

Pattern and Impact of Bullying Behaviour among School Children in Kashmir

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There is new concern about school violence; bullying is widespread problem in our schools and communities and perhaps the most underreported safety problem on school campuses, with negative impact on school climate and on students' right to learn in a safe and secure environment without fear. This study aimed to investigate the pattern and impact of bullying behaviour among the school children and to seek the relationship between types of bullying behaviour and impact. This descriptive study included 100 school aged 10-14 years studying in Baramulla Public School, Kashmir, using convenience sampling. A structured interview schedule was used for data collection and the data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results revealed that majority of the school children had moderate impact as a result of bullying behaviour and area wise analysis of the impact revealed that the highest impact was in the social aspects. Guidelines were prepared on anti-bullying interventions for school management, school teachers and for parents through teachers. Bullying has serious and far reaching impact on the psyche and personality of a person who undergoes it; even the bully does not remain unaffected.

Bullying refers to deliberate harmful behaviours directed towards others, which are repeated over time, and involve a power imbalance between those who are engaging in bullying and those who are being bullied (Sally, 2011). Bullying can be a humiliating and embarrassing experience for a child who can demoralise him / her. International research suggests that bullying is common at schools and occurs beyond elementary school; it occurs at all grade levels, although the most frequently during elementary school. It occurs slightly less often in middle schools, and less so, but still frequently in high schools. If the child is being bullied in his school, it is very incorrect on the part of parents to ignore this issue. The help and support of parents is very important to help the child cope with bullying (Banks et al, 2001).

A student is being bullied when he or she is "exposed, repeatedly and over time," to abuse or harassment by one or more other students. The goal of the

bully is to gain power over and dominate other individuals. There are three forms of bullying: physical (including hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, stealing, and destruction of property), verbal (such as taunting, malicious teasing, name calling, and threatening), and psychological (including spreading rumours, manipulating social relationships, exclusion from a peer group, extortion, and intimidation). Bullying has two key components: physical or psychological intimidation occurring repeatedly over time and an imbalance of power. Taunting, teasing, and fighting don't constitute bullying when two persons are of approximately the same physical or psychological strength. Bullies engage in hurtful behaviour against those who can't defend themselves because of size or strength, or because the victim is outnumbered or less psychologically resilient (Frank et al).

Review of literature

In a study conducted by Kshrisagar et al (2007) on 500 school children to examine its association with common symptoms in childhood, the samples were randomly selected from public and private schools in a rural area. The study showed that bullying was reported by 157 (31.4%) of the 500 children interviewed 25 (16%) students were physically hurt and only 24 (24%) parents were aware that their children were being bullied. The study concluded that bullied children were more likely to report symptoms such as school phobia, vomiting and sleep disturbances. Frequent bullying is also associated with school absenteeism.

A study by Stanford University Medical Centre, California found that nine out of 10 elementary students were bullied by their peers. Nearly six in 10 children surveyed in the preliminary study reported participating in some type of bullying themselves in the past year. The survey explored two forms of bullying: direct, such as threatening physical harm, and indirect, such as excluding someone or spreading rumours.

In a study conducted in Tamil Nadu (India), R Srisiva (2013) found that majority of the respondents stated that they had multiple effects due to school bullying which include poor concentration in education (56%), felt self esteem being damaged, tearful (41%), and don't want to live (27%). However a significant number of respondents which included the above mentioned category tried to retaliate by teas-

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Table 1: Mean, median, mode, standard deviation, possible range of scores and range of obtained impact scores of school children as a result of bullying behaviour (N=100)

Variables	Possible range of scores	Range of obtained scores	Mean scores	Median	Mode	Standard deviation (SD)
Impacts of bullying behaviour	0 – 86	15-66	23.46	22	18	15.12

ing the bullies' back.

Materials and Methods

Study design: A descriptive survey design was chosen for the present study. **Study setting:** The study was conducted in selected schools of Baramulla Kashmir. **Sampling technique:** The sample comprised of 100 school children from selected schools of Baramulla Kashmir. Convenience sampling technique was used to obtain the samples.

Data collection process

After ethical permission from Jamia Hamdard Institutional Review Board formal administrative approval was obtained from the concerned authority to conduct the study. The school children who met the inclusion criteria were selected using random sampling technique. The purpose and confidentiality of responses and the anonymity were explained to them after obtaining their willingness to participate in the study. The school children were administered structured interview schedule to assess the pattern and impact of bullying behaviour.

Results

Among 100 school children, 40 percent were 14 years of age, 26 percent were 12 years, 23 percent were 13 years, 9 percent were 15 years and 2 percent were 11 years of age. Out of 100 school children, 69 percent respondents

Table 2: Mean, modified mean and rank order of different areas of impact of bullying behaviour on school children (N=100)

Area	No. of items	Mean	Modified mean	Rank order
Emotional	6	5.08	0.846	I
Social	7	4.96	0.708	II
Academic	5	2.67	0.534	III
Psychological	16	7.82	0.488	IV
Physical	9	2.93	0.32	V

Table 3: Relationship between types of bullying behaviour and impact of bullying behaviour on school children (N=100)

Category	Impact of bullying			Fisher exact value	P value
	Mild	Moderate	Severe		
Physical	15	47	15	1.3	0.863
Verbal	15	65	16		
Indirect	13	54	12		
Sexual	5	14	4		
Cyber	4	32	9		

were girls and 31 percent were boys; 52 percent of the respondents were in 8th standard, 38 percent were in 6th standard, 7 percent were in 7th standard and 3 percent were in 9th standard. 54 percent respondents belonged to nuclear family, 38 percent to joint

family and 8 percent to extended family; 75 percent respondents were from urban area and 25 percent were from rural area. The data revealed that 75 percent had a monthly family income above Rs 20,001, 10 percent earned between Rs. 15,001 - 20,001, 9 percent had a family income between Rs. 10,001 - 15,000 and only 6 percent had a family income less than Rs. 10,000/-.

Bullying behaviour among school children: The data indicated that out of 100 school children, 42 percent were bullied one or more times a day, 31 percent were bullied one or more times a week, 14 percent were bullied one or more times a year, 12 percent were bullied one or more times a month, and only 1 percent was bullied one or more times a term. The data revealed that 54 percent had reported bullying, whereas 46 percent had not reported bullying to anyone; 47 percent were bullied by peers, 33 percent were bullied by teachers, 32 percent were bullied by seniors, and 2 percent were bullied by others. From the respondents who had reported bullying, 38 percent reported to friends, 6 percent had reported bullying to teachers, 4 percent reported to parents as well as siblings and 2 percent had reported to mothers. With regard to the place of being bullied, most of them were bullied in classrooms i.e. 70 percent, 30 percent in playground, 19 percent had been bullied in school entrances, 12 percent in computer rooms, 11 percent in assembly, 10 percent in school bus, 9 percent in libraries, 7 percent on the way to and from school, 6 percent on school field trips, 5 percent in hallways, 4 percent in parking lot, auditorium as well as in school laboratories, 3 percent in common room, 2 percent in lunch room, activity room as well as in waiting hall, and 1 percent in bathroom as well as in gymnasium. With regard to the types of bullying, 96 percent experienced verbal bullying, 79 percent of the respondents experienced indirect bullying, 76 percent experienced physical bullying, 45 percent experienced cyber bullying and 23 percent experienced sexual bullying.

Findings related to impacts of bullying on school children: The range of obtained scores for the subject was 15.66, the obtained mean, median, mode and standard deviation were 23.46, 22, 18, and 15.12 respectively. The close approximation of mean, median, and mode reveals that distribution is normal (Table 1).

The findings related to impacts of bullying on school children: The data indicated that 68% of re-

spondents had moderate impact, 17% respondents had severe impact whereas 15% respondents were having mild impact of bullying

Area wise analysis of impact of bullying behaviour on school children: The impact was assessed on the basis of different areas that could be affected as a result of bullying behaviour. The structured interview schedule had five sections i.e. physical, social, psychological, academic and emotional. The number of items in each area varied from 6-16. For an area wise comparison of impact, modified mean score was computed. The modified mean was calculated by dividing the mean of each area by the number of items in that area.

The highest impact of bullying among school children was in area of emotional (0.846) and the least were in the physical area (0.32). The descending orders of areas of impact were emotional, social, academic, psychological and physical (Table 2).

The data in the Table 3 shows that the obtained Fisher exact value and p value of impact of bullying scores were not significant at 0.05 level of significance, as the obtained p value was more than 0.05 (Table 3), hence it was concluded that there was no significant relation between types of bullying and impact of bullying behaviour among school children.

Validation of Guidelines on anti-bullying interventions: Guidelines on anti-bullying interventions were prepared for school management, teachers and for parents through school teachers, to create a friendly environment in the school and also help the teachers and parents to deal effectively with the children who face these problems in the school.

Discussion

The present study was descriptive one and was conducted to assess the pattern and impact of bullying behaviour among school children and to develop and disseminate guidelines on anti-bullying interventions in selected school of Kashmir. The study revealed that the bullying was prevalent in age group of 11-15 years which is similar to the findings presented in "Hindustan Times" titled 'Don't let bullying become your child's way of life' where bullying was found to be more prevalent among 13-17 years of age group.

This study highlighted the pattern of bullying behaviour and revealed that majority of the students experienced bullying one or more times a day and only a small number of school children experienced bullying one or more times a year. Most of the school children experienced verbal, physical bullying, indirect bullying and cyber bullying and a small number of school children experienced sexual bullying.

Majority of the students had moderate impact of bullying; area wise analysis revealed that the highest impact of bullying among school children was in area of emotional followed by social, academic, psychological and physical.

There was no significant relationship between the type and impact of bullying behaviour among school children. The obtained Fisher exact value and p value of impact of bullying scores were not significant at 0.05 level of significance, as the obtained p value was more than 0.05.

Conclusion

A predominantly high number of school children had moderate impact of bullying on them. The majority of school children reported the bullying behaviour to their friends. Most of the school children had moderate impact of bullying behaviour with the impact being mostly on the emotional aspect. The finding of the present study lays significant implications for school management.

There is a need for providing guidance and counselling to school children to protect them from developing psychological effects of bullying as they last well into adulthood and may lead to development of severe personality impairments. Also, anti-bullying interventions must be strengthened in school and school management needs to develop and implement these as a part of their management protocol.

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