

A STUDY OF BULLYING IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS OF VARANASI CITY

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Abstract

Bullying is a pervasive problem in schools throughout the world that has been linked to both immediate and long-term detrimental effects for students. This is a huge problem that exists among adolescents though it is often neglected in our country. This investigation was undertaken with the objective to study the bullying experience and bullying behavior of seventh class students of Varanasi city. A total of 100 students were selected from four schools (two CBSE board schools and two UP board schools) of Varanasi city of Uttar Pradesh to collect the data. After analysis, it was found that majority of the students get bullied by their own classmates. Commonly same sex students did the bullying and it mainly occurs in playgrounds and classrooms.

Key-words: *Bullying experience, bullying behavior, elementary school students*

Introduction

Bullying is the act of intentionally causing harm to others, through verbal harassment, physical assault or other more subtle methods of coercion such as manipulation. According to Norwegian researcher Dan Olweus (1978), “A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself.”

Bullying is characterized by an individual behaving in a certain way to gain power over another person. Bullying behaviors may include name calling, verbal or written abuse exclusion from activities, exclusion from social situations, physical abuse or coercion. Bullies may behave this way to be perceived as popular or tough or to get attention. They may bully out jealousy or be acting out because they themselves are bullied.

USA National Centre for Education Statistics (2001) has divided bullying into two categories- direct bullying and indirect bullying. Ross (1998) defines direct bullying as physical aggression which involves the activities like shoving and poking, throwing things, slapping, choking, punching and kicking, beating, pulling hair, scratching, biting and scraping while indirect bullying is characterized by threatening the victim into social isolation.

Bullying often describes a form of harassment perpetrated by an abuser who possesses more physical and/or social power and dominance than the victim. The harassment can be verbal, physical and/or emotional.

Bullying can occur in any setting where human beings interact with each other. This includes school, the work place, home and neighborhoods etc. On the basis of place of bullying, it can be divided into following types:

a) School Bullying

School bullying is the most common type of bullying. In schools, bullying can take place in all

areas of the school whether it is around the school building or any other place. It more often occurs in recess, hallways, bathrooms, on school buses and bus stops. Bullying in school sometimes consists of a group of students which take the advantage of one student with the help of bystanders who doesn't want to become the next victim. These bullies taunt and tease their target before physically bullying the target.

b) Workplace Bullying

According to the *Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute*, "it is the repeated, health-harming mistreatment, verbal abuse or conduct which is threatening, humiliating, intimidating or sabotage that interferes with work or some combination of the three." This type of bullying often takes place within the established rules and policies of the organizations and society. When workplace bullying is perpetrated by a group, is sometimes called as mobbing. In political circles, it is also known as "career assassination."

c) Cyber Bullying

It is a type of electronic bullying. According to Canadian educator Bill Belsey (2006) it involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, cell phone and pager text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal websites, blogs, online games and defamatory online personal polling websites, to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Bullies even create blogs to intimidate victims world-wide.

d) Political Bullying

This type of bullying occurs between political parties or even between countries (called as Jingoism). Jingoism occurs when one country imposes its will on another country. This is generally done with military force or threats. By doing this, it is assumed that aid and grants will not be given to the smaller country or that the smaller country will not be allowed to join a trading organization.

e) Hazing

It is a type of virtualistic test which may constitute harassment, abuse or humiliation with requirement to perform meaningless tasks. The term can refer to either physical or mental practices. It can take place in a variety of social contents including sports teams, academic fraternities, colleges and universities etc.

Need of the Study

Day by day we come to hear that bullying tendency in students is gradually increasing and its effect on victims is indescribable. There is a list of researches which indicates that individuals whether child or adult who are persistently subjected to abusive behavior are at risk of stress related illness which can sometimes lead to suicide. Victims of bullying can suffer from long term emotional and behavioral problems. Bullying can cause loneliness, depression, anxiety, low self- esteem and increased susceptibility to illness (William, K.D. et al 2005). Rigby (1996) had found that victimization due to bullying is correlated with student absenteeism, poorer academic achievement (Nolin et al. 1996), social isolation (Slee and Rigby, 1993). Depression, anxiety and poorer psychosocial adjustment (Callaghan, 1995; Olweus, 1979; and Nausel et al., 2001). Craig (1998) reported that all forms of bullying-physical, verbal and social were predicative of victim anxiety. Sounder et al. (2000) found that students who were repeatedly victimized in elementary school reported higher levels of internalizing problems at the age of 16. Likewise longitudinal researches

done by Forero et. al. (1999); Hawker and Boulton (2000); Muscari (2002) suggests that being a victim of bullying is associated with low self-esteem, school refusal, anxiety, depression, social isolation and even suicide.

In countries like USA, U.K., Canada and Norway many researches have been done for the identification of bullying behavior to make programmes to prevent the bullying at schools. Even many programmes run in these countries to prevent the problem of bullying but in Indian context, negligible work has been seen in this area. In India no importance is given to this point that bullying can affect the future of children very deeply. And that's why a need was felt by the researcher to study the prevailing problem of bullying in Indian school scenario and hence the present study was taken with the formal title, "*A Study of Bullying in Seventh Class Students of Varanasi City.*"

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- 1) To study the bullying experience of elementary school students of Varanasi city with reference to following variables:
 - a) Number of students
 - b) Class of students
 - c) Sex of students (male/female)
 - d) Place of bullying
- 2) To study the bullying behaviour of elementary school students of Varanasi city with reference to following variables:
 - a) Number of students
 - b) Class of students
 - c) Sex of students (male/female)
 - d) Place of bullying

Assumptions of the Study

1. Bullying Experience of students can be identifiable and measurable.
2. Bullying Behaviour of students can be identifiable and measurable.

Method of the Study

Descriptive Survey method of research has been used for conducting the present study.

Population of the Study

The elementary school students in 2009-2010 session in the intermediate colleges of Varanasi city had formed the population of the present study.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study consisted of 100 students who were studying in class VII in 2009-10 session in the intermediate colleges of Varanasi city. Students were randomly selected from four schools of Varanasi city. The sample spectrum of students with school wise distribution is given in following table:

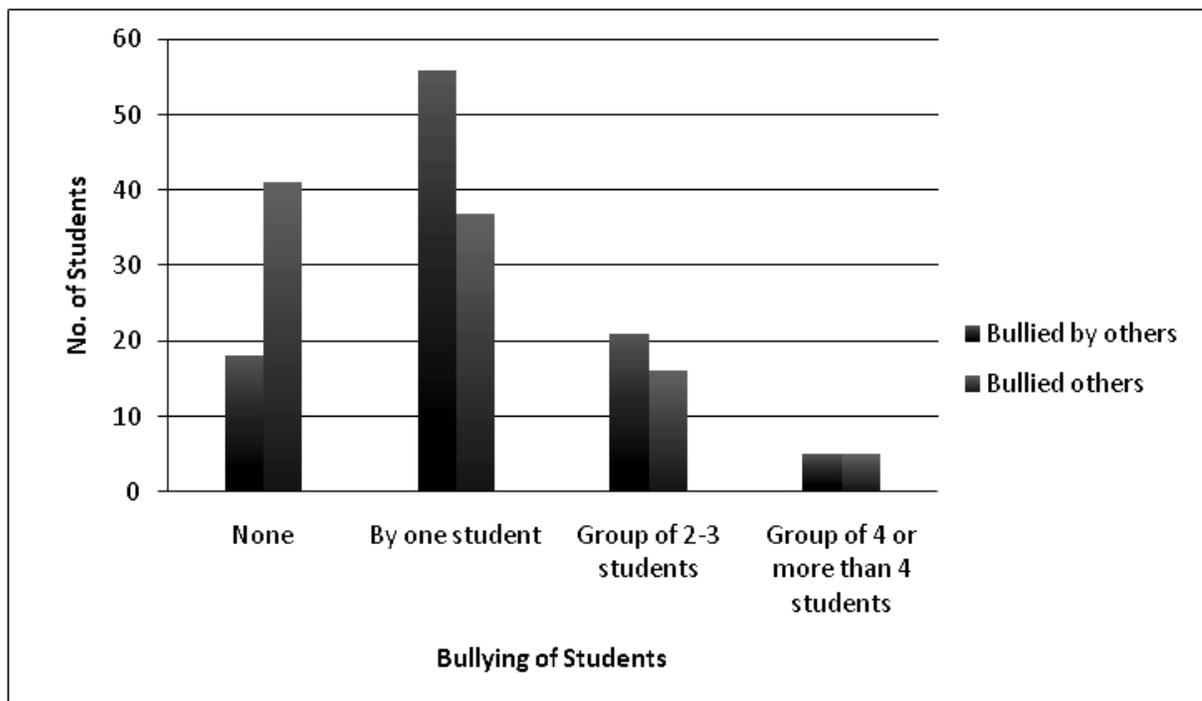
Table1: School wise distribution of the sample

S. No.	Name of the School	No. of Students	Percentage
1	Central Hindu Boys School	22	22
2	Central Hindu Girls School	29	29
3	Mahamana M.M.M. Boys School	24	24
4	Mahamana M.M.M. Girls School	25	25
	Total	100	100

Tool used for the Study

Due to the unavailability of the appropriate tool in Indian context researcher had prepared a tool in the line of Bullying Questionnaire of Dr. Dan Olweus (1978) to collect the data for the purpose of the study. It has two sections- Section A and Section B. Section A is related with bullying experience and Section B is related with Bullying behavior. The reliability of Bullying Questionnaire was calculated by split-half method and it was found to be 0.84. The face and content validity of the questionnaire was established with the help of experts in the field of education and psychology.

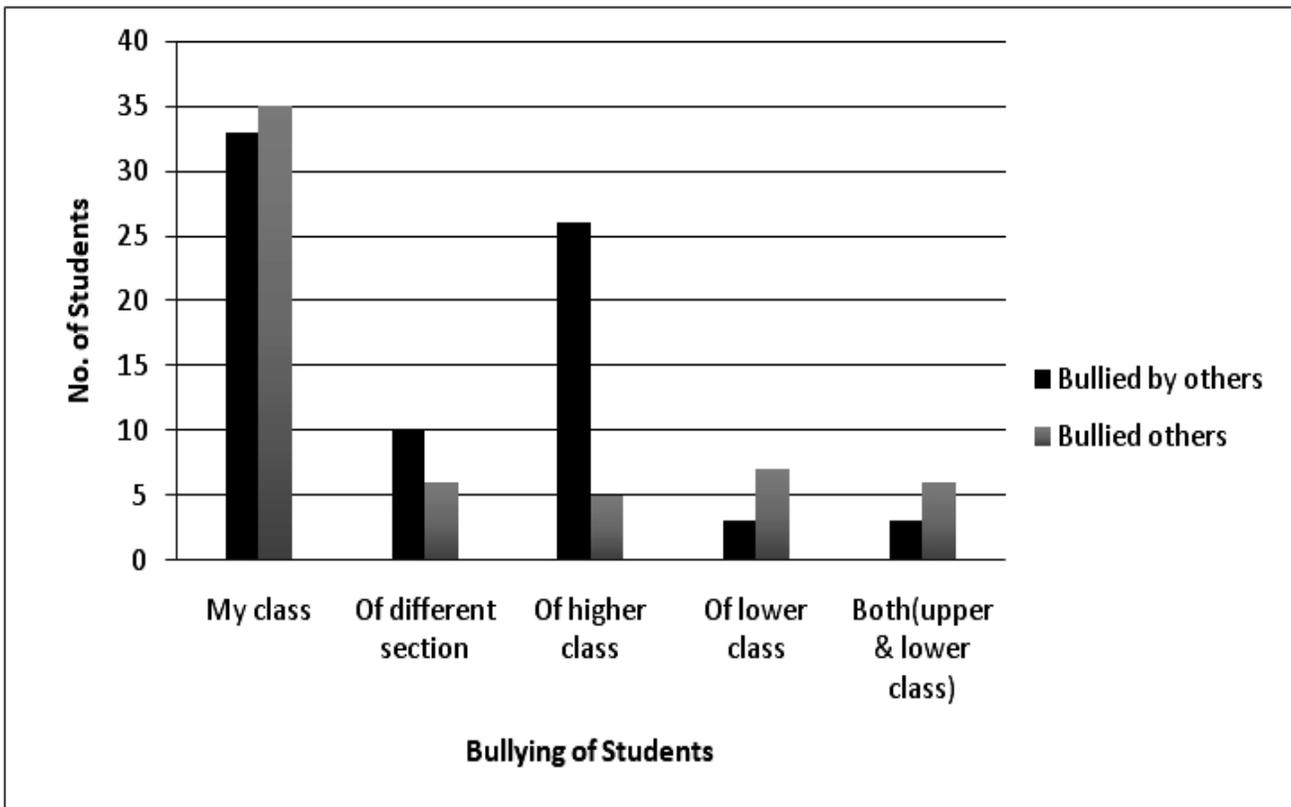
Findings

Figure 1: Bar Diagram for Item One

The question related to this bar diagram was “how many students bullied you (section A) and how many students are bullied by you” (section B). Its result is shown in above bar diagram.

About 18% students said that they are bullied by none while 41% have said that they bullied none. About 56% students said that they have been bullied by mainly one student whereas 37% students said that they bully mainly one student. Further, 21% students have said that they are bullied by a group of 2 to 3 students while 16% have said that they bully a group of 2 to 3 students. About 5% said that they are bullied by 4 or a group of more than 4 students. About 5% have said they have bullied 4 and more than 4 students.

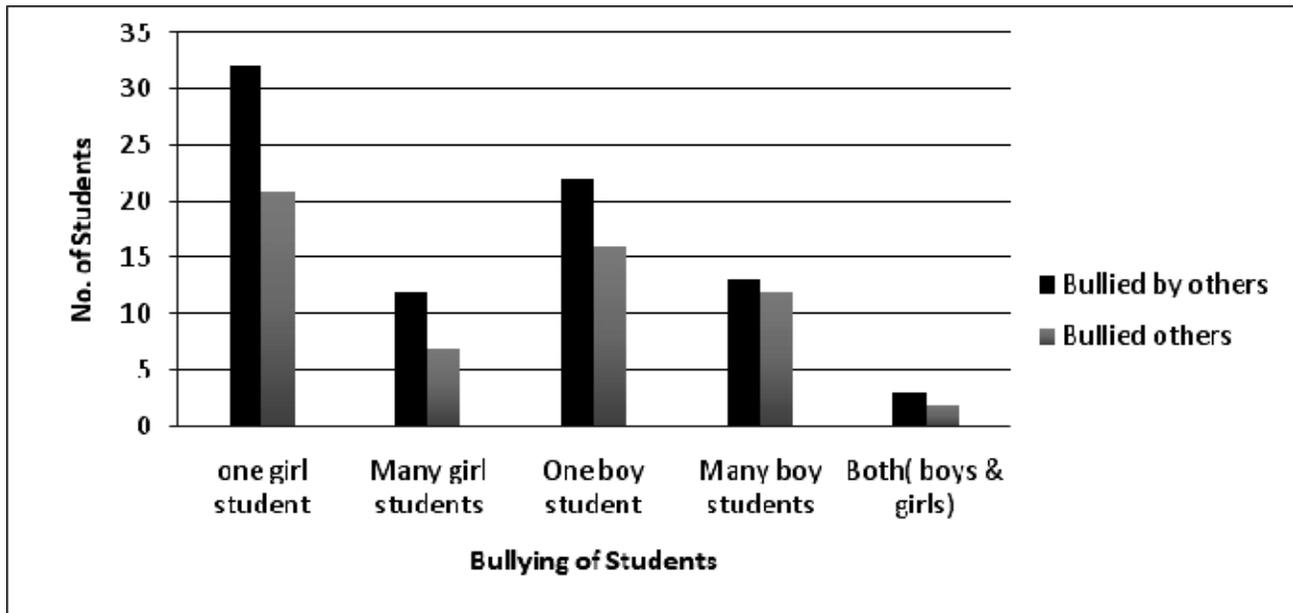
Figure 2: Bar Diagram for Item Two



The item related to this bar diagram was “the students who bully you belong to which class (section A) and the students whom you bully, belong to which class” (section B).

The result by the diagram is that about 33% students have said that the students who bullied them belong to their own class; about 10% students have said that they are being bullied by the students of their standard but of different section. Nearly 26% students have said that they are being bullied their seniors while 3% students have said that they have been bullied by their juniors. About 3% accepted that they have been bullied by both (juniors and seniors). 6% have said that they bullied the students of different section. 5% have said that they bully their seniors and 7% have bullied their juniors while 6% have bullied both (junior and senior) students.

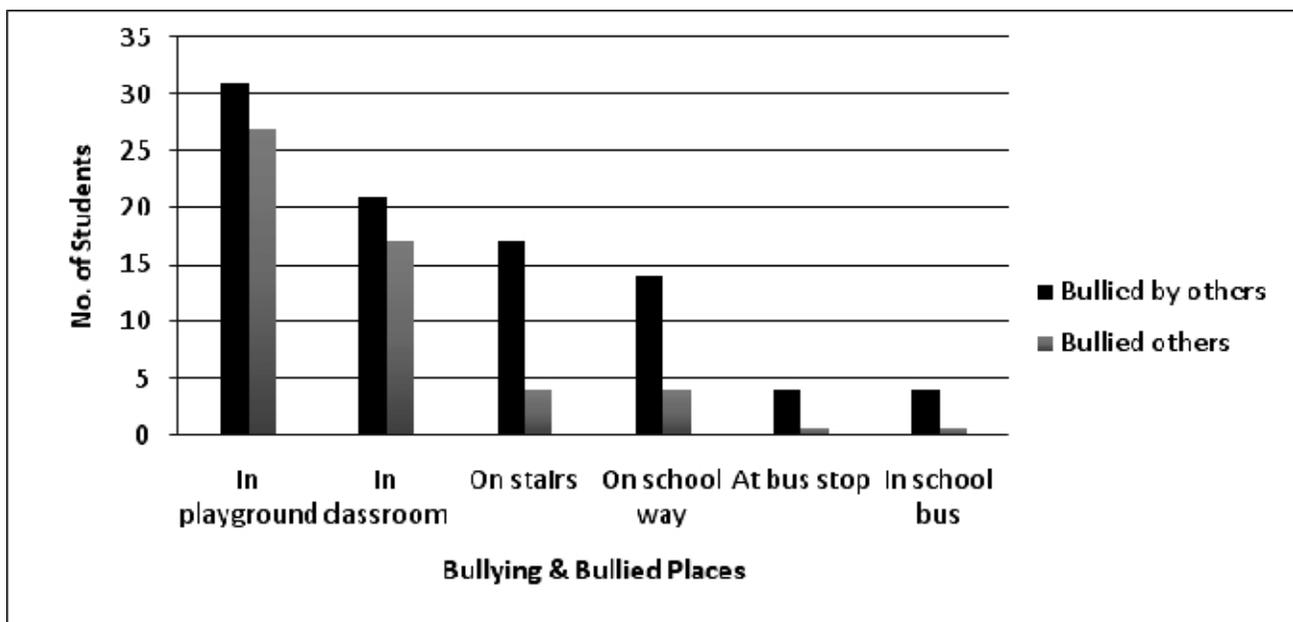
Figure 3: Bar Diagram for Item Three



The item related to this bar diagram was “the students who bully you are girls or boys (section A) and the students whom you bully are girls or boys” (section B).

From the graph, it is clear that 32% students have said that the students who bully them is mainly one girl student and 21% have said that they have bullied mainly one girl student. 12% have said that they are bullied by many girl students while 7% have said that they bullied many girl students. About 22% students have been bullied by mainly one boy while 16% have bullied mainly one boy student. About 13% have been bullied by many boys while 12% have bullied many boy students. The students being bullied by both (boys and girls) are 3% and that bullied both are 2%.

Figure 4: Bar Diagram for Item Four



The item related to this bar diagram was “*at which of the places, mentioned in the questionnaire you have got bullied or have bullied the others.*”

By observing the bar diagram we can conclude that more students (about 31%) have been bullied in playground while 27% have bullied the students in playground. About 21% have got bullied in the classroom while 17% have bullied the students in the classroom. The students get bullied on stairs is 17% and that of bullied the other students is 4%. The percentage of students bullied on school way is 14 and that of the students bullying others is 4%. The students bullied at bus stop are 4% and none of the students have bullied the others at bus stop. About 4% have been bullied by the students in school bus whereas negligible percentage of the students has bullied the others in school bus.

Conclusion

Bullying and victimization are often persistent and associated with severe emotional and behavior problems. Preventive efforts should be focused, and targeted at those children who are characterized by both psychological disturbance and bullying. Present findings highlight the need to increase parental awareness about bullying and to include parents in school-based bullying prevention programs because School bullying can have a major impact on the physical and mental health of victims, and of the bullies themselves.

Many psychosomatic and psychosocial health problems follow an episode of bullying victimization. Because victimization could have an adverse effect on children's attempts to cope with depression or anxiety, it is important to consider teaching these children skills that could make them less vulnerable to bullying behavior.

On the basis of above findings, some suggestions can be made so that our school can make programmes and manage them for proper control of bullying problem. These are- In schools, arrangement should be made for positive disciplinary actions, strong parental involvement and high academic standards to reduce the bullying. Teachers should develop qualities to intervene in bullying behaviors and to promote respectful interactions between students as a part of their curriculum. In schools, such type of programmes and activities should be organized so that children learn social skills successfully to interact with people and hence the bullying can be prevented. Teacher-parent meeting should be organized monthly so that teachers and parents can get aware of bullying behavior of children and if they found any problem in children then they should work together to solve it. Awareness programmes in schools should be organized for community members so that parents will get knowledge about bullying and victimization problems, signs or behavioral characteristics of bullying, problem of victimization and suggestions to reduce or prevent it for students' complete growth and development.

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