

In recent years, the generation gap between parents and their children has widened exponentially, with parents becoming increasingly alarmed at their children's inexplicable behaviour. My unique ability to hide my insanity from others, has led the desperate parents of my mad adolescent friends to ask for my help in dealing with their monsters -- oops, I meant moppets! It is indicative of how frantic they must be, to seek my help...

Therefore I have decided (as a public service) to write something about the different species of adolescents that I have encountered. This may (at your own risk!) be used as a guide by those of you who are already parents-- or those of you contemplating that decision. Remember, you should make an INFORMED decision about this!

I will restrict my analysis to species that can be sighted in any English medium school in Dhaka:

**Species number 1--Straight-Hair Girl.** This was formerly a nice enough girl, but one who never got *patta* from the "cool group" or the boys she liked. Then, she straightened her hair and started wearing gobs of make-up. Suddenly, she became popular, started having boyfriends and began behaving in a way that was so painfully *neka* that it should be made illegal. This species is recognisable by a sudden fascination in cosmetics, boys and accessories. They are unable to discuss anything more demanding than the above. They develop a frightening capacity to speak for long periods of time in nasal whiny tones... similar to Britney Spears.

*Note to parents:* When faced with a straight-hair girl living in your house, try not to give in to her demands for expensive hair and beauty treatment, just ignore the sulky pouts and whiny tone of voice and hopefully, after a while, the demon airhead living in your daughter's room will go away.

**Species number 2--Back-brush Boy.** This species always back-brushes his hair with an OBSCENE amount of hair gel and has a lot of "mood" (or at least what they would like to pass off as mood). He talks about cars and *genjam* and is often seen standing about moodily trying to look dangerous. In fact, all he is really trying to do is form coherent sentences. Due to all that time spent practising looking like a "cool, bad dude", several hundred brain-cells have withered away from lack of use. This ever-so-clever species thinks of nothing other than their cars, stereos and the money in their pocket... and of course, fancy cell phones.

# School Safari

8TEEN

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*Note to parents:* The only way to deal with this particular species is to thoroughly and repeatedly embarrass him in front of all his equally "cool" friends. Even if he does not turn back into the son you used to have, at least your house will no longer be infested by other members of his species and their girlfriends (usually straight-hair girls).

**Species number 3-- the Druggies.** This is a group of otherwise intelligent adolescents who are nearly always part of the "cool group". This species is mainly made up of boys with an occasional girl. They can be recognised by the vacant look in their eyes, rapid weight loss and sudden changes in personality. They

speak in grunts and mumbles which may cause people to believe that they are sullen, angst-ridden and deep...but it's all really just an act, used so that they don't have to actually remember where they are, who the speaker is and, in fact, who they themselves are.

*Note to parents:* So far, there is no definite way to handle them, as what they are doing to themselves is quite serious. But hang in there, it is likely that eventually the few brain cells which have not fizzled out may start working just long enough for them to see the error of their ways.

**Species number 4-- the Nice Boy.** This is truly a dying breed. They are the boys who wear ugly shoes simply because their mothers asked them to. They are ill-at-ease, but always polite with the opposite sex. They do no drugs, get good results in school and enjoy good clean fun...like sports. They are often the victims of other teen