planet Rock is widely regarded as a turning point; fusing electro with hip hop, was "like a light being switched on," resulting in a new genre. Other groundbreaking records released in 1982 were The Message by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, Nunk by Warp 9, Man Parrish's "Hip Hop, Be Bop (Don't Stop)," Whodini's "Magic Wand," and Malcom McClaren's "Buffalo Gals." In 1983, Hashim created the influential electro funk tune "Al-Naafiysh (The Soul)," while Warp 9's "Light Years Away"(1983), "a cornerstone of early 80s beat box afrofuturism," produced by Lotti Golden and Richard Scher, introduced socially conscious themes from a Sci-Fi perspective, paying homage to music pioneer Sun Ra.

Encompassing graffiti art, MCing/rapping, DJing and b-boying, hip hop became the dominant cultural movement of the minority-populated urban communities in the 1980s. The 1980s also saw many artists make social statements through hip hop. In 1982, Melle Mel and Duke Bootee recorded "The Message" (officially credited to Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five), a song that foreshadowed the socially conscious statements of Run-DMC's "It's like That" and Public Enemy's "Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos". During the 1980s, hip hop also embraced the creation of rhythm by using the human body, via the vocal percussion technique of beat boxing. Pioneers such as Doug E. Fresh, Biz Markie and Buffy from the Fat Boys made beats, rhythm, and musical sounds using their mouth, lips, tongue, voice, and other body parts. "Human Beatbox" artists would also sing or imitate turntablism scratching or other instrument sounds.

Many hip hop-related films were released between 1982 and 1985, among them Wild Style, Beat Street, Krush Groove, Breakin, and the documentary Style Wars. These films expanded the appeal of hip hop beyond the boundaries of New York. By 1984, youth worldwide were embracing the hip hop culture. The hip hop artwork and "slang" of US urban communities quickly found its way to Europe, as the culture's global appeal took root.

Women artists have also been at the forefront of the hip hop movement since its inception in the Bronx. Negation of female voice and perspective is a theme that defines mainstream hip-hop; the recording industry is less willing to back female artists than their male counterparts, and when it does back them, it often emphasizes their sexuality over their musical substance. Since the turn of the century, female hip hop artists have struggled to get mainstream attention. Several produced platinum albums in the decade to 2003, when Lil' Kim achieved the feat. Since then the only one to achieve platinum has been rapper Nicki Minaj.⁸

Condry, (2000) in his research mentioned that Hip-hop culture influences styles of behavior and dress: from sagging pants to oversized tees, hip-hop style is an important business venture for the not only the recording industry, but also clothing, fashion, accessories and beauty industries

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hip_hop (Last Assessed on July 30, 2015@12:17AM)
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worldwide. For example, the fashion of droopy, oversized pants, baseball caps, and Nike sneakers are a leading style for teenage boys in the United States, Tokyo, Japan.

Osumare (2001) indicates, Global hip-hop youth culture has become a phenomenon in the truest sense of the word and has affected nearly every country on the map.

Androutopoulous and Scholz (2003) Similar to other popular music cultures such as punk rock and heavy metal, the global appeal of the hip-hop aesthetic "has led to its being productively used in new social and linguistic environments."⁹

Since the early to mid-90's, hip-hop has undergone changes that purists would consider degenerating to black culture. At the root of these changes is what has been called 'commercial hip-hop.'¹⁰

Punk: Anarchy, Rebellion, and Revolution

Punk "started out as a music-based subculture"; that much is agreed upon by all, whether they laud punk or deplore it.¹¹ Early punk was a proclamation and an embrace of discord. In England it was begun by working-class youths decrying a declining economy and rising unemployment, chiding the hypocrisy of the rich, and refuting the notion of reform. In America, early punk was a middle-class youth movement, a reaction against the boredom of mainstream culture (Henry 1989: 69). Early punk sought to tear apart consumer goods, royalty, and sociability; and it sought to destroy the idols of the bourgeoisie.¹²

Prior to the mid-20th century, the term "punk" carried a variety of meanings, none of them positive. Some of them, such as "male homosexual" or "catamite" were sexual in nature. Others, including "hoodlum," "gangster," "ruffian," or "to punch or blow with a closed fist" carried with them connotations of violence. Henry in his work *Break All Rules! Punk Rock and the Making of a Style* (1989) described punk society "used many of the same revolutionary tactics employed by members of early avant-garde movements: unusual fashions; the blurring of boundaries between art and everyday life; juxtapositions of seemingly disparate objects and behaviors; intentional provocation of the audience; use of untrained performers; and drastic reorganization (or disorganization) of accepted performative styles and procedures" It came to be associated with a particular genre of music (and the people who listened to it) in 1975. The Sex Pistols, for example, were known to go down into the crowd of people that crushed up against the stage still playing their instruments or singing, while fans would often interact with the band. Punk concerts "took place in small, crowded, low-budget spaces in notoriously rough neighborhoods. Performers, for the most part, had little or no technical training and possessed only very cheap and unsophisticated equipment. The decibel level was brutally high, and the attitudes of both performers and audience

⁹http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Carol_Motley/publication/222685387_The_global_hiphop_Diaspora_Understanding_the_culture/links/0c96051bf0c82af876000000.pdf?disableCoverPage=true (last assessed on 27 July 2015, @11:40AM)

¹⁰ <http://www.eliluminador.com/2012/03/07/evolution-of-hip-hop/> (Last assessed on July 27,2015,@11:48AM)

¹¹ <http://academic.mu.edu/meissnerd/punk.html> (Last assessed on July 29,2015,@5:10PM)

¹² Clark, Dylan, "The Death and Life of Punk, The Last Subculture," (2003), assessed from : <http://individual.utoronto.ca/roguers/PunkLastSubculture.pdf> (Last assessed on July 29,2015,@6:09PM)

members were aggressive and often verged on violence". Punk dance styles reflected the atmosphere of the performances. One of the best known styles, the pogo, essentially involves jumping up and down in a semi-rhythmic manner. Punk lost the public view through the late 1970s and most of the 1980s partly due to splintering within the group itself. Nazi punks, extreme leftist anarchists, and straightedge movements all developed within the original punk core. Punk became "hardcore" and more masculine. Through this decade or so, punk also became slightly more commercialized. The shock impact of the both the music and style of dress had been diminished by a combination of exposure and the co-opting of punk fashion by popular designers and the music by the music industry.¹³

Today, punk has a different face and connotation. No longer are the most visible punks the working class punks of Britain in the 70's. (As a matter of conjecture, it might be argued that the British punks of the 90's are more influenced by America's style based punk culture than their own working class culture which faded quickly in the early 80's). The most visible punks today seem much more concerned with image, art and music than with working class philosophy.

Today's punk as illustrated by Willis shows punk as style based, devoid of any real political or even social meaning. "Hardcore ideologies are styles whose codes of meaning are manipulated and disputed as are the elements of fashion and the brands of music" (Willis, 374).¹⁴

Jock Culture

The use of the term "jock" to refer to an athletic man is thought to have emerged around 1963. It is believed to be derived from the word "jockstrap," which is an undergarment worn to support/protect the male genitals while playing sports. Jocks are often contrasted with another negative stereotype, nerds.¹⁵

In Canada and the United States, a jock is a stereotype of an athlete. It is generally attributed mostly to high school and college athletics participants who form a distinct youth subculture. In sociology, the jock is thought to be included within the socialite subculture, which also contains the preps and Ivy-Leaguers. As a blanket term, jock can be considered synonymous with athlete.

Miller and her colleagues have been instrumental in clarifying that "jocks" can be separated from the overall pool of athletes (*Miller et al., 2003, 2005, 2006*). These researchers stress that identity as a jock reflects more than just participation in, or orientation toward, sports. It represents a distinct identity "with implications not only for the lived athletic experience but also for other, less obviously related domains, including gender norms and health-risk behavior" (Miller, 2009).

Eccles and Barber (*1999*) found that "being involved with team sports contributes significantly to an increase in alcohol use and getting drunk over the high schools years for males.... The proportion of their friends who drank and skipped school was also quite high. This pattern is consistent with the jocks' own behavior patterns."

La Greca, Prinstein, and Fetter (*2001*) report that "athletically oriented teens tend to be sexually active (e.g., 59% were sexually active, compared with 42% of teens overall) and

¹³ Supra 8

¹⁴ <https://cdr.lib.unc.edu/indexablecontent/uuid:a14b2b23-9e8b-45f6-9251-a6e1d75fe4c8> (Last Assessed on July 29, 2015 @6:20 PM)

¹⁵ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jock_\(athlete\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jock_(athlete)) (Last Assessed on July 30, 2015 @12:38AM)

may be engaging in risky sexual behaviors; these teens also view themselves as popular and may have more opportunities to find sexual partners than other teens. In fact, surveys of high school athletes have found that male athletes engage in sex at earlier ages than male non athletes.” “Moreover, among college students, higher rates of risky sexual behaviors (i.e., more partners, less contraceptive use) have been observed in athletes than in non athlete peers.”

Miller, et al. (2005) found that “female athletes at the high school and college levels report less frequent and less risky sexual activity than non athletes. Female high school sports participation has also been linked with reduced odds of teen pregnancy.” However, they also found that female and black adolescents who identified themselves as jocks reported lower grades than other female athletes.¹⁶

At-Risk Youth and Deviant Behavior

Geoffrey Pearson in his work namely "Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears" published in 1983 gives us a solid historical perspective on the "recurrent problem of youth" in Britain throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Pearson argues that commonsense analyses of youth deviance tend to have a number of characteristics:

1. They tend to define "the problem of youth" as one that is specific to the age in which we live. That is, the (mis)behaviour of the young is invariably seen as a novel problem - one that was not a problem in the previous generation.
2. Youth deviance develop around the idea that an idealized past is contrasted with an uncertain present. In trying to make sense of youth behaviour, people contrast deviant behaviour now with a "golden age" sometime in the past(usually "20 years ago" for some reason - probably a popular choice because it refers to the previous generation) "when youth deviance was not a problem".
3. Given the confines of this perspective, explanations for youth deviance are given in terms of "things that are wrong now that weren't wrong in the past".
4. For example, various common sense explanations include Deviance Youth Subcultures:
 - Lack of parental responsibility.
 - The breakdown of the family (especially amongst the working class).
 - The breakdown of authority and respect for the law.
 - The breakdown of community values.
 - The lack of discipline in schools.
 - The "permissive society"
 - The (bad) influence of the mass media (television and film in particular).¹⁷

Masculinity and Femininity in High School

Femininity and masculinity or one's gender identity (*Burke, Stets and Pirog-Good 1988; Spence 1985*) refers to the degree to which persons see themselves as masculine or feminine given what it means to be a man or woman in society.

¹⁶ <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/youth/jocks.pdf> (Last Assessed on July 29, 2015 @8:47 PM)

¹⁷ www.sociology.org.uk/devy1.pdf (Last Assessed on July 30, 2015@4:26PM)

Femininity and masculinity are rooted in the social (one's gender) rather than the biological (one's sex). Societal members decide what being male or female means (e.g., dominant or passive, brave or emotional), and males will generally respond by defining themselves as masculine while females will generally define themselves as feminine.

For symbolic interactionists, gender identity is understood in the context of a body of research known as identity theory (Stryker 1980). According to identity theory, the self is an organized collection of hierarchically arranged identities (self-meanings) that serve as a source of motivation for our behavior (Burke 1980). In recent developments in identity theory, identities are organized as control systems that act to maintain congruency between the internalized self-meanings (one's identity standard) and perceptions of the meaning of the self in ongoing social situations (Burke 1991). The key in this is one's self-meanings (Osgood, Succi, and Tannenbaum 1957).

Another symbolic interactionist tenet is that people will choose behaviors that are similar in meaning to the meanings of their identities (Burke and Reitzes 1981). Burke (1989) found that among middle school children, boys and girls with a more feminine gender identity earned higher grades than those with a more masculine gender identity. This was true independent of the child's sex, race, grade, subject area, or sex of the teacher. Since the early years of schooling are more likely to be "feminized" because there are more female than male teachers (Lipman-Blumen 1984), children with a more feminine identity will likely perform better in a "feminine" institution. Among college students, research has shown that males and females with a more feminine gender identity are more likely to inflict and sustain both physical and sexual abuse in dating relationships (Burke, Stets, and Pirog-Good 1988).¹⁸

"Emo" Culture: The Self-Destructive Teen

Emo, short stands for emotional music which is an evolving and complex youth subculture. So called Emo-kids listen to specific music characterized by feelings of psychical vulnerability and willingness to express heart-felt confessions about adolescence and its demands. It is a type of revolution among youth which has its roots in the mid-80s. What separated Emo from punk and hardcore rock was the obvious move away from angry songs of rebellion and disdain for authority to more sensitive performance. The meaning of Emo subculture vary from those describing it as extremely dark, full of people who are depressed and almost suicidal, to those who view Emo as a new trend among youths who like to be unique and want to show the society that they are absolutely free from any type of social bounds. This presumed freedom includes the freedom of emotions too. Critics of Emo music and lifestyle think that they, with their themes of sadness and despair, lead to a death preoccupation while some others argue that Emos are extremely vulnerable, depressed teenagers with the sensitiveness and ingenuousness of an innocent kid which could explain why members of this subculture are called **Emo—kids**. Music makes them particularly passionate, making their hearts tremble and bringing tears in their eyes. In fact, Emo kids are never ashamed of those emotional outbursts.¹⁹

¹⁸ Stets, Jan E. and Burke, Peter J., "Femininity/Masculinity", accessed from:

<http://wat2146.ucr.edu/Papers/00b.pdf> (last Assessed on July 29,2015 @11:55PM)

¹⁹ Gojanovi,M.D., Gugi, D. and Sutlovi, D., " Suicide and Emo Youth Subculture – A Case Analysis", (2009), accessed from: hrcak.srce.hr/file/79108 (last Assessed on August 22,2015 @12:06PM)

Self-destructive teenagers are a little like suicide bombers: they express their anger by blowing themselves up. In this process they even take their parents down with them. Anger turned inwards is a particularly dangerous form of passive-aggression. When a person cannot express anger directly, most often because the anger is unconscious, the person cannot get over it easily. The individual is doomed to act out in self-destructive ways, motivated by an anger of which it is not even aware. Teen age self-destructiveness takes many forms: from having a chaotically messy room or refusing to talk to parents, to chronic school failure or getting into trouble with the law.²⁰

Scher & Baumeister (1988) self-destructive behaviour as any deliberate or intentional behavior that has clear, definitely or probably negative effects on the self or on the self's projects.²¹

Scheel & Westfeld (1990) in their study depicted that heavy metal male fans had less strong reasons for leaving and female fans had more suicidal thoughts.²²

When children reach adolescence, much of his or her focus is on how their own bodies and actions stand in relation to others, and how others, in turn, perceive them. This intense reflection on the self can influence adolescents to focus on any assumed inadequacies and failures. In addition to the adolescent years being marked by puberty and bodily changes, individuals also change in the social arena. Adolescents often struggle trying to find their new place in society and meet new social expectations.

Joseph (2008) in his study on destructive teens explains that participating in self-destructive behaviors often has to do with the stress of being a teenager... your weight, how you look, how you dress, what's cool, what's not cool, whether or not you are fitting in...

Adolescents struggle trying to deal with their daily stresses and in maintaining an image of perfection. Rather than disrupting this image of excellence, some adolescents do not discuss their struggles or emotional anxieties.

Anderson (2008) in his study states that adolescents are at high risk for developing self-destructive behaviors due to the stage of life where they are at, pulling away from their parents, rebelling, taking risks, trying to figure out who they are, who they are going to be and also trying to fit in with friends as they get closer to their peers.

Nurse Davis (2008) in her study explains the biggest problem with adolescent self-destructive acts is peer pressure and the families. Family and peer group interactions along with the influences of the media may modify or reinforce adolescents' beliefs and systems of meanings.²³

The main causes of self-destruction may include impulsive and self-destructive behavior in adolescents can stem from a number of causes, including depression, anxiety, strained relationships with parents and organic issues, such as autism spectrum disorders or brain injury. Likewise, children who grow up witnessing persons in their families and communities engaging in self-destructive actions may be affected by these environmental influences and grow up to adopt these

²⁰ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/suffer-the-children/201308/the-self-destructive-teenager> (last Assessed on August 19,2015 @12:14PM)

²¹ http://www.psychwiki.com/wiki/Explaining_Self-_Destructive_Behaviors (last Assessed on August 19,2015 @12:28PM)

²² Supra 18

²³ <https://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1294&context=honorstheses> (Last Assessed August 19,2015@12:19 PM)

behaviors. Furthermore, adolescents who have suffered physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect may also engage in destructive and impulsive behaviors, such as substance abuse or self-mutilation.²⁴

The self-destructive behaviour can be controlled by encouraging positive decision. Alongwith this, Parents of self-destructive teenagers or young adults should know that their youngster may well be motivated by unconscious feelings of anger and resentment. Only when the roots of the rage are uncovered and dealt with will the teenager be able to get on a more productive path. The therapeutic approach that works best is two-pronged. It involves the therapist working with the teenager to uncover the roots of the anger, and at the same time working with the family to ensure that the teen is getting consistent consequences for misbehavior.²⁵

Cliques and Outcasts

According to Thomas (2009) cliques are formed to facilitate racial identity construction, mark differences with others, and similarities among in-group members.²⁶ The meaning of the word clique varies from context to context, as:

- ✚ Previous scholars considered cliques as fundamentally equivalent to friendship groups, and identified from four to eight per grade level.
- ✚ A second body of literature examines the features of children's inter group and intra group relation.
- ✚ A third group of studies examines the behavioral dynamics associated specifically with cliques.²⁷

Thus, Cliques are small, exclusive groups of friends who share common traits and common interests (music, dress, sports, etc.). Each member is either directly or indirectly connected to each other member. Cliques usually refer to groups of girls; however boys are also involved in cliques. There are usually hierarchies of cliques among teens, from the populars to the losers, and there are often many cliques in schools, including jocks, arties, brains, nerds, druggies, freaks, preppies and normals.

Some children show preferences for friends at an early age. By 9 or 10, as children become aware of differences, they begin to form cliques. At 10 to 12 years of age, as they separate from parents, identification with peers may become exaggerated and cliques may form and change frequently. By middle and high school, as the issue of belonging becomes even more critical, cliques and bullies

²⁴ <http://everydaylife.globalpost.com/impulsive-selfdestructive-behaviors-adolescents-6573.html> (Last Assessed August 19,2015@12:23 PM)

²⁵ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/suffer-the-children/201308/the-self-destructive-teenager> (Last Assessed August 19,2015@12:35 PM)

²⁶ Lueck, Kerstin and Steffen, Hayley, "White Kids: Identity Construction, Critical Mass, and Symbolic Exclusion in High School Cliques and other Groups", *Berkeley Review of Education*, 2(1), 2011 (Last Assessed August 22,2015@12:43 PM)

²⁷ A. Adler, Patricia and Adler, Peter, "Dynamics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Preadolescent Cliques", *Social Psychology Quarterly*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Sep., 1995), accessed from: http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1463715.files/Adler%20%20Adler_Dynamics%20of%20Inclusion_snowballing%20%20saturation.pdf , (Last Assessed August 22,2015@12:50PM)

become more prominent. Bullying in schools peaks in middle school and drops off by grades 11 and 12.

Cliques can have a strong positive effect on self-worth. They provide a social niche and help kids develop a sense of belonging, support, and protection. These boost self-esteem by making kids feel wanted, and they enable the clique member to develop a sense of identity and to regulate social interactions. Along with this flipside is that Cliques can be hostile to other kids and other cliques. In some cases clique members can become nasty to outsiders by putting them down, using teasing, taunting, backstabbing, and even violence. Although girls are socialized to suppress physical displays of aggression, it can take the form of belittling and intimidating behavior. Cliques can blur individuality and prevent members from mixing with members of other groups. They usually require some degree of conformity – in appearance, attitude, or behavior. They can oust members for no apparent reason, and they can pressure kids into group activities in order to fit in, creating interpersonal conflict and bully behavior.²⁸

Mean Girls

In 2004, the hit teen movie *Mean Girls* brought the portrayal of teen girls as socially aggressive to the forefront of popular discourse about female adolescence. *Mean Girls* was heralded by critics as "acutely hilarious sociology, nailing the servile malice of 15-year-old girls and "not only funny but smart".

According to a 2005 New York Times article, "In recent years, girls have been increasingly portrayed in everything from serious journalistic studies to light comedies like 'Mean Girls' as tyrannical, bullying and devoted to a ruthless caste system."²⁹

Mean girls, as do other subgroups that engage in some bullying behaviors (*e.g.*, *jocks*), manifest some bullying behaviors. However, they manifest other behaviors that generate a defined youth culture subgroup. Several studies have commencement and upsurging of mean girls as a form of subculture. These are:

Merten (1997) reported the findings in the journal of *Sociology of Education* from a junior high study "exploring the meaning of meanness" as a starting point in understanding the connections between female competition, conflict, and popularity.

Horn (2004) in his study reported the portrayals in the popular media mainly generate a stereotypical picture of gossiping, back-biting and manipulation, and "try to make the case that this type of aggression is inherently female." The increasing focus on mean girls has contributed to the societal impression that social or relational aggressive behavior, especially among girls, is on the rise.

Ringrose (2006) in his study states that popular constructions of the mean girl are rooted in a developmental psychology debate on girls as indirectly and relationally aggressive. Constructions of the mean girl are linked to post-feminist gender anxieties over middle-class girl power and girl success.

²⁸ Mandel, J. (2010), "Social Life in Middle and High School: Dealing With Cliques and Bullies" (Last Assessed August 6, 2015 @ 12:25PM)

²⁹ http://www.syndicate.missouri.edu/resources/behm-morawitz/Mean_Girls.pdf (Last Assessed on August 23, 2015 @ 2:09PM)

Pronk and Zimmer-Gembeck (2009) in the *Journal of Adolescent Research* studied the meaning of “mean” as described by victims, aggressors, and their peers. They in their study found that the subgroup was characterized behaviorally as having unpredictable or inconsistent friendships excluding and ditching (cutting) friendships; practicing social intimidation; spreading rumors and gossip, including using notes but also engaging in cyber and technological aggression.

Dellasega & Adamshick (2010) in their study revealed stress that adolescents use relational aggression to maintain their dominant, influential position in the peer group. They list the following as examples of the ways they do this: “gossip, manipulation, intimidation, exclusion, gestures, ridicule, saying something mean then pretending you were joking, name calling, teasing, cliques, campaigns, on again-off again friendships, betrayal of confidences, sending hurtful messages via cell phone or computer, other subtle or not so subtle forms of harassment.”³⁰

Sex and Adolescents

Adolescent sexuality is sexual feelings, behavior and development in adolescents and a stage of human sexuality. Sexuality is often a vital aspect of teenagers' lives. The sexual behavior of adolescents is, in most cases, influenced by their culture's norms and mores, their sexual orientation, and the issues of social control such as age of consent laws.

In humans, mature sexual desire usually begins to appear with the onset of puberty. Sexual expression can take the form of masturbation or sex with a partner. Sexual interests among adolescents, as among adults, can vary greatly. Sexual activity in general is associated with various risks including unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. The risks are elevated for young adolescents because their brains are not neurally mature; several brain regions in the frontal lobe of the cerebral cortex and in the hypothalamus important for self-control, delayed gratification, and risk analysis and appreciation are not fully mature. The creases in the brain continue to become more complex until the late teens, and the brain is not fully mature until age. Partially because of this, young adolescents are generally less equipped than adults to make sound decisions and anticipate consequences of sexual behavior, although brain imaging and behavioral correlation studies in teens have been criticized for not necessarily being causative and possibly reaffirming cultural biases.³¹

Adolescence can be tough enough to get through without questions of sex, sexuality, and sexual identity. But adolescents are humans, too — no matter how alien they may seem to their parents at times. Openly addressing the all-too-human questions of sexual development, sexual desire, and the nature of the adolescent's developing sexual identity are critical.³²

Many assume that most teens are sexually active. In actuality, recent studies have shown that adolescents are becoming sexually active at a later age than in past years. Recent studies have shown that the main factors for unprotected sex or risky sexual behavior may be result of peer pressure, curiosity, or a lack of knowledge. A study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control, reported

³⁰ <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/youth/meangirls.pdf> (Last Assessed August 23,2015@2:00PM)

³¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolescent_sexuality (Last Assessed August 6,2015@12:19PM)

³² <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/dating-sex/Pages/Adolescent-Sexuality-Talk-the-Talk-Before-They-Walk-the-Walk.aspx> (Last Assessed August 6,2015@12:16PM)

that “47% of high school students were sexually active, and 14% of students have had four or more sex partners during their life”.³³

The major factors that lead to sexual activity numerous but some of the important ones are as follows:

- **Community:** The community a teen lives in influences his or her sexual behavior. In particular, teens that live in disorganized communities have higher rates of substance abuse, violence, and hunger and are more likely to begin having sex early and to have a child. Teens that live in communities with a higher proportion of foreign-born residents are more likely to delay having sex.
- **Family:** Family characteristics are very important in determining risk. Specifically, if teens live with biological parents (instead of only one parent or step-parents), they are less likely to have sex, but if they do, they are likely to have sex less frequently. Teens whose parents are more educated are less likely to become pregnant than teens whose parents have less education. Family abuse of alcohol or drugs increases the chances that teens will have sex more frequently and with more partners.
- **Peers and best friends:** Sexual behavior is one of the many areas in which teens are influenced by their best friends and peers. Teens are more likely to have sex if their best friends and peers are older, use alcohol or drugs, or engage in other negative behavior. If teens believe their friends support condom use or actually use condoms, chances are greater that they will use condoms themselves.
- **Romantic partners:** While simply having a romantic partner increases the chances of sexual activity, having an older romantic partner increases them even further. If teens’ partners support condom or contraceptive use, then teens are more likely to use them if they have sex.
- **Individual Factors:** Fifteen groups of factors found to be particularly influential on teens’ sexual behavior are classed as individual. They include biological factors, race and ethnicity, connection to family, connection to school and to doing well in school, connection to religion, connection to other organizations or adults in the community, involvement in gangs, alcohol and drug use, aggressiveness, involvement in problem or sensation seeking behavior, paid work, involvement in sports, cognitive and personality traits, sexual beliefs, attitudes, skills, motivations, and intentions, and relationships with romantic partners and previous sexual behavior.³⁴

Many young people engage in sexual risk behaviors that can result in unintended health outcomes. For example, among U.S. high school students surveyed in 2013:

- 47% had ever had sexual intercourse.
- 34% had had sexual intercourse during the previous 3 months,

³³ Villarreal, Annette., “Sexual Activity Among Adolescents” , accessed from: <http://www.cedu.niu.edu/~shumow/itt/doc/SexualActivityAmongAdolescents.pdf> (Last Assessed August 6,2015@12:54PM)

³⁴ Kirby, Douglas., and Lepore, Gina, “Sexual Risk and Protective Factors”, (2007), accessed from: <http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/documents/theories/RiskProtectiveFactors200712.pdf> (Last Assessed on August 6, 2015 @1:10PM)

- 41% did not use a condom the last time they had sex.
- 15% had had sex with four or more people during their life.
- Only 22% of sexually experienced students have ever been tested for HIV.

Sexual risk behaviors place adolescents at risk for HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and unintended pregnancy:

- * Nearly 10,000 young people (aged 13-24) were diagnosed with HIV infection in the United States in 2013.
- * Young gay and bisexual men (aged 13-24) accounted for an estimated 19% (8,800) of all new HIV infections in the United States, and 72% of new HIV infections among youth in 2010.
- * Nearly half of the 20 million new STDs each year were among young people, between the ages of 15 to 24.
- * Approximately 273,000 babies were born to teen girls aged 15–19 years in 2013.

To reduce sexual risk behaviors and related health problems among youth, schools and other youth-serving organizations can help young people adopt lifelong attitudes and behaviors that support their health and well-being—including behaviors that reduce their risk for HIV, other STDs, and unintended pregnancy.³⁵ Alongwith this, several other things have to be kept in mind such as, Understanding the influences in sexual decision-making, Role of Parents and Family Dynamics, Role of Peers, Role of the Media, Role of Communities, Schools, and Social Policy, Defining Responsible Sexual Behavior: Individual and Community Responsibility, Getting the Boys Involved, Mental health considerations and additional Ways To Become Involved In Helping Youths and Communities Achieve Responsible Sexual Behavior.³⁶

Conclusion

The category of youth has been a strategically important focus in the development of research in the contemporary epoch. Numerous variations are being witnessed amongst the young children belonging to the newfangled world but still a lot needs to be them to make them aware about these transitions some of which have been discussed in detail such as emergence, theoretical perspectives, hip hop culture, punk culture, jock culture, deviant culture, masculinity and femininity, “emo” culture, clique culture, mean girls culture and sex and adolescents culture, etc., along with others which need to be discussed such as: Extreme Sports Culture: Surf, Skate, and Snow; Messages Promoted in Music; Bullying; Cyber Bullying; Maturity and the Media: Are Teens Pressured to Mature as Fast as their Favorite Stars?. The youth of today needs to be empowered and should be cognizance about the transformations and complexities of the 21st century so that they can easily comprehend, prioritize and equipoise their attitude towards themselves as well as others which will eventually help them in maintaining the equilibrium of their own and of the society.

³⁵<http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sexualbehaviors/> (Last Assessed on August 6, 2015 @1:14PM)

³⁶ http://www.naswdc.org/practice/adolescent_health/ah0202.asp (Last Assessed on August 6, 2015 @1:28PM)

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