

Original Research Article

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Bullying, Victimization and Fighting: Extent in Secondary Children

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ABSTRACT

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The study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana state. The objective of the study was to identify the extent of bullying; victimization and fighting behaviour among rural and urban children. Three secondary and senior secondary schools from Hisar city and three secondary and senior secondary schools from village Ladwa (Hisar district) were selected at random. The study was conducted with all children enrolled in classes 6th to 10th from six selected schools. Total sample constituted of 1070 students, 570 from rural area and 500 from Hisar city. Illinois Bully Scale developed by Espelage and Holt (2001) was used to assess the bullying, victimization and fighting behaviour among school children. Children were personally interviewed about their bullying, victimization and fighting behaviour. Chi-square test was used to determine if there were statistically significant association between rural and urban children. The results revealed that there was no association between bullying, victimization, fighting, bullying-victimization, bullying-victimization-fighting behaviour and rural urban setting. Majority of the children from both the areas i.e. rural and urban were engaged in mild level of bullying, victimization, fighting, bullying-victimization, and bullying-victimization-fighting behaviour.

Introduction

Bullying and victimization has become a matter of great concern in Schools in present scenario. The phenomenon of bullying behaviour has increasingly become a global problem. This is a kind of violence which threatens the well-being of teenagers and youths at schools and district. Bullying affects families, schools and people in the society. It may cause lake of self-confidence, fear and humiliation among youths via aggressive

actions of others. Bullying accrue in a lot of environment such as schools, after-school programs, or among the youths' districts. The phenomenon of bullying behaviour has increasingly become a global problem (Gladden *et al.*, 2014). Any behaviour exhibits by a person, with the intention to hurt another person physically or psychologically, without any cause, is considered an act of bullying (Nwokolo *et al.*, 2011). In general there is a consideration that verbal bullying is a common aspect of childhood. The

researchers found that the problem of bullying can affect a student's future life (DeVoe *et al.*, 2005). Victims have been characterized as shy, depressed, and anxious, whereas bullies are aggressive, dominant, and antisocial in their behaviour (Olweus, 2001). Cook *et al.*, (2010) found bullies have elevated externalizing behaviours (e.g., defiant, disruptive behaviors), social competence and academic challenges, and negative attitudes and self-cognitions. Victims have elevated internalizing behaviours (e.g., depression, anxiety, withdrawal, and avoidance), negative self-related cognitions, and lower social skills.

Materials and Methods

Locale of the study and sample selection

The study was conducted in rural and urban area of Hisar district of Haryana state. Three secondary and senior secondary schools were selected randomly from Hisar city and similarly three secondary and senior secondary schools from rural area (village Ladwa) were selected at random. From selected six schools all the children enrolled in 6th to 10th classes were selected from both areas. Hence, five hundred children were selected from three schools of Hisar city for urban sample. For rural sample, 570 children from all the three schools of Ladwa village were selected.

Measures and Method

Data collection

All the children from rural and urban area were personally interviewed about their bullying, victimization and fighting behaviour with the help of Illinois Bully Scale by Espelage and Holt (2001). This scale had 18 items divided in 3 subscales- bully subscale, victim subscale and fight subscale. The students were asked to respond on five-point

Likert-type scale with the assigned values for never (0), 1 or 2 times (1), 3 or 4 times (2), 5 or 6 times (3) and 7 or more times (4). Bully subscale had 9 items, victim subscale had 4 items and fight subscale had 5 items. So, the range for the bully subscale could be 0 to 36, with higher scores indicating severe status of bully in school children.

The range for the victim subscale could be 0 to 16, with higher scores indicating severe status of victimization in school children. The range for the fight subscale could be 0 to 20, with higher scores indicating severe status of fighting in school children. Status in different subscales of bullying was categorized in four categories- not involved, mild, moderate and severe. Total scores were also calculated for bullying and victimization; and for bullying, victimization and fighting.

Results and Discussion

Frequency and percentages were computed to assess the bullying, victimization and fighting behaviour of children on the bases of area. Chi-square test was also used to examine the association between rural and urban children for their bullying, victimization and fighting behaviour

Extent of bullying behaviour among rural and urban children

As shown in Table 1 more than sixty per cent of the children from both the areas i.e. rural (62.81%) and urban (60.20%) were engaged mild level of bullying behaviour.

Further table represents that in total sample 19.44 percent of the children were not involved in bully perpetration (rural=18.95%; urban=20.00%). But 11.40 percent rural children and 13.40 percent urban children were involved in moderate bullying and 6.64 percent of the children from total sample were

involved in severe bullying (rural=6.84%; urban=6.40%). Chi square was computed to examine association between bullying behaviour and rural-urban setting. There was no association between bullying behaviour and rural urban setting.

It can be interpreted from these findings that majority of children were involved in mild bullying and only 6.64 percent children were involved in severe bullying.

These findings get support from previous research studies. Dake *et al.*, (2003) reviewed research on nature and extent of bullying at elementary schools. These authors reported the prevalence of bullying ranged from 11.3 per cent in Finland to 49.8 per cent in Ireland. In the United States 19 per cent elementary students were found to be bullied.

Beaty and Alexeyev (2008) reviewed the history of bullying in schools, its nature and prevalence. The authors reported that bullying is present in majority of schools and has impact on as many as 70 percent of children. Joffre-Velazquez *et al.*, (2011) conducted a study on an average age group of 13.6 years. Results revealed that out of total sample 13.1 per cent children were bullies.

Khezri *et al.*, (2013) conducted a study to explore the prevalence of bullying in a sample of middle school students and found that 79.6 percent of students were involved in mild to severe form of bullying. In another study on a sample of 581 students in the age range of 12 to 17 years, Seixas *et al.*, (2013) found that almost half of the sample was involved in bullying behaviors. Out of total sample, 57.8 per cent students were not involved in bullying, 17.9 per cent of the students were classified as bullies.

In a recent study Rigby and Johnson (2016) reported that approximately one in five

students (20.0%) reported being bullied every few weeks or more often during the previous 12 months period. Shin *et al.*, (2016) conducted a study on 3956 children aged 12-13 years who completed the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children reported about their experiences of traditional face-to-face bullying and cyber bullying in the last month. In terms of prevalence, 60 percent of the sample had been involved in traditional bullying.

Extent of victimization among rural and urban children

As shown in to Table 2 that 18.69 per cent of children participated in the study reported that they had not been victimized at all. But more than half of the children (55.89%), 58.60 per cent rural and 52.80 per cent urban children were mildly victimized. This was followed by moderate (18.13 %) and severe victimization (7.29).

Chi square was computed to examine association between victimization and rural-urban setting. There was no association between victimization behaviour and rural urban setting.

It can be concluded from these results that in total sample about 56 per cent children were mildly victimized, 18 per cent children were not at all victimized or moderately victimized. Only about 7 per cent children were severely victimized. These finding are in line with previous literature. In a Canadian study Totten *et al.*, (2004) found that seven per cent of students mentioned that they were victims of social bullying on a weekly basis. In another study conducted by Fekkes *et al.*, (2005), results revealed that 16 per cent of children were bullied on a regular basis. Seixas *et al.*, (2013) conducted research study on bullies, victims and bully-victims and impact on health. Results revealed that 17.2

per cent students were identified as victims. Joffre-Velazquez *et al.*, (2011) reported that out of total sample 20.5 per cent were victims.

Extent of fighting behaviour among children

Children's scores on fight subscale were computed and extent of fight was categorized in four levels- not involved, mild, moderate, and severe. Higher score indicates higher involvement in fighting.

Table 3 shows that 17.94 per cent children were not involved in fighting. From rural area 60.53 per cent and from urban area 59.80 per cent children were involved in mild fighting. Result revealed that 16.32 per cent of rural children and 16.00 per cent urban children were involved in moderate fighting. In total sample, only 5.70 per cent of the children were involved in severe fighting.

Chi square was computed to examine association between fighting behaviour and rural-urban setting. There was no association between fighting among rural and urban children.

From these findings it seems that majority of children are mildly involved in fighting. About 18 per cent children are never involved and 16 per cent children are moderately involved. About six per cent children are severely involved in fighting, this included 5.6 per cent rural and 5.8 per cent urban children.

Extent of bullying-victimization among rural and urban children

Frequencies and percentages of rural and urban children in different categories of bullying-victimization are presented in Table 4. To investigate the extent of bullying-victimization among rural and urban children χ^2 was computed and was found to be non-

significant. As shown in Table 4 that 17.60 per cent of the children participated in the study did not involve in bullying-victimization at all. More than fifty per cent children, 53.00 per cent rural and 53.60 per cent urban children belonged to mild category of bullying-victimization. This was followed by moderate (22.70 %) and severe (6.40%) bullying-victimization. Table 4 depicted no association between bullying-victimization and rural-urban setting. These results also get support from literature reviewed. Totten *et al.*, (2004) found that 41 per cent of all students in grades 4 to 7 reported that they were involved in bullying either as victims or bullies. Glew *et al.*, (2005) examined the prevalence of bullying during elementary school and the participants were 3530 students. The results revealed that 22 per cent children of sample studied, had shown bullying behaviour either as sufferer, culprit or both. Joffre-Velazquez *et al.*, (2011) conducted a study on an average age group of 13.6 years and reported that out of total sample 13.1 per cent children were bullies, 20.5 per cent were victims and 27.4 per cent were observed as both bully and victims.

Chen and Cheng (2013) conducted a study in Taiwan to explore prevalence of school bullying. Results revealed that 10.9 per cent were involved in bullying at least two or three times a month. Self-reports by 5.5 per cent students also revealed that they themselves were bully/victims.

Results further revealed that, one out of ten Taiwanese secondary school students was involved in bullying or victimization. Khezri *et al.*, (2013) in a study on prevalence of bullying reported that 88 per cent of the students were categorized as bully/victims. Although percentage was low, similar result were obtained by Seixas *et al.*, (2013), in their study, 7.1 per cent children were categorized as bully-victims.

It can be interpreted from these findings that there was no difference in bullying-victimization of urban and rural children.

Extent of bullying-victimization-fighting among children

To explore the occurrence of bullying-victimization-fighting among children, scores of bullying, victimization and fighting sub

scales were computed to get bullying-victimization-fighting score. Score of bullying-victimization-fighting could range from 0 to 72. A score of zero means that these children were not involved in any kind of bullying-victimization-fighting. Four levels of extent- not-involved, mild, moderate and severe bullying-victimization-fighting were computed.

Table.1 Extent of bullying among rural and urban children (n=1070)

Extent of bullying	Rural (n=570)	Urban (n=500)	Total (n=1070)	χ^2 -value
Not involved (0)	108 (18.95)	100 (20.00)	208 (19.44)	1.39
Mild (1-9)	358 (62.81)	301 (60.20)	659 (61.59)	
Moderate(10-18)	65 (11.40)	67 (13.40)	132 (12.34)	
Severe(19-36)	39 (6.84)	32 (6.40)	71 (6.64)	
Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages				

Table.2 Extent of victimization among rural and urban children (n=1070)

Extent of victimization	Rural (n=570)	Urban (n=500)	Total (n=1070)	χ^2 -value
Not at all victimized (0)	105 (18.42)	95 (19.00)	200 (18.69)	5.35
Mild (1-4)	334 (58.60)	264 (52.80)	598 (55.89)	
Moderate(5-8)	90 (15.79)	104 (20.80)	194 (18.13)	
Severe(9-16)	41 (7.19)	37 (7.40)	78 (7.29)	
Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages				

Table.3 Extent of fighting among rural and urban children (n=1070)

Extent of fighting	Rural (n=570)	Urban (n=500)	Total (n=1070)	χ^2 -value
Not involved (0)	100 (17.59)	92 (18.40)	192 (17.94)	0.17
Mild (1-5)	345 (60.53)	299 (59.80)	644 (60.19)	
Moderate (6-11)	93 (16.32)	80 (16.00)	173 (16.17)	
Severe (12-20)	32 (5.61)	29 (5.80)	61 (5.70)	
Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages				

Table.4 Extent of bullying-victimization among rural and urban children (n=1070)

Extent	Rural (n=570)	Urban (n=500)	Total (n=1070)	χ^2 -value
Not at all (0)	99 (17.40)	89 (17.80)	188 (17.60)	0.18
Mild (2-15)	302 (53.00)	268 (53.60)	570 (53.30)	
Moderate (16-29)	132 (23.20)	111 (22.20)	243 (22.70)	
Severe (30-43)	37 (6.50)	32 (6.40)	69 (6.40)	
Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages				

Table.5 Extent of bullying-victimization-fighting among rural and urban children (n=1070)

Extent of bullying-victimization-fighting	Rural (n=570)	Urban (n=500)	Total (n=1070)	χ^2 -value
Not involved (0)	95 (16.67)	83 (16.60)	178 (16.64)	0.26
Mild (1-18)	387 (67.89)	335 (67.00)	722 (67.48)	
Moderate (19-36)	66 (11.58)	60 (12.00)	126 (11.78)	
Severe (37-72)	22 (3.86)	22 (4.40)	44 (4.11)	
Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages				

As presented in table 5 that 16.64 per cent children, (16.67% rural and 16.60% urban) were not involved in bullying-victimization-fighting. Majority of children (67.48%) belonged to mild category of bullying-victimization-fighting, 11.78 per cent belonged to moderate category of bullying-victimization-fighting and only 4.11 per cent belonged to severe category of bullying-victimization-fighting.

Chi square was computed to examine association between bullying-victimization-fighting and rural-urban setting. There was no association between bullying-victimization-fighting and rural urban setting.

In conclusion the results indicate that majority of the children belonged to mild category of bullying-victimization-fighting. More than 16 per cent children were not involved and only four per cent children belonged to severe category. The findings clearly indicate that majority of rural and urban children belonged to mild category of bullying-victimization-

fighting. Only four per cent children were identified in severe category.

Conclusion and Suggestion are as follows

On the basis of findings of the present study it can be concluded that there was no association between bullying, victimization, fighting, bullying-victimization, bullying-victimization-fighting behaviour and rural urban setting. Majority of the children from both the areas i.e. rural and urban were engaged mild level of bullying, victimization, fighting, bullying-victimization, bullying-victimization-fighting behaviour. Hence, Preventive measures should be adopted in schools and homes to reduce the incidences of bullying. Intervention programmes should be planned for bullies and victims to develop social skills.

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