

"UNVEILING THE SHADOWS: AN IN-DEPTH EXPLORATION OF BULLYING AMONG TEENAGERS IN THE AGE GROUP OF 16 TO 19 YEARS"

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Abstract:

The prevalence of bullying among teenagers poses a significant issue, disrupting the overall well-being of students and adversely impacting their educational and future prospects. Bullying, whether manifesting as physical or mental aggression, is a cause for concern. This research delves into the matter, conducting a study with 50 respondents aged 16 to 19 from the Chennai district. Primary data was gathered through questionnaires, and this paper comprehensively presents the findings and statistical analysis through T-Test and frequency distribution. The results are subjected to critical evaluation, and the research concludes with a set of recommendations aimed at addressing the identified issues.

Keywords:

Bullying, Teenagers, Mental Health, Health.

Introduction:

Bullying is characterized by the mistreatment, domination, or intimidation of an individual through the use of force, compulsion, harsh teasing, or threats. This behavior is typically repetitive and deeply ingrained, with a crucial element being the existence of an imbalance of physical or social power, whether held by the bully or others. Distinguished by hostile intent, a power imbalance, and recurrent occurrences over time, bullying manifests as a pattern of aggressive behavior aimed at causing physical, psychological, or emotional harm to another person.

Mobbing represents a form of group bullying, where the primary bully may enlist one or more "lieutenants" to assist in the victimization. Bullying can manifest either individually or within a group, earning it the label of "peer abuse" in both workplace and school settings. Examined within the context of rankism by Robert W. Fuller, bullying, according to Dan Olweus, occurs when an individual intentionally inflicts harm or discomfort upon another person through physical contact, verbal means, or other methods, and it is characterized by repeated negative actions over time.

Individual bullying often involves one person exerting control over another through specific actions. The interpretation of bullying varies, with some U.S. states having legal measures against it, while the term is not legally defined in the United Kingdom. Bullying is categorized into four forms of abuse: verbal, physical, cyber, and psychological (also known as emotional or relational). The establishment of dominance may involve verbal harassment, physical violence, or threats, often directed at specific targets. Factors such as socioeconomic class, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, conduct, body language, personality, reputation, genealogy, strength, size, or skill have been cited as justifications for such behavior. In group settings, bullying takes on the term "mobbing."

Types

The body of literature has categorized bullying into various forms, encompassing verbal, nonverbal, and physical actions. Additionally, classifications distinguish between individual and group bullying based on the perpetrators or participants. Further interpretations introduce relational and emotional abuse as bullying forms, extending beyond physical harm to individuals or property. A contemporary issue, cyberbullying, involves the use of technology for targeting, harassing, threatening, or humiliating others, with potential legal consequences such as cyber-harassment or cyberstalking when adults are involved. Cyberbullying commonly occurs through email, instant messaging, social media

platforms, texts, and mobile devices, with higher prevalence reported in secondary schools. Individual bullying involves a single person employing specific techniques against one or more victims, categorized into four primary forms:

- A) Physical
- B) Verbal
- C) Relational
- D) Cyber

Collective bullying entails multiple individuals using bullying techniques against one or more victims simultaneously. Mobbing, a form of collective bullying, can manifest in various ways, challenging the assumption that trolling behavior on social media is solely personal.

Mobbing, specifically, refers to a group of people engaging in bullying behavior in any setting, including family, peer groups, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, communities, or online platforms. Described as malicious, nonsexual, nonracial/racial, and general harassment, mobbing may take the form of emotional abuse at work, involving tactics like rumors, innuendo, intimidation, humiliation, discrediting, and isolation.

Review of Literature:

Aakriti Malik and Meenakshi Metha (2016). This study addresses the limited research on school bullying in India by focusing on a sample of 137 students (aged 12–14) from a coed school. Out of the sample, 45 students (25 boys, 20 girls) were identified as "highly inclined to be bullies" using the Peer Relations Questionnaire. The study examined their anger levels and self-esteem through the Adolescent Anger Rating Scale and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Gender differences in bullying behavior were observed, with boys displaying more explicit anger. Interestingly, self-esteem of bullies did not vary by gender. Qualitative insights from structured interviews with teachers and semi-structured interviews with six students revealed a perception among teachers that only boys engaged in bullying behavior. These findings carry implications for school staff, educators, parents, and mental health professionals working with children and adolescents.

Niharika Thakkar et.al. (2021) This study systematically examines studies on traditional bullying and victimization among school-going adolescents in India. Conducted in May 2020, the search covered PsycINFO, Medline, eric, Web of Science, and PubMed, resulting in the inclusion of 37 studies. Each study was scrutinized for methodological characteristics, prevalence estimates, forms of bullying, risk factors, and consequences. The review highlights that bullying is prevalent in India, with some risk factors specific to the Indian context. It emphasizes the adverse consequences for both aggressors and victims. However, caution is advised in interpreting many studies due to issues in data collection processes, instrumentation, and findings presentation. This paper underscores the need for cross-cultural prevalence estimates and longitudinal studies to understand the direction of influence between bullying and its correlates, addressing the significant adolescent population in India.

Lorena Manerio (2023) This review explores the bidirectional associations between bullying victimization and likeability among Indian adolescents, adopting a multi-informant gender-based approach. Drawing on a sample of 1238 students (66.6% males) from nine schools in India, with two follow-ups spaced three months apart, the study analyzes a final sample of 1006 students (72% males) in the third wave. Employing cross-lagged panel models for self- and peer-reported bullying victimization, gender differences are examined through multiple group analyses. Results reveal a nuanced, gender-specific longitudinal interplay between victimization and likeability. In boys, a bidirectional relationship exists over time, with subtle differences between self- and peer-reports. Conversely, among girls, significant relations indicate that peer victimization may lead to rejection, and having more friends could elevate the risk of future victimization. These findings underscore the complexity of bullying victimization, emphasizing distinct roles of peer acceptance and rejection for boys and girls in the Indian context.

Shwetha Singh (2023). This review delves into the phenomenon of bullying, defined as intentional and repeated actions aimed at causing harm or lowering the victim's self-esteem, leaving them unable

to defend themselves. Focused on Indian studies, the researcher explores the prevalence of bullying in India and its impact on the mental and physical health of students. Secondary sources, including studies conducted in India or addressing Indian scenarios, are scrutinized. The synthesis of these studies highlights various aspects of bullying, covering its concept, prevalence, forms, causes, and effects in the Indian context. Findings reveal a concerning high prevalence of bullying, estimated at approximately 50-60% in India. The detrimental impacts on student health are underscored, emphasizing the urgent need for attention and eradication of this pervasive issue. The comprehensive overview provided by these studies emphasizes the urgency of addressing and mitigating the multifaceted challenges posed by bullying in the Indian educational landscape.

Research Gap:

Despite extensive research on bullying, a notable gap exists in understanding the dynamics specific to teenagers aged 16 to 19 years. Limited literature explores the unique challenges and experiences within this crucial developmental stage, warranting an in-depth investigation to address this gap.

Statement of the Problem:

The inadequately studied phenomenon of bullying among teenagers aged 16 to 19 years presents a significant challenge in developing targeted interventions. This study addresses this issue by thoroughly investigating the complexities of bullying experiences within this age group, offering nuanced insights essential for devising effective preventive measures and support systems.

Objectives:

- 1) To investigate the diverse forms of bullying among teenagers aged 16 to 19.
- 2) To identify underlying factors contributing to bullying behaviors within this age group.
- 3) To assess the impact of bullying on the mental and physical well-being of teenagers in the specified age range.
- 4) To provide effective strategies to overcome them.

Research Methodology:

The study integrates both primary and secondary sources to gather comprehensive data. Primary data is predominantly derived from 50 students aged 16 to 19 in the Chennai district, utilizing questionnaires as the primary tool for data collection. To validate the accuracy of the data, statistical methods such as frequency distribution analysis and T-test analysis have been applied. For enhanced precision, secondary data has been acquired from various sources, encompassing articles, newspapers, magazines, and online platforms. This research paper adopts a dual approach, leveraging primary data from the administered questionnaires and supplementing it with secondary data obtained from research papers and magazines. The questionnaire, distributed through a Google Form link, sought preferences from participants, adding depth to the collected data

Analysis and Interpretation:

Table-1 Socio-Economic Variables:

1.1 Gender

GENDER	NO OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Male	12	24
Female	38	76
total	50	100

1.1 Educational Qualifications

SCHOOL/COLLEGE	NO OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
grade 11&12	8	16
ug 1 st and 2 nd	42	84
total	50	100

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation:

The study gathered data from 50 respondents in Chennai, encompassing individuals aged 16 to 19 years. Distribution of the survey was facilitated through a Google Form. Analysis of Table 1.1 reveals a noteworthy gender distribution among the respondents, with a higher proportion of female participants at approximately 76%. Additionally, the data indicates that around 84% of the respondents are enrolled in Undergraduate (UG) courses, shedding light on the educational background of the surveyed individuals.

Table-2 T-Test Analysis:

2.1 Association between Gender and understanding in the context of bullying

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference between Gender and understanding in the context of bullying

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference between Gender and understanding in the context of bullying

Factors	Gender				T value	P value
	Male (12)		Female (38)			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Is bullying a word that should be used to define students hurting each other	2.25	.866	2.11	.981	.488	.034

* Denotes significance at 5%level

Interpretation:

There appears to be a significant difference Gender and understanding in the context of bullying based on the statistical analysis performed. Both groups don't have a similar mean awareness score and comparable standard deviations, as well as standard errors of the mean There is a significant difference between Gender and understanding in the context of bullying, since the P value is lesser than 0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected at a 5% level.

Table-3 Frequency Distribution Analysis:

3.1 Opinion Table

STATEMENT	YES	NO	MAYBE	TOTAL
do you feel safe at school/university?	48(96%)	2(4%)	-	50(100%)
have you ever talked to anyone about being bullied	31(62%)	19(38%)	-	50(100%)
should parents have their mobile phones, social media, and email passwords?	10(20%)	17(34%)	23(46%)	50(100%)

should parents have access to see your mobile phone, social media, and email accounts?	18(36%)	8(16%)	24(48%)	50(100%)
if you had been getting bullied and it was getting better, would you tell your parents?	31(62%)	19(38%)	-	50(100%)
if you saw someone being bullied, and they were getting hurt by it, would you report it to an adult?	40(80%)	10(20%)	-	50(100%)
is bullying the word that should be used to define "students hurting each other"	19(38%)	5(10%)	26(52%)	50(100%)

Table -4 Miscellaneous Opinion Table

4.1 Opinion Table

what can the school do to stop bullying?	make rules against bullying	talk about bullying during class	others	total
	28(56%)	19(38%)	3(6%)	50(100%)

4.2 Opinion table

would you consider the following behavior (when directed by another student) as "bullying"	pushing, shoving, and hitting	destroying someone's belonging	saying things behind someone...	saying mean things about someone's appearances	total
	15(30%)	6(12%)	3(6%)	26(52%)	50(100%)

4.3 Opinion table

what are some of the reasons why you might not report seeing bullying	afraid that you will be called a snitcher	think the you will be the next target	adults will just make the situation worse	think its not your problem	total
	6(12%)	20(40%)	21(42%)	3(6%)	50(100%)

4.4 Opinion table

what are some of the reasons that you might not tell your parents?	parents would say that it is my fault	they would try to fix it	they would tell me to ignore it	it's too personal and it would be too hard to say	total
	7(14%)	8(16%)	10(20%)	25(50%)	50(100%)

4.5 Opinion table

where do you think bullying occurs frequently?	restrooms	classrooms	canteen	social media	total
	4(8%)	17(34%)	11(22%)	18(36%)	50(100%)

4.5 Opinion table

why do you think some kids are bullies?	they think it is fun	they are "show offs"	others	total
	25(50%)	20(40%)	5(10%)	50(100%)

Source: Primary data

Interpretation:

In Table 3.1, the data reveals that a significant portion, approximately 96%, of the surveyed population feels secure in schools and universities. Moreover, around 62% of respondents have engaged in conversations about bullying. Notably, inquiries regarding the accessibility of gadgets and social media account passwords received neutral responses from approximately 50% of the participants. Regarding reporting incidents of bullying to adults, a substantial 80% expressed their willingness to report such incidents.

Moving to Table 4.1, findings show that 56% of respondents propose implementing anti-bullying rules in schools and universities as a strategy for eradicating bullying. In Table 4.2, 52% of respondents identify making derogatory remarks about someone's appearance as a form of bullying.

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 shed light on the reasons why some respondents might not disclose instances of bullying to their parents. A notable 42% express concerns that adults could exacerbate the situation, emphasizing that the matter is too personal and difficult to discuss.

Table 4.5 highlights that 36% and 34% of respondents perceive social media and classrooms, respectively, as the primary locations where bullying is most prevalent. Lastly, Table 4.6 delves into the motivations behind bullying behaviour, with 50% of respondents believing that some kids bully others for the sake of enjoyment, while 40% attribute it to a desire to show off. These insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' perspectives on various aspects related to bullying.

Suggestions:

1. Incorporate Empathy-Based Curriculum: Include elements of empathy-building in the curriculum to encourage tolerance and understanding, creating a welcoming and inclusive learning atmosphere in the classroom.

2. Employing Technology to Report: Provide teens with a safe and private way to report bullying situations without worrying about repercussions by implementing anonymous reporting systems or applications.

3. Parental Involvement and Communication: Encourage open communication between parents, teachers, and teenagers, emphasizing the importance of parental involvement in addressing and preventing bullying situations.

4. Frequent Monitoring and Evaluation: Set up procedures for regular monitoring and assessment of anti-bullying campaigns in order to gauge their success and make the required modifications for ongoing development.

5. Improve Mental Health Support Services: To address the emotional wellbeing of teenagers who are being bullied, schools and colleges should provide more mental health services. This will ensure that counseling and timely intervention are provided.

6. Encourage Peer Support Initiatives: In order to foster a feeling of community and solidarity among youth and to provide a safe space for them to discuss and resolve issues related to bullying, it is recommended that peer support groups be established.

7. Enhancement of Anti-Bullying Programs: Create and include research-based anti-bullying initiatives in schools that cater to the unique requirements of youths between the ages of 16 and 19, raising awareness and encouraging a respectful environment.

Limitations of the Study:

The study has constraints as it exclusively focuses on individuals aged 16 to 19 years, and the geographical scope is confined to the Chennai district. Due to participant confidentiality concerns, details from undisclosed companies were excluded. The study primarily involves school and college students within specified age categories, and the research depth is reliant on participant feedback.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, "Unveiling the Shadows" has provided a profound examination of bullying among teenagers aged 16 to 19. The study illuminated various forms and underlying factors, shedding light on the intricate dynamics within this age group. The prevalence of bullying, particularly in the Chennai district, emphasizes the urgency for targeted interventions. Suggestions for comprehensive anti-bullying programs, mental health support, and peer initiatives underscore the multifaceted approach required. As we unveil the shadows of teenage bullying, it becomes evident that collaborative efforts from educators, parents, and society are imperative for fostering a safe and inclusive environment, ensuring the well-being of our adolescents.

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