

# Prevalence of School Bullying in Higher Secondary School Students and Myths Related to Bullying Among Students

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**Abstract – Bullying is one of the burning issues in schools and it is one of the national importance issues in schools for every country around the globe. An abundance of researches points out the huge negative impacts on students who are involved in bullying by one way or another. It requires the attention and interventions of adults to address and resolve bullying incidents among students. This study, giving importance and light to the voices of 11th and 12th graders in higher secondary school of Kashmir and try to find out the prevalence of bullying. It not only tried to understand the various perspectives of bullying but also tried to understand students perception regarding bullying. The study involves 1103 students which was randomly selected among the three regions of Kashmir where male students was 501 and female students was 502 (n=1103). Mixed methods approach was used in the study in which both survey and focus group discussion methods was integrated. Data from the Turkish Peer Bullying Survey Questionnaire (Pişkin, 2010) provided detailed student-reported data on the nature and extent of bullying. Initial review of the survey results in the form of frequency statistics on each question provided baseline data from which focus group questions emerged.**

**Statistical analysis of the survey data generated the quantitative portion of this study while focus group data generated the qualitative portion of this study. The survey revealed that about 25.8 percent of the students in the sample experienced some sort of bullying in the past month with verbal bullying as the most common type of bullying experienced. Themes that emerged from focus groups revolved around confusion regarding the definition of bullying, confusion about bullying, Physical appearance, Impact of bullying and coping behaviour. Finally, participants discussed specific forms and motives of bullying.**

**Keywords: Bullying, Higher Secondary School, Student Perceptions.**

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## INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a serious issue in schools from many decades all across the globe. Bullying had been always a part of life especially in Indian context. The first extensive research and published work was done by Berk (1897) but it was not recognised around the world and it led a huge gap until it had been taken up again. During that time bullying was recognized but was little understood and less researched and due to norms and cultures what now can be understood as normal behaviour that time can be seen as violent behavior nowadays. Bullying remained a serious issue always in school and many studies put a light on this darkest issues of the school. Bullying is a serious problem that has increased in recent years in our schools (Brindley, 2010). According to Sullivan (2000), bullying is not a new phenomenon; it has been recognized as one of the main concerns in schools internationally, including Australia (Peterson & Rigby, 1999), the

United States of America (Nansel et al., 2001), the United Kingdom (Smith & Shu, 2000), Norway (Olweus, 1993) and New Zealand (Adair et al., 2000). In United States approximately 160,000 students avoid schools due to the bully victimization by bullies (Nash, 2012; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014; Kramer, 2015).

Bullying is a critical issue and is much differently viewed than it was in the last century. It took many decades to understand and define this serious problem in our school system and understand its severity and impact. The credit of research regarding this area completely goes to researcher Dan Olweus, who studied it extensively and his researches and extensive work in this area elaborated bullying and unfolded this critical issue and its related impact. The significant turning point in the history of bullying took place during 1970s when Dan Olweus using his own systematic researching methods conducted an intensive study

on bullying among students (Koo, 2007, p112). A program was created namey Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP), which had significant results in reducing school bullying (Hazelden Foundation, 2007). Olwes research had a huge contribution regarding bullying as it bought this issue in limelight and his researches put a light on its impact on school life. It also bought an impetus in the researches regarding bullying in various other countries. His efforts and researches made schools safe once again and bought back the peaceful learning environment in the schools.

Majority of schools in India has witnessed bullying incidents and had accepted it as a minor violence incidents unless its physical. Unfortunately teachers and even parents fail to understand bullying. Most of these incidences are handled by the teachers and are considered as a minor incidents and are not been held the way they should be. Sometimes the bullying cases are mediated by parents or elders and may be reported to the concerned school authorities and small warning type actions are being taken. In the rarest cases they are being delt in a proper way and victims are being labeled such as attention seekers. Usually bullying is perceived as a normal peer play such as verbal bullying by peers or classmates. The bully are being perceived as —funnyll or —spoilt childll when they make fun of other students on their physical appearance and especially when they are not hostile (Jaishankar,2009).

Most of the schools in India especially private schools declare their school norms in their handbooks and it give prior importance to discipline and unacceptable behaviours in the school. A student can bear consequences of his bad behaviour by getting expelled from the school but ususally such norms are strictly followed by few private schools only and that too in extreme cases. Also the definition of —bad behaviorll vary from school to school such as smoking or drinking in school, damaging school property, repeatedly avoiding the home work fighting with classmates causing severe physical harm. The expulsion from the school due to bad academic repors is more common then comparison to the bad behaviour in the school.

In indian context it is difficult to determine what the future of bullying will be in india, as the government is trying to formulate policies regarding bullying but yet they are not fully implemented on ground. Also in india researchers need to do extensive researches in schools and study bullying extensively as it had been studied globally but in india it had not been taken yet that seriously. With time the trends and prevalence of such behavior was studied in depth all across globe but in Kashmir such phenomenon had not yet been explored and studied well. Due to the lack of researches and geographical constrains bullying had not been yet studied in Kashmir and this is a first such kind of research which will try to bring in light the prevalence of bullying in Kashmir.

## OBJECTIVES

1. The Prime objective was to find out the prevalence of the bullying.
2. Is there any significant difference in bullying behaviour among boys and girls.
3. Understanding and Perception of bullying and related myths regarding bullying among students.

## METHODOLOGY

The mixed method research design was used as a study design. The researcher used Survey questionnaire which is related to measuring and determine the pattern of bullying, and characteristics of bully, victim and bully-victim neutral of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> students at Kashmir, India.

### Tools Used

Bullying was assessed by using Peer Bullying Survey Questionnaire, developed by Metin Pisken (2010) and for qualitative data questions was formulated after analysing the quantitative data and according to the need of study.

### Sample

This study was focused on Kashmir only and among Kashmir region the focus area is the main three terrorism affected regions Northern, Central and Southern Districts of Kashmir i.e. Baramulla, Srinagar and Anantnag. The target population of the study is all students from 11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades in three districts of Kashmir namely Baramulla, Anantnag and Srinagar. The three districts were chosen randomly and also the reason of choosing these three districts was that they are the oldest districts with easily assess within the districts. They also represent the population of Kashmir valley in every aspect.

### Procedure

The data was collected during the schools was in session with an appropriate permission from school authorities as well as with formal consent of the participants. After establishing the rapport with the participants, they were requested to fill the bullying questionnaire. The questionnaire took 25 mints to complete.

## RESULTS

### Result of Quantitative part

According to the Olweus criteria for bullying students who had been bullied every day or once a week is being considered mostly victim. So the

belowtable shows the frequency analysis of the participants.

**Table 1.Frequency of Bully/Victim/Bully-Victim/Neutral according to Olweus bullying criteria**

	f	%
Victim	259	25.8
Bully	140	14.0
Bully-Victim	157	15.7
Neutral	446	44.6

The above table shows 25.8% are Victim, 14% are bully and 15.7% are bully-victim according to the Olweus bullying criteria that had been bullied every day or once in a week. Also the researcher tries to understand the gender difference in bullying phenomenon and the below results shows the frequency percentage of male and female participant's bully/victim/bully-victim/Neutral in higher secondary students of Kashmir.

**Table 1.2 Frequency and Percentages of male and female participant's bully/victim/bully-victim/Neutral.**

	F	Male %	f	Female %
Victim	142	28.3	117	23.3
Bully	70	14.0	70	13.9
Bully-Victim	80	16.0	77	15.3
Neutral	209	41.7	238	47.4

$$\chi^2=4.351 \text{ sd}=3 \text{ p}=.226$$

The table shows among males 28.3% are victimized and females 23.3% are victimized. The above results shows that there is no significant difference between male and female  $\chi^2(\text{sd}=3, n=1003)=4.351, p>.05$ . According to the analysis male victimization seems to be slightly higher than the female victimization but it's not statistically significant that shows that gender doesn't play much role in bullying behaviour.

## RESULT OF QUALITATIVE PART

Phase II of the data analysis involved the content analysis of the interviews, which was held after the Survey Questionnaire. The findings, presented different experiences and different perceptions of bullying among students. The participants discuss different type and amount of bullying that took place in the school and also their perception towards it. The common themes, which emerged during the interview, were analysed first according to their frequency of occurrences. The below table shows the most frequent themes to the least frequent themes which emerged during the interviews and these themes are being arranged according to the ranks.

**Table 1.3 Frequency of themes which emerges during interviews**

Themes	Rank
Vague idea about bullying	1
Confusion about bullying a) Misconceptions about bullying b) Considering some forms of bullying as friendly Play	2
Physical Appearances	3
Impact of Bullying	4
Coping behaviour of bullying	5
Forms and Motives of bullying	6

## DISCUSSION

The study provides information regarding prevalence of bullying in higher secondary schools of Kashmir. According to Olweus bullying criteria a person can be said victim or bully or bully victim if he encounters bullying incidence every day or once in a week. So according to the Olweus definition it has been found that 25.8% are victimized and 14% are bully and 15.7% are bully-victim. Such percentages are consistent with the findings of earlier studies conducted in India and in other countries. Yadav. A et al (2015) indicates in their study with higher secondary schools in Varanasi City, India that about 21% of students faced bullying by group of students while 16% accepted that they bully. In another study conducted among adolescents of 11-18 years of age at Rohtak, India, it has been found that 21.6% students bullied other students, 19% were being bullied (Siba et al 2018).

After the analysis of data 28.3% of males are reported being victim and 23.3% of girl's students are reported being victim of bullying. 14% of male and 13.9% of females reported that they bully. The 16% boys and 15.3% of girl participants report that they had been victimized as well also they bully other students. The data shows there are minor differences among males and females in victimization but there are no significant differences in bully and bully-victim. In literature there are inconsistent research findings regarding gender differences. —Perhaps the most consistently reported finding in the literature on bullying is that boys tend to bully more often than girls (Rigby., 2008).

The First theme, which was emerged, was that most of the participants were having a vague idea about bullying. This doesn't mean that there was no bullying happening or they had not faced any kind of bullying but it resembles as they don't know the terminology but were aware about such kind of behaviour and some had gone through it themselves. On another hand the participants who understand bullying had confusion and misconceptions about

bullying. For example there is a blur line between bullying and teasing as the behavior could look similar to others and some feels it's one and the same thing. It seems that some feels teasing or jokes between classmates or friends can't be differentiated as bullying. The next theme which was impact of bullying by which student's access the quantum of harm one can make on a person may define bullying behavior. Usually students feels that mild level of bullying or friendly play such as teasing or name calling is not harmful and it won't affect academic achievements. But students felt if the quantum of bullying is higher such as hitting or stealing of money then it is harmful and it can affect person in many ways. So usually student assesses the impact of bullying according to its quantum.

Last but not the least theme was that many students get victimized as they believe because of their physical appearance. Such cases like someone had been bullied due to his physical lean or fat body or someone is wearing tested glasses or even someone is tall or short are very common causes to provoke bullying behaviour among students.

## CONCLUSION

Result indicates that boys generally thought they were more involved in bullying than girls. It was also indicated that males were more often victimized than girls as there is a slight differences found in this study. This study was a first of its kind in kashmir and results showed that kashmir is not an exception in bullying phenomenon. Also this study found various common myths regarding bullying phenomenon.

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