



ISSN : 2961-1636 (Print)

ISSN : 2961-1644 (Online)

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Nursing, Purbanchal University School of Health Sciences

²Assistant Professor, Medical Surgical Nursing, Hamro School of Nursing

³Assistant Professor, Public Health, Koshi Health and Science Campus

***Corresponding Author:**

Ashmita Shrestha,

Email ID:

ashmita.shrestha70@gmail.com

ORCID iD:

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6163-0944>

Submitted:31st Oct, 2023**Accepted:**1st August, 2024**Published:**31st December 2024**OA 2****Citation:**

Ashmita Shrestha, Uma Pradhan, Sapana Kumari Maharjhan, Raksha Dahal, Pramila Sinha, Rita Pradhan. Bullying among secondary level school students in metropolitan city of Koshi province, Nepal. Purbanchal University Health Journal. 2024 December; 2(2)3: 7-12

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.3126/puhj.v2i2.81722>

Bullying among Secondary Level School Students in Metropolitan City of Koshi Province, Nepal.

Ashmita Shrestha^{1*}, Uma Pradhan¹, Sapana Kumari Maharjhan², Raksha Dahal³, Pramila Sinha¹, Rita Pradhan¹

Abstract

Introduction: Adolescents is a critical phase in a person's life as various problems and risk factors may arise in this stage. Bullying refers to actions with aggression that are repeated with an intention to hurt others and create unequal situations.

Objective: The objective of the study is to assess the prevalence of bullying among secondary level school students in metropolitan city in Koshi province.

Method: A descriptive cross-sectional design was conducted among the secondary level students in 3 school operating in Biratnagar metropolitan city of Koshi Province, Nepal. Multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample of the study. Data was collected through self-administered method using Adolescent Peer Relation Instrument (APRI-B/T) standard tool. Descriptive statistics followed by chi-square test was utilized to explore the relationship between participant's sociodemographic characteristics and bullying practice.

Result: A total number of 345 adolescent students participated in this study, of which majority (87%) had done bullying while 13% were not been involved in bullying behavior. More than two third (72.2%) were engaged in mild bullying while minority (2.6%) were engaged in severe form of bullying. Majority (83.8%) of the students were involved in verbal bullying, (67%) social bullying and (64.6%) physical bullying. There was a significant association between prevalence of bullying with demographic variables like gender ($p = 0.04$), ethnicity ($p = 0.0002$), residence ($p = 0.003$), mother's education ($p = 0.003$), school type ($p = 0.000$), father's education ($p = 0.000$) and grade in previous year ($p = 0.000$).

Conclusion: Trends of bullying practice among the secondary level school students in this area were high in domain specifically in verbal bullying. Prevalence of this practice was significantly associated among gender, ethnicity, residence, school factors and parental educations. The study recommends educational awareness and appropriate vigilance programs in schools of these areas to curb bullying practice among teenagers.

Key words: Adolescents; Bullying; Prevalence; School students; Secondary schools.

Introduction

World Health Organization defines adolescent as the phase of life between childhood and adulthood, from ages 10 to 19.¹ Adolescents is age of transformation as various changes in terms of social behavior, emotional and relationship changes occurs in this stage.² Bullying refers to actions with aggression that are repeated with an intention to hurt others and create unequal situation.³ Bullying can be in direct forms such as physical attacks, verbal harassments or in indirect forms such as being socially boycotted, spreading fake rumor, gossiping.⁴ Adolescents and youths are among vulnerable groups to bullying because of physical and emotional changes, peer pressure, social media influence and lack of awareness regarding repercussion of their action.⁵ Moreover, bullying makes students frustrated leading to change in their academic performance and creativity.⁶ It was shown to decrease self-confidence, work productivity and self-assurance.⁷ Bullying in educational institutions like schools is one of the serious issues faced by adolescents and it can lead victims to self-harm thoughts and suicidal behavior. Research has described adolescents who are victims of bullying are at risk of poor physical and mental health problems (such as anxiety, depression, psychiatric disorder) with immediate and long-term health impacts.⁸

According to Centers for Disease Control, 1 out of every 5 (20.2%) students report being bullied. In gender wise bullying case, a higher percentage of male (6%) than female students (4%) were found being physically bullied.⁹ According to UNICEF, 8 in 10 Nepalese children suffer from violent discipline, including psychological and physical punishment.¹⁰ In 2017, 17,324 Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) were attributable to childhood bullying in Nepal. Almost 32.69 DALYs per 100,000 from anxiety disorder and 25.27 DALYs per 100,000 from depressive disorder are attributable to bullying in Nepal.⁸ The objective of this study was to assess the prevalence of bullying among adolescents at selected secondary schools of Biratnagar.

Method

A descriptive cross-sectional design was used in order to study the prevalence of bullying among adolescents. The sample size was 345 which was calculated by using Cochran formula. The study

was conducted among 345 school students of 3 secondary Schools (1 community school and 2 private schools) of Biratnagar. Three schools were selected randomly by lottery method. Multistage sampling technique such as stratified sampling based on probability proportion to size followed by random sampling was used to collect the samples. Students who were able to read and write in English or Nepali were included in the study. Students who were absent during the time of data collection and those above 19 years were excluded from the study. Ethical approval with reference number 016-079/80 was taken from Institutional Review Committee of PUSHS.

The tools used in this study consists of socio demographic profile, Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (APRI) which consists of 36 questions divided into two parts (18 for bullies and 18 for bully victim) in a 6 point likert and 6 subscales to assess the physical, verbal and social bullying as both perpetrator and victim. The score was interpreted for bullying/victimization as 1-18 no bullying/victimization, 19-40 mild bullying/victimization, 41-60 moderate bullying/victimization and ≥ 61 severe bullying. APRI is a standard tool and the reliability ranges within 0.83 to 0.92.²

Formal permission was acquired from the school administration. Investigator took the informed verbal and written consent from both parents and respondents with proper clarity about the objective of the study. Data was collected from April 2023 – June 2023. Self-administered standard questionnaire was used to collect the data from 345 school students. The research work was completed with total confidentiality and anonymity of the information. All the acquired data were checked, reviewed and verified for accurateness and completeness. Data were coded and entered into SPSS version 16. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (chi square test at 0.05% significant level) was used to explore relationship between socio demographic characteristics and bullying practice for statistical analysis.

Result

Table 1: Socio-demographic information of the respondents

n = 345

Variables	Categories	n (%)
Age	13-16 years	293 (84.9%)
	17-19 years	52 (15.1%)
Mean±SD = 16.19±1.33		
Gender	Male	171 (49.6%)
	Female	174 (50.4%)
Religion	Hindu	310 (89.9%)
	Muslim	10 (2.9%)
	Christian	5 (1.4%)
	Buddhist	13 (3.8%)
	Others	7 (2.0%)
Ethnicity	Brahmin/Chhetri	88 (25.5%)
	Janajati	101 (29.3%)
	Dalit	21 (6.1%)
	Terai/ madhesi	135 (39.1%)
Residence	Urban	235 (68.1%)
	Rural	110 (31.9%)
School type	Government	175 (50.7%)
	Private	170 (49.3%)
School grade	Class 9	63 (18.3%)
	Class 10	89 (25.8%)
	Class 11	122 (35.4%)
	Class 12	71 (20.6%)
Fathers' education	Illiterate	57 (16.5%)
	Primary	87 (25.2%)
	Secondary	157 (45.5%)
	Bachelor and above	44 (12.8%)
Mothers' education	Illiterate	66 (19.1%)
	Primary	121 (35.1%)
	Secondary	127 (36.8%)
	Bachelor and above	31 (9%)
GPA obtained in previous year	A	52 (15.1%)
	B	183 (53%)
	C	103 (29.9%)
	D	7 (2%)

Table 1 shows that majority (84.9%) of the respondents belong to 13-16 years of age group with the mean age 16.19±1.332. Over half (50.4%) of the respondents were female. Majority 89.9% of the respondents belong to Hinduism. Majority (39.1%) were from Terai/ Madhesi. More than half (68.1%) were from urban area. Half (50.7%) of the respondents were from government school while (49.3%) were from private school. Majority (45.5%) and (36.8%) of the respondent's father's education and mother's education were of secondary level. More than half (53%) of the respondents had obtained B grade in the previous year.

Table 2: Respondent's Prevalence, Level of Bullying Behavior and Victimization

n = 345

Variables	Category	n(%)
Prevalence of bullying	No bullying (18)	45 (13%)
	Bullying (≥ 19)	300 (87%)
Level of bullying	Mild (19-40)	249 (72.2%)
	Moderate (41-60)	42 (12.2%)
	Severe (>61)	9 (2.6%)
Level of Victimization	No victimization (18)	31 (9%)
	Mild (19-40)	231 (67%)
	Moderate (41-60)	71 (20.5%)
	Severe (>61)	12 (3.5%)

Table 2 depicts that most (87%) of the respondents were involved in bullying behavior while only (13%) of them were not involved in bullying behavior. The overall mean score and SD for 345 students is 29.01±11.864. More than two third (72.2%) of the respondents were engaged in mild form of bullying while minority (2.6%) of them were engaged in severe form of bullying. More than half (67%) of the respondents were mildly victimized while minority (3.5%) were found victim of severe order.

Table 3: Domain Wise Classification of Bullying and Victimization among Respondents

n = 345

Group	Have Not experienced n(%)	Have Experienced n(%)
Verbal bullying	56 (16.2%)	289 (83.8%)
Social bullying	114 (33%)	231 (67%)
Physical bullying	122 (35.4%)	223 (64.6%)
Verbal victimization	43 (12.5%)	302 (87.5%)
Social victimization	69 (20%)	276 (80%)
Physical victimization	94 (27.2%)	251 (72.8%)

Table 3 represents that majority (83.8%) of the participants had committed verbal bullying. More than half (67%) of the participants had committed social bullying. More than half (64.6%) of the participants were involved physical bullying. Most (87.5%) of the participants were victim of verbal bullying, majority (80%) of the participants were victims of social bullying and 72.8% of the participants were the victims of physical bullying.

Table 4: Association Between Selected Demographic Variables and Prevalence of Bullying

n = 345

Demographic variables	Category	Sample	Prevalence of bullying No bullying n(%)	Bullying n(%)	χ^2 value	p value	Fisher's Exact test
Age	13-16 years	293	41(14%)	252(86%)	1.54	0.214	0.268
	17-19 years	52	4(7.7%)	48(92.3%)			
Gender	Male	171	16(9.4%)	155(90.6%)	4.063	0.044*	
	Female	174	29(16.7%)	145(83.3%)			
Religion	Hindu	310	43(13.9%)	267(86.1%)	1.845	0.174	0.286
	Others	35	2(5.7%)	33(94.3%)			
Ethnicity	Terai/ Madhesi	135	27(20%)	108(80%)	9.463	0.002*	
	Others	210	18(8.6%)	192(91.4%)			
Residence	Urban	235	22(9.4%)	213(90.6%)	8.809	0.003*	
	Rural	110	23(20.9%)	87(79.1%)			
School type	Government	175	39(22.3%)	136(77.7%)	26.74	0.000*	
	Private	170	6(3.5%)	164(96.5%)			
School grade	9-10	152	19(12.5%)	133(87.5%)	0.071	0.790	
	11-12	193	26(13.5%)	167(86.5%)			
Fathers' education	Illiterate	57	16(28.1%)	41(71.9%)	13.59	0.000*	
	Literate	288	29(10.1%)	259(89.9%)			
Mothers' education	Illiterate	66	16(24.2%)	50(75.8%)	9.024	0.003*	
	Literate	279	29(10.4%)	250(89.6%)			
Grade in previous year	A, B	235	20(8.5%)	215(91.5%)	13.35	0.000*	
	C, D	110	25(22.7%)	85(77.3%)			

*significance at 5% level

Table 5 illustrates that out of all the socio demographic variables, gender, ethnicity, residence, school type, father's education, mother's education, grade in previous year were found to be greatly associated with prevalence of bullying at 5% level.

Discussion

In the present study, the overall mean for APRI score was found to be 29.01 ± 11.864 . Most of the respondents (87%) were engaged in bullying while only (13%) of them were not engaged in bullying behavior. A study conducted on bullying behavior in Dhulikhel, Kathmandu which revealed the prevalence of bullying was (78%).¹¹ A study done among adolescent students in Dharan supported the current study which identified the prevalence of bullying was (98.2%).¹ This might be due to the influence of urban area in the adolescents. However, the prevalence of bullying was also found to vary across the globe. Similarly, the study done in Pyuthan District revealed the prevalence of bullying was found to be (55.8%).¹² The finding of the study varies which might be due to cultural differences as people from various ethnic group reside in Biratnagar. The result of the current study also varies with the study done in Africa where the findings showed bullying behavior among the respondents was (38.8%) and (48.5%) respectively.^(13,14) The finding of the study varies

as Africa have strict disciplinary measures in place to address bullying.

The present study shows majority (72.2%) of the students had done mild form of bullying, (12.2%) of them had done moderate form of bullying and (2.6%) of them had done severe form of bullying. More than half (67%) of the students were mild victims, (20.6%) of them were moderate victims and (3.5%) of them were severe victims. A study done among adolescent students in Dharan is similar to the current study where (84.8%) of the respondents were committing mild form of bullying, (11.6%) were committing moderated form of bullying, (1.3%) were involved in severe form of bullying while majority (82.3%) were mild victims, (15.2%) were moderate victims and (2.4%) were severe victims.² A study done among 100 students in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh varies with the current study where the findings of the study revealed that (28%) had committed mild bullying, (46%) had committed moderate bullying and (26%) were involved in severe bullying. While (29%) were mild victims, (47%) were moderate victims and (24%) were severe victims of bullying.¹⁵ This might be due to casteism, social and economic class difference.

The result of the present study discovered that majority (93.8%) of the students had committed verbal bullying, (67%) had committed social bullying and (64.6%) had committed physical bullying whereas majority (87.5%) of the students were victims of verbal bullying, (80%) were the victims of social bullying and (72.8%) were the victims of physical bullying which is well supported by a study conducted in Dharan where the findings found that most of the (97%) students had committed verbal bullying, (61%) had committed social bullying and (84.8%) had committed physical bullying whereas (97%) were verbally victimized, (65.2%) were socially victimized and (86.6%) were physically victimized.¹

The findings of the current study showed that there was a statistically significant relationship of bullying with gender ($p = 0.04$), ethnicity ($p = 0.002$), residence ($p = 0.003$), school type ($p = 0.000$), father's education ($p = 0.000$), mother's education ($p = 0.003$), grade obtained in previous year ($p = 0.000$). A study done in Pyuthan district among school students showed that bullying was significantly associated with gender ($p = 0.0001$) and school type ($P = 0.039$).¹²

The result of the current study varies with the study done on adolescent students in Dharan where the finding revealed that demographic variables such as age ($p=0.033$), school grade ($p=0.038$), family income ($p=0.011$) were significantly associated with bullying.¹ This might be due to diversity in child's upbringing, schooling environment and cultural influence. Limitations of the study are only secondary level school students of Koshi Province were included in the study and the sample of the study might not be generalized to the whole population.

Conclusion

Majority of the students experienced bullying in their school while very few students did not experience bullying behavior. The result of the study revealed the alarming high percentage of students were involved in mild form of bullying, followed by moderate and severe form of bullying. It was also found that over half of the students were victims of mild bullying. Most of the respondents were involved verbal bullying followed by social and physical bullying. Similarly, most of the respondents were found to be the victims of verbal bullying. The result showed that gender, ethnicity, residence, schools they study, parent's education and grade obtained in previous year were found to be significantly associated with prevalence of bullying.

Recommendation

- Students should be regularly assessed and observed for bullying activities. They must be provided with proper understanding about bullying and encouraged to report bullying incidents.
- Different campaigns regarding bullying prevention and awareness in the schools and communities must be facilitated.

Conflict of interest

None

Financial Disclosure

This study was funded by Dean office, Faculty of Medical and Allied Sciences, Purbanchal University, Gothgaun, Province 1.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere regards to PUSHS for providing opportunity to carry out this study. I genuinely thank Institutional Review committee for providing ethical clearance to conduct the study. I am truly obliged towards my study participants for their participation and patience who made this study a reality. I sincerely appreciate all the help and encouragement from all my co- authors for the completion of this study

References

1. World Health Organization. Adolescent Health. Online available from: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/adolescent-health>
2. Kafle G, Dhakal N, Kumara P. Prevalence of bullying among adolescent students at selected schools of Dharan Sub- Metropolitan City, Nepal. *International Journal of sciences: Basic and Applied Research (IJSBAR)*. Oct 2020; 54(2): 263-289. Available from: <https://gssrr.org/index.php/JournalOfBasicAndApplied/article/view/11818>
3. Juvonen J, Graham S. Bullying in schools: the power of bullies and the plight of victims. *Annu Rev Psychol*. 2014; 65:159-85. DOI: 10.1146/annurev-psych-010213-115030.
4. Smith PK, Mahdavi J, Carvalho M, Fisher S, Russell S, Tippett N. Cyberbullying: its nature and impact in secondary school pupils. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry, and allied disciplines*. 2008; 49(4): 376–85. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01846.x>.
5. Ngo AT, Nguyen LH, Dang AK, Hoang MT, Nguyen THT, Vu GT et al. Bullying experience in urban adolescents: Prevalence and correlations with health-related quality of life and psychological issues. *PLOS One*. June 8 2021; 16(6): e0252459. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0252459>
6. Putter S, Bussey K, Singh P. Peer Victimization: The Role of self-efficacy in children's coping strategies. *Spring*. 2007 Jun; 5 (1,2): 82-86. Corpus ID: 8156091
7. Kassem AH, Elsayed RS, Elsayed WA. Bullying Behaviors and Self Efficacy among Nursing Students at Clinical Settings: Comparative Study. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 2015; 6 (35): 25-36. Available from: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1086369>
8. Neupane T, Pandey AR, Bista B, Chalise B. Correlates of bullying victimization among school adolescents in Nepal: Findings from 2015 Global School-Based Student Health Survey Nepal. *PLOS ONE*. Aug 19, 2020; 15(8): e0237406. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0237406>
9. Centers for Disease Control. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2019). Preventing bullying. Available from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/yv/bullying-factsheet508.pdf>.
10. Dhakhwa T. Eight out of 10 children in Nepal experience violent discipline- UNICEF. UNICEF Nepal for every child. 6 Sep 2018. Available from: <https://www.unicef.org/nepal/press-releases/eight-out-10-children-nepal-experience-violent-discipline-unicef>

11. Bhandari MS, Chataut J. Prevalence of bullying in undergraduate students at medical college of Nepal. *Journal of college of Medical Sciences-Nepal*. Jan-Mar 2023; 19(1): 9-14. DOI:10.3126/jcmsnv19i1.47943
12. Mishra DK, Thapa TR, Marahatta SB, Mahotra A. Bullying Behavior and Psychological Health- A cross-sectional study among school students of Pyuthan Municipality. *Journal of Nepal Health Research Council*. Mar 2018; 16(1): 73-8. Online available from: <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/JNHRC/article/view/19370>
13. Aboagye RG, Seidu AA, Hagan, JE *et al*. A multi-country analysis of the prevalence and factors associated with bullying victimization among in-school adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa: evidence from the global school-based health survey. *BMC Psychiatry*. July 2021; 325 (2021). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-021-03337-5>
14. Alavi N, Roberts N, Sutton C, Axas N, Repetti L. Bullying Victimization (Being Bullied) Among Adolescents Referred for Urgent Psychiatric Consultation: Prevalence and Association with Suicidality. *Can J Psychiatry*. 2015; 60(10): 427-431. DOI:10.1177/070674371506001003
15. S Supriya, S Hemlata, M. Bhagya Lakshmi. Assess the bullying and victimization among high school children in selected schools, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh. *Journal of Nursing and Health Science*. 2016; 5(1): 45-53. Available online on: www.iosrjournals.org