

THE UNHEALTHY EFFECTS OF BULLYING AMONGST SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract- *Bullying is the most common type of violence among children and adolescents in school. Sometimes bullying can also come from the side of teachers in the school environment. There are some misconceptions about bullying, which should be cleared. Various researches have shown a good number of prevalence of school bullying worldwide. There are various causes of bullying, including psychological factors, family factors, school factors, socio- economic factors, and media. It affects both who are bullied, and who bully others, adversely. Along with them who witness this bullying also faces the impact. To address these problems some preventive measures can be followed properly.*

Key Words- *School bullying, misconception, prevalence, preventive measure.*

I INTRODUCTION

Bullying is an wide spread problem among school age children that interferes with the teaching learning environment, and increases mental health and behavioural problems. It is the use of force or threat intended to abuse, or aggressively dominate others, to hurt another individual physically, or emotionally. It is a kind of aggressive behavior characterized by the three minimum criteria i.e., hostile intent, imbalance of power, and repetition over a period of time. School bullying is a form of youth violence, particularly in an educational setting. According to The Centre for Disease Control (CDC) bullying in school is “any unwanted aggressive behaviors by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly liked to be repeated”.

There are certain misconceptions regarding bullying, which researchers have identified, i.e.

- Bullying is a consequence of large class or school size.
- It is a result of poor self esteem and insecurity.
- It is the consequence of competition for grades and failure in school.
- It is just teasing.
- Bullying is a normal part of growing up.
- It will go away if ignored.
- The best way to deal with a bully is by fighting or trying to get even.
- People who are bullied will only hurt for a while before recovering.

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Eradication of such misconceptions is necessary to understand and address this problem properly.

II A LITERATURE REVIEW ON PREVALENCE OF SCHOOL BULLYING

WORLD WIDE

Various researches have been done on school bullying. By analyzing various findings of these researches, it can be said that school bullying is a global phenomenon. Some study findings on this phenomenon are as follows:

- In reports from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) [2019], and the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) [2017], it is shown that,
 - ◇ 1 in 5 high school students reported being bullied on school property in previous years.
 - ◇ Nearly 14% of public school report that bullying happens at least once a week.
 - ◇ Reports of bullying are highest for middle schools (28%), followed by high schools (16%), combined schools (12%) and primary schools (9%).
- In a 2013 nationwide survey, it has been found that,
 - ◇ 20% of high school students reported being bullied on school property in the 12 months preceding the survey.
 - ◇ Approximately 15% of high school students reported that they were bullied electronically in the 12 months before the survey.
 - ◇ During 2012-2013 school year, 8% of public school students ages between 12-18 years reported being bullied on a weekly basis.
- In an Indian study, data was collected from 500 children aged 8 to 12 years. From this study it has been found that 31.4% children enrolled in the study reported that they are bullied. Moreover, it has also been found that the prevalence of bullying varied from 18.5% in girls' school to 38.2% in co-ed schools.
- A Korean study showed that as many as 40% students surveyed contributed some role in bullying with 14% of victims, 17% of perpetrators, and 9% victim- perpetrators.
- A Nigerian study on 1160 students from 6 secondary schools reported that about 82.2% students have been the victims of bullying, whereas, 64.9% reported to be bullies.
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- A survey among the school children in 66 countries showed that approximately 32.1% of the children were bullied at least once in a day.

III CAUSES OF BULLYING

There are various reasons for bullying in school.

- An Iranian study, conducted on 72 Iranian students, 12 teachers and 9 parents reported 5 probable factors of school bullying. They are,

- ◇ Psychological factors, including psychiatric disorders, pride and arrogance, jealousy, and imposing will and opinions on others.
- ◇ Family factors, including family violence, wrong parenting, siblings' bullying behavior, and parental employment.
- ◇ School factors, including not paying attention to the students inappropriate behavior, discriminating behaviours against the students, teachers' behaviours, and peer influence.
- ◇ Socio economic factors including the lack of patience, neighbour's influence on behaviours, and poverty.
- ◇ Influence of the media, including effects of social media and internet, and violent video games.
- According to a study on Brazilian students, causes of bullying has been reported as
 - ◇ Low levels of education of mothers.
 - ◇ Body appearance.
 - ◇ Facial appearance.
 - ◇ Race.
 - ◇ Sexual orientation
 - ◇ Religion
 - ◇ Region of origin.

IV EFFECTS OF SCHOOL BULLYING

Various studies have been done on identifying the impact of school bullying. From these studies, it has been found that, bullying can have impacts on everyone, who are bullied, who bullies, and who witnesses bullying. The extreme impact of bullying can be committing suicide. Other impacts than this can be stated as follows:

- ***Impacts on children who are bullied:***
 - ◇ Loneliness, extreme sadness, feelings of dejection, lower self- esteem, depression, and anxiety and other various mental health problems.
 - ◇ Frequent health complaints.
 - ◇ Decrease in academic achievements, school dropouts.
- ***Impacts on children who bullies :***
 - ◇ May develop criminal conviction.
 - ◇ Getting into fights, destruction of properties, and school dropouts.
 - ◇ Lack of sense of responsibility
 - ◇ May engage in early sexual activities
 - ◇ May get addicted to various substances like alcohol or other drugs.
 - ◇ Poor adjustment level
 - ◇ May develop exaggerated high self esteem
 - ◇ Lack of attention in studies

- **Impact on those who witnesses bullying:**

- ◇ Intense feeling of anxiety, depression and other various mental health problems.
- ◇ Increased use of tobacco, alcohol or other substances
- ◇ Skipping school

Preventive measures:

Bullying prevention is necessary to achieve a healthy teaching- learning environment and healthy mental health of the individuals. Various studies have been done on identifying preventive measures, including one of a very recent studies (Diana Divecha, 2019), which has explored several measures. Some ways to prevent bullying can be stated as follows:

- Positive school climate building is a very important factor in preventing school bullying, as it fosters healthy development, while negative climate leads to school bullying. To achieve this educators and teachers should be prepared in such a manner so that they behave empathically with the students. Beside the teachers and educators, active participation of students, parents, administrators is necessary to address the school's specific issues.
- Advancing social and emotional learning (SEL) can help prevent bullying. It is the process through which individuals acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning [CASEL]). This SEL approach is found to reduce emotional distress, various disruptive behaviours like conflicts, aggression, bullying, hostile attribution bias and fosters academic achievement, creativity, and leadership. For its effectiveness this approach should be designed wisely.
- It should be remembered that, as bullying in school arises sometimes from harsh parenting or sibling bullying at home, so school cannot alone do anything. Family factors should also be addressed properly.

V CONCLUSION

Bullying is an unhealthy practice. Much awareness is needed to eradicate this malpractice. Students, teachers, parents, and administrators should work hand in hand to make a healthy world.

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