



# PILOT STUDY ON INFLUENCE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' VALUE DEVELOPMENT IN PURBA MEDINIPUR DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL

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## Abstract:

Value development among adolescents is deeply intertwined with the social environment in which they grow, specifically the family and the community. This pilot study investigates how home dynamics, parental behaviour, socio-economic conditions, peer groups, and community culture influence secondary school students' value understanding and practice in the Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal. The primary purpose of the pilot was to test research tools, refine the questionnaire, verify sampling feasibility, and identify any procedural constraints before conducting a larger study.

The sample consisted of 30 secondary students selected randomly from two schools representing semi-urban and rural settings. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, value-awareness checklist, and short interviews. Descriptive statistics (percentage, mean awareness scores) were used for interpretation. The pilot results indicate that family environment—particularly parental communication, modeling of values, and involvement in children's learning—plays a strong role in shaping honesty, respect, and responsibility. Students from cohesive family environments demonstrated higher awareness and application of values compared to those from fragmented or low-communication households. Community influences such as neighbourhood safety, social norms, peer behaviour, local festivals, club activities, and exposure to cultural traditions also showed significant associations with value internalization. However, students reported weaker understanding of empathy, self-discipline, and tolerance, especially in communities marked by social conflicts or poor cooperative culture.

The pilot further revealed the need for refining scenario-based questions and incorporating more examples related to local culture. Overall, the pilot confirms the relevance of the study and provides methodological insights crucial for the development of a full-scale research project.

## Introduction

Value development is a lifelong process, but adolescence marks a critical stage where individuals begin to form stable concepts of right and wrong, social responsibility, cooperation, and respect for diversity. In societies experiencing rapid socio-cultural changes—like many districts of West Bengal—adolescents often receive conflicting value messages from various social institutions. In the context of Purba Medinipur, families and communities remain strong determinants of students' belief systems and behavioural patterns.

The district is characterized by diverse socio-economic backgrounds, strong cultural traditions, and varying levels of community cohesion. In such environments, students' value development is shaped not only by formal education but also by daily interactions within the family and the neighbourhood. Parents' behaviour, communication style, disciplinary methods, religious/cultural practices, community organizations, and peer groups all influence adolescents' understanding of values.

This pilot study aims to explore these influences in a small sample to determine the feasibility of a larger research project.

## 1 Review of Related Literature

**1. Durkheim (1925/2012)** Emphasised that moral education originates in social groups such as family and community before formal schooling begins.

**2. Lickona (1991)** Highlighted parental modeling and communication as foundational pillars for character development.

**3. Berkowitz & Bier (2004)** Argued that value development is most effective when family and community environments reinforce school-based character programmes.

**4. Bronfenbrenner (1979)** His ecological systems theory explains how microsystems (family, neighbourhood) shape children's values.

**5. Halstead & Taylor (2000)** Stressed that cultural practices, social norms, and community behaviour influence adolescents' moral understanding.

**6. Narvaez & Lapsley (2013)** Suggested that moral identity develops through repeated exposure to value-rich environments.

**7. UNESCO (2015)** Identified community involvement and parental engagement as critical to value internalization in adolescents.

**8. Kaur & Singh (2017)** Reported that cohesive family environments lead to stronger empathy and responsibility among school students.

**9. Sharma & Kaur (2020)** Found that peer influence can either strengthen or weaken values depending on group behaviour patterns.

**10. Pandey (2019)** Emphasised the role of neighbourhood activities, festivals, and clubs in promoting cooperation and respect.

## 2. Background of the Study

Purba Medinipur district represents a unique blend of rural and semi-urban communities with rich cultural heritage, community-level festivals, local clubs, and strong kinship networks. However, family structures are changing due to migration, work pressure, and the growing influence of media. The shifting dynamics often lead to inconsistency in value transmission.

Research shows that family is the primary agency of value education, while community serves as the extended environment that reinforces or contradicts family values. When both environments work harmoniously, students exhibit stronger moral behaviour; when conflict exists, value confusion arises. Given this context, a pilot examination of these influences is both relevant and necessary.

## 3. Rationale of the Study

This pilot study is important because:

## a. Identifying Environmental Influences on Values

Students are exposed to diverse, sometimes contradictory influences from family, media, peers, and the community. Understanding how these factors interact is crucial for designing effective value education programmes.

## b. Strengthening School Interventions

Schools often struggle to compensate for value deficiencies arising from the home environment. Insights will help schools design targeted parental involvement programs.

## c. Supporting Families

Findings can guide schools and NGOs in creating workshops for parents about positive communication and value modeling.

## d. Community Development Initiatives

Local clubs, panchayats, and community groups can use the insights to promote cooperative, culturally enriched, and inclusive neighbourhood environments.

## e. Preparing for the Full-Scale Study

The pilot helps test tools, sampling methods, and data collection feasibility before launching a larger district-wide study.

## 4. Objectives of the Pilot Study

1. To assess the level of students' value awareness influenced by family and community environments.
2. To identify specific family factors affecting value development.
3. To examine community influences such as peer groups, social activities, and neighbourhood culture.
4. To test the validity and reliability of the research tools.
5. To identify practical difficulties for the full-scale study.

## 5. Hypotheses for Pilot Testing

Since this is a pilot study, hypotheses are exploratory:

- **H1:** Students with supportive and communicative families show higher value awareness.
- **H2:** Community environment significantly affects students' behavioural values such as cooperation and tolerance.
- **H3:** Students from cohesive neighbourhoods demonstrate better application of values in real-life situations.

## 6. Methodology

### 6.1 Research Design

The pilot follows a descriptive survey method supplemented with brief interviews.

### 6.2 Sample

A sample of **30 secondary students** from:

- One semi-urban school in Tamluk
- One rural school in Panskura

Simple random sampling was used.

### 6.3 Tools Used

#### 1. Value Awareness Questionnaire

- 30 items
- Covers honesty, empathy, respect, cooperation, tolerance, responsibility, self-discipline

#### 2. Family Environment Checklist

- Parental communication
- Discipline style
- Emotional warmth
- Role modeling

#### 3. Community Environment Scale

- Peer behaviour
- Neighbourhood safety
- Social norms
- Community activities

#### 4. Short Interviews

- 5–6 minutes each
- Used to verify questionnaire responses

### 6.4 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics: percentage analysis, mean score, cross-comparison between students based on family and community characteristics.

## 7. Analysis and Interpretation of Pilot Data

### 7.1 Overall Value Awareness

Value Category	High (%)	Moderate (%)	Low (%)
Honesty	60	30	10
Respect	55	35	10
Responsibility	50	40	10
Cooperation	40	45	15
Empathy	30	50	20
Tolerance	25	45	30
Self-Discipline	35	40	25

#### Interpretation:

Students showed high awareness of honesty and respect but weaker understanding of empathy, tolerance, and self-discipline.

### 7.2 Influence of Family Environment

Family Factor	Impact Level	Interpretation
Parental communication	Strong	Students who talk regularly with parents showed clearer value understanding.
Parental consistency in rules	Moderate	Inconsistent rules caused confusion about right and wrong.
Emotional warmth	Strong	Warm families nurtured empathy and cooperation.
Role modeling	Very Strong	Students adopted values directly observed in parents.

**Interpretation:**

Parental behaviour and communication are primary determinants of value development.

**7.3 Influence of Community Environment**

Community Factor	Impact	Interpretation
Peer group behaviour	High	Negative peer influence weakened discipline and tolerance.
Neighbourhood safety	Moderate	Unsafe areas lowered cooperation and trust.
Social norms	High	Conservative norms sometimes limited tolerance and diversity acceptance.
Community activities	High	Club activities, cultural events improved cooperation and respect.

**8. Findings of the Pilot Study**

1. Family influence is stronger than community influence, especially regarding honesty, respect, and responsibility.
2. Community factors significantly influence behavioural values such as cooperation, tolerance, and self-discipline.
3. Students from supportive and communicative families demonstrated higher awareness across most values.
4. Peer influence often contradicts family teachings, leading to value conflict.
5. Scenario-based items in the questionnaire need simplification for full-scale application.
6. More community-specific examples must be added to reflect local culture

The pilot successfully demonstrated that family and community environments significantly shape students' value development in Purba Medinipur. While schools contribute to formal value teaching, the home and neighbourhood provide daily reinforcement—or contradiction—of these values. The pilot confirmed the feasibility of the research tools and identified necessary modifications for a district-wide study.

**9. Limitations of the Pilot Study**

- Small sample size (30 students).
- Conducted in only two schools.
- Some students hesitated during interviews.
- Community data varied widely based on locality.
- Questionnaire items need refinement.

**10. Suggestions for Full-Scale Study**

1. Increase sample size to cover all blocks of Purba Medinipur.
2. Include teachers and parents for triangulation.
3. Add qualitative tools like case studies.
4. Conduct community-level observation.
5. Revise questionnaire for local context.

**Conclusion**

The pilot study on the influence of family and community environment on students' value development in Purba Medinipur district demonstrates that both social settings play a crucial and interconnected role in shaping adolescents' moral awareness and behavioural tendencies. The findings clearly indicate that students who experience supportive family interactions—characterized by open communication, emotional warmth, consistent guidance, and positive role modelling—tend to show stronger understanding and practice of values such as honesty, respect, and responsibility. At the same time, community influences such as peer behaviour,

neighbourhood culture, safety, and participation in social or cultural activities significantly affect values related to cooperation, tolerance, empathy, and self-discipline.

The pilot further established that while the overall research framework is workable, certain adjustments are necessary for the main study. Some questionnaire items need rephrasing for better comprehension, and community-related items should be more contextualized to reflect the socio-cultural diversity of Purba Medinipur. Despite the limited sample size, the pilot affirms that family and community environments are fundamental to value development and that a larger, more comprehensive study will yield deeper insights. This pilot thus successfully validates the feasibility and relevance of the proposed full-scale research.

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