

Bullying, Depression and Anxiety among Secondary School Students of Illam, Nepal

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ABSTRACT

Background: Bullying is an intentional act of hurt and frighten others, it is common in schools. Different kind of bullying student may include physical, verbal, emotional and cyber bullying in the school.



Objectives: To assess bullying, depression and anxiety among students and to find out association between bullying, depression and anxiety.

Materials and method: A descriptive cross-sectional study design was adopted with sample size of 306. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample. Bullying (physical, verbal, emotional, sexual and cyber bullying) questionnaire was developed on the basis of Olweus Bullying Profile, Depression and anxiety was assessed using Beck Depression Inventory (BDI II) and Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI). Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with SPSS version 16.

Results: Present study found that 112 (37%) of respondents had experienced bullying among them physical bullying 41(36.6%), verbal bullying 40 (35.7%), emotional bullying 10 (8.92%), sexual bullying 11(9.82%), and cyber bullying 10 (8.92%). More than half (52.6%) of the respondents had minimal depression followed by mild depression 35.6%. More than two-third (69.9%) of the respondents had low anxiety.

Conclusion: Bullying is common in schools. Minimal Depression and low anxiety were common in students which ultimately leads to suicidal ideation. There was significant association between physical, verbal, and sexual bullying with gender and obtained percentage in last year summative annual exam. Awareness program should be initiated to identify bullying and proper reporting which will ultimately improve the mental health of school students.

Keywords: Anxiety, bullying, depression

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INTRODUCTION

Bullying constitutes a complex problem in school children's lives. Bullying may involve different forms like verbal, physical assaults, threats, jokes or language, and criticizing. Bullying at school affects academic performance since bullied children feel fear and weak. Therefore, such a situation makes bullied students unable to follow or to pay attention to their study well and even they might do not like to go to school. Many researchers that there is a strong relationship between bullying academic achievement. Students lose concentration when they are attending their classes.¹

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 63,997 children, with an objective to assess association between mental health disorder and school bullying. It was reported that 15.2% of the school children experienced bullying. The diagnosis of a mental health disorder was strongly associated with being identified as a bullied. In particular, depression, anxiety, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) were strongly associated with being identified as a bullied.² So, the aim of this study is to assess bullying, depression, and anxiety among students of selected secondary schools of Suryodaya municipality, Illam District.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

A descriptive cross-sectional study design was adopted. The population of the study was the students of secondary level schools of Suryodaya Municipality, Illam District. Sample size was 306, it was calculated by using prevalence formula.

$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{l^2}$, where p= prevalence of bullying, taken as 40%, l = permissible error of 6%

q= 1-p =60

$$= \frac{1.96 \times 1.96 \times 40 \times 60}{6 \times 6} = \frac{9219.84}{36} = 256$$

For possible non response we take 20% of 256.

Hence total sample size would be 306.

Suryodaya municipality has 9 secondary schools, through simple random sampling technique two schools were selected. A lottery method was used to select the respondents from class 8, 9, and 10 of selected schools. Data was collected by using self-administered questionnaire related to bullying (physical, verbal, emotional, sexual and cyber bullying). This questionnaire was developed on the basis of Olweus bullying Profile questionnaire and other literature. Depression and anxiety were assessed using Beck Depression Inventory (BDI II) and Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI)⁶. Written permission was obtained from principal of school to conduct study. Permission letter along with informed consent was sent to parents prior to data collection. Informed written consent was obtained from each respondent. Data was analyzed by using SPSS version 16.

RESULT

More than half 159 (52%) of respondents were female followed by 147 (48%) were male. Among 306, only 112 (37%) respondents had experienced school bullying at secondary level of education whereas 194 (63%) does not have experience of bullying (figure 1).

Maximum of 62 (55%) female respondents experienced bullying followed by male 50(45%). In present study physical bullying was common among male respondents (29%) and verbal bullying was common among female respondents (35%). Whereas, least reported for sexual bullying among male (0.9%) and cyber bullying among female (5%) (Figure 2).

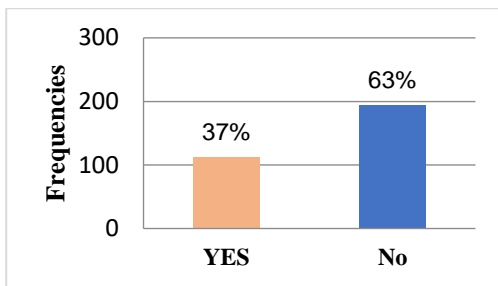


Figure 1: Bullying experience among the respondents.

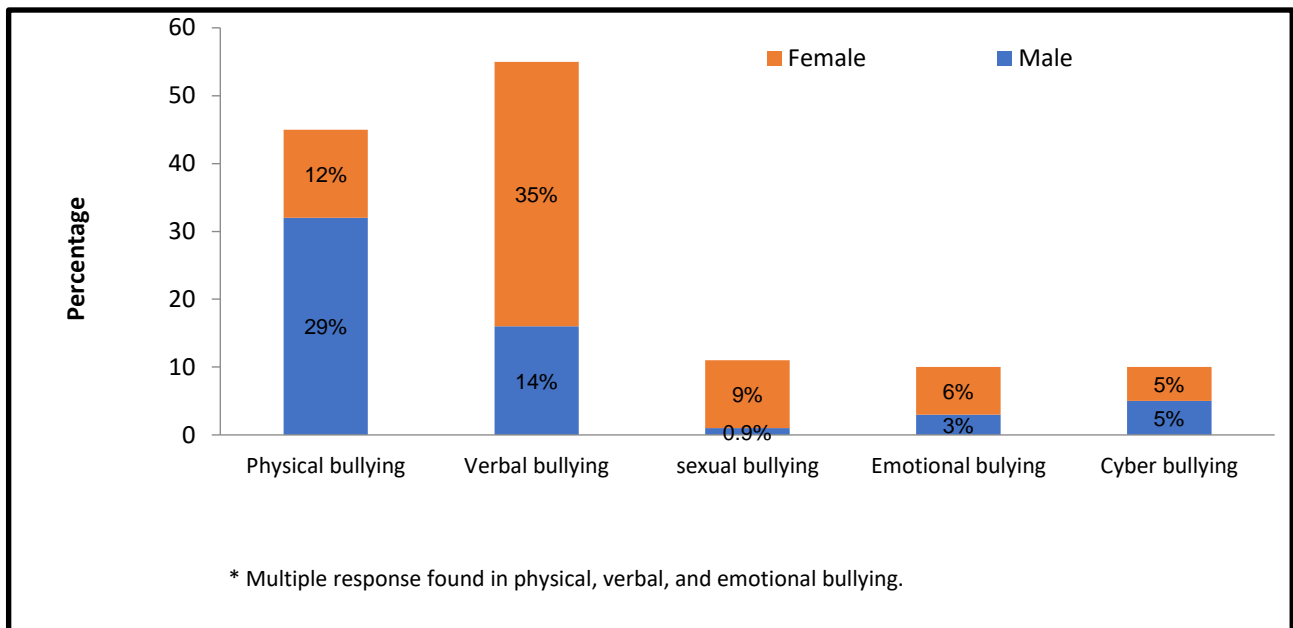


Figure 2: Types of bullying experienced by the respondents

Table 1: Association Between Socio-Demographic Variables and Different Types of Bullying

Characteristics	Types of Bullying				
	Physical Bullying (%)	Verbal Bullying (%)	Emotional Bullying (%)	Sexual Bullying (%)	Cyber Bullying (%)
Sex					
Male	32 (21.8)	16 (10.9)	3 (2.0)	1 (0.7)	5 (3.4)
Female	13 (8.2)	39 (24.5)	7 (2.0)	10 (6.3)	5 (3.1)
P- Value	0.001	0.002	0.401	0.008	1.000 *
Obtained Percentage					
<50%	25 (25.8)	27 (27.8)	6 (6.2)	3 (3.1)	6 (6.2)
50-75%	15 (8.7)	20 (11.6)	2 (1.2)	5 (2.9)	3 (1.7)
>75%	5 (8.7)	8 (22.2)	2 (5.6)	2 (8.3)	3 (2.8)
P-Value	0.001	0.003	NA	NA	NA

Note: types of bullying are multiple responses. Pearson Chi-Square Test *= Continuity correction. NA= Chi-Square Test not applicable

Table 1 showed that there is significant association between sex and physical bullying ($P= 0.001$), verbal bullying ($P=0.002$), and sexual bullying ($P=0.008$). There is significant association between obtained percentage and physical bullying ($P=0.001$), and verbal bullying ($P= 0.003$).

Table 2: Association between Level of Depression and Different Types of Bullying

Types of Bullying	Total	Level of Depression		P-Value
		Minimal / Mild Depression (%)	Moderate/ Severe Depression (%)	
Physical Bullying *	45	33 (73.3)	12 (26.7)	0.001
Verbal Bullying *	55	43 (78.2)	12 (21.8)	0.015
Emotional Bullying *	10	8 (80.0)	2 (20.0)	0.774
Sexual Bullying	11	7 (63.6)	4 (36.4)	0.012
Cyber Bullying	10	8 (80.0)	2 (20.0)	0.776

*Multiple Response

Table 2 depicts that there is significant association between level of depression and physical bullying (P=0.001), verbal bullying (P=0.015), and sexual bullying (p=0.012).

Table 3: Association between level of Anxiety and Different Types of Bullying

Types of Bullying	Level of Anxiety		Total	P-Value
	Low Anxiety (%)	Moderate / Severe Anxiety (%)		
Physical Bullying *	21 (46.7)	24 (53.3)	45	<0.001
Verbal Bullying *	30 (54.5)	25 (45.5)	55	0.006
Emotional Bullying *	5 (50.0)	5 (50.0)	10	0.162
Sexual Bullying	5 (45.5)	6 (54.5)	11	0.013
Cyber Bullying	8 (80.0)	2 (20.0)	10	0.722

*Multiple Response

Table 3 illustrates that significant association found between level of anxiety and physical bullying (P=<0.001), verbal bullying (P=0.006), and sexual bullying (P=0.013).

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with the aim to assess bullying, depression, and anxiety among students of selected secondary schools of Suryodaya municipality, Illam District. A total of 306 respondents were enrolled in the study, with 52.0% female and 48.0% male respondents. This finding is similar to a descriptive study conducted in Pyuthan, western Nepal, where majority of respondents (51.60%) were female and rest of respondents 48.40.0%) were male.¹⁰

In the present study, physical bullying (28.0%) and verbal bullying (14.0%) were commonly reported by male respondents. Whereas, verbal bullying (35.0%) was common among female

respondents and physical bullying was reported by 12.0% of them. This finding is similar to a study conducted by Shemesh et al. that reported 38.6% male respondents experienced physical bullying and 29.3% experienced verbal bullying. Similarly, 29.4% female respondents had reported verbal bullying and 14.0% had experienced physical bullying.¹⁰

The reason for physical bullying is common in boys might be the tendency of physical aggressiveness among the boys and usually enjoy the fight. It is also contributed by a great deal of male bullying is influenced by the "boy code". Among the girls it tends to experience more verbal bullying than physical because of girls tend

to bully other girls indirectly or by using relational aggression.

Around 18.0% of respondents missed the classes due to school bullying experience in school. This might be because 48.2% of them had fear of recurrence of bullying event and skip school attendance. Similar finding was reported on study conducted by Saadoon et al. that reported 48.4 % of students missed school 2-3 days who were bullied.¹¹

In regards to depression and physical bullying, 75.6% of respondents who had experienced physical bullying had minimal and mild depression. This finding is similar to study conducted by Richard et al. which reported that 79.4% of physically bullied respondents had mild depression and 20.6% had moderate depression.¹² Similarly, 80.0% of the respondents who had experienced verbal bullying had minimal and mild depression. This finding is supported by Arhin et al., study where 75.2% of verbally bullied respondents had mild depression.¹³ Anxiety and depression found to be common among bullied victim might be attributed by bullying. It could be a traumatic experience which leads to pain and distress among victims. Ultimately, impact every aspect of their lives resulting in feeling lonely, isolated, vulnerable, and anxious. Bullying is a major risk factor as well as major complication for anxiety and depression among victims. Many studies also have demonstrated a concurrent association between bullying and depression in adolescent.

Present study illustrated a significant association between sex and different types school bullying (physical, verbal, sexual bullying). This finding is similar to the study conducted by Schneider et al. that reported a significant association between sex and physical bullying ($P=0.031$), verbal bullying ($P=0.002$), emotional bullying ($P<0.001$).¹⁴ Association was found with obtained percentage might be because of respondents who were male had chances of physical bullying and verbal bullying among the girls. The strength part of this study, it provides the insight into the bullying behavior among the school students of eastern Nepal. Furthermore, samples for this study were randomly selected and sample size is large. Limitations in this study, self-administered questionnaire was used however it would be better if triangulation method to be used in future studies. Being sensitive issue, the information provided by respondents may be underreported so the findings might not be generalized.

CONCLUSION

Verbal and sexual bullying was common in female respondents, whereas male respondents had experienced physical bullying. There was significant association seen between physical, verbal and sexual bullying with gender. Mild level of Depression and low anxiety were common in students which ultimately leads to suicidal ideation. Awareness program should be initiated to the bullying behaviors and motivate them to report such events that will ultimately improve the mental health of school students.

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