

## **A STUDY ON PSYCHOSOCIAL EFFECTS OF BULLYING AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*One of the many interactions that the young adult has with their classmates is bullying. Bullying occurs when someone is abused, obnoxiously dominated, or threatened with unpleasant mocking or threats. Bullying has increased in prevalence among the groups, yet it is still a problem that is not well understood in Indian society. Many studies indicate that people who have experienced bullying frequently have long-term psychological effects that may have an impact on their welfare. There are experts that state that there is a drastic difference in the cases of bullying among gender. In light of this environment, the current study sought to examine bullying experiences among young people in India and assess the psychosocial aspects from a gender perspective.*

**METHODOLOGY:** *The main focus of this study is on the psycho social effects of bullying among college students and also focuses on the gender perspective of bullying. The sample consisted of 70 college students in Chennai, both males and females. They were assessed on a self-prepared questionnaire by using a simple random sampling method.*

**RESULTS:** *Around 70% of the samples have witnessed bullying or were victims of bullying. The study also reveals that how individuals who have experienced bullying have led to long-term consequences for the victims which have affected their current scenario of daily life. The findings of the present study suggest that the male respondents have experienced more bullying than female respondents on the basis of their physical and social factors. The study also suggests that there is a need to identify such instances at school level and plan interventions at various stages.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Bullying experiences, Gender, Indian setting, psychological functioning, social factors, college students.*

## **INTRODUCTION:**

When someone is mistreated, aggressively dominated, or intimidated via the use of force, coercion, cruel teasing, or threats, that behaviour is referred to as bullying. The actions are regularly performed and become second nature. A necessary prerequisite is the perception of an imbalance of physical or social power, whether possessed by the bully or by others. This imbalance is what distinguishes bullying from confrontation. Bullying is a subcategory of aggressive behaviour that is distinguished by hostile intent, an imbalance of power, and persistence over time. Bullying is the persistent use of violent behaviour with the aim of inflicting physical, mental, or emotional harm on another person.

Olweus defined bullying as "a circumstance where a student is subjected frequently and over time to unfavourable action on the part of one or more other pupils", despite the fact that there are alternative definitions for bullying. Such action must be intentional, contain a real or apparent discrepancy in authority, and constitute a long-term pattern of behaviour. Direct bullying may involve overt attacks on the victim, but indirect bullying is characterised by social marginalisation, exclusion from a group, or exclusion from activities.

It is important to assess the bullying phenomenon since peer relationships during adolescence are essential for a young adult's emotional development as well as for the evolution of their self-image and self-concept. Young people today have many socialising options available to them, there is a constant desire for ability and perfection, and there is pressure to establish oneself in the performance-based society. When these pressures are added to bullying experiences, an adult who is still developing may endure long-term repercussions.

Bullying can develop as a result of many problems including the maxim "survival of the fittest," in which other students demonstrate their power by inflicting physical and psychological harm on the victim in an effort to gain their respect. It should also be mentioned that bullies may be people who are dealing with psychological problems like low self-esteem, jealousy, rage, and hatred, as well as other things like fear, worry, and desperation, which need to be addressed.

Being bullied can have a significant role in the etiology of the onset of a number of mental health issues in both adolescence and adulthood. Farrow and Fox found that bullying incidents significantly increased the likelihood of anxiety and dejection, restricted eating, and body dissatisfaction in both male and female young people. An association between bullying and unhealthy eating behaviours, beliefs, and

routines has also been found in earlier research, as well as an association between emotional symptoms and unhealthy eating. Bullying victims frequently have ongoing psychological problems like despondency, loneliness, low self-esteem, and psychosomatic illnesses. The fear of being bullied might lead victims to quit school, which begins a downward spiral of misery. According to Schafer, bullies frequently continue to harass victims long after they graduate from school. At both work and school, Schafer found that bullies usually pick out the same victims.

Bully victims have been proven to be more vulnerable to hardship than bullies or bullies themselves, including having access to weapons, going to jail, and continuing to be hostile and violent towards others. Bullying during the first year of secondary school (at age 13) was found to be associated with reports of anxiety and depressive symptoms the following year in a study including 2680 kids. Hemphill found that kids who had been bullied were more likely to report depressed symptoms a year later. It's significant to note that there is evidence that bullying increases people's risk for depression far into adulthood. Childhood bullying memories have also been connected to adult depression and anxiety problems.

In order to classify how bullying affects the victim and the abuser psychologically and socially, we must first grasp the psycho-social components of bullying. In terms of the psychological effects, it may result in mental health problems, such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anorexia, and at worst, it may even trigger the start of a persistent mental illness like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. In terms of social issues, it may cause social isolation, low self-esteem, and a greater propensity for substance misuse and other types of addictions.

While peer victimisation is an issue that is frequently addressed in the news, there are many young adults in India, but few studies have looked at the long-term effects on young adults, despite the fact that people are becoming more aware of its negative effects. Bullying has become more prevalent in many areas of India, yet school systems and systems do not address it or take it into account, which causes people's general health to decline and increases their risk of suicidal thoughts and the emergence of mental health problems. The current study aims to explore both the relationship between these two variables as well as the experiences of bullying among young people from the perspective of gender and how it acts as an influential part in the factors of bullying.

## METHODOLOGY:

The main focus of this study is on the psycho social effects of bullying among college students and also focuses on the gender perspective of bullying. The sample consisted of 70 college students in Chennai, both males and females. They were assessed on a self-prepared questionnaire by using a simple random sampling method. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Simple percentage and Chi<sup>2</sup> test was used to analyse the data by using SPSS 20.

## Analysis, Findings and suggestions:

**Table: 1**

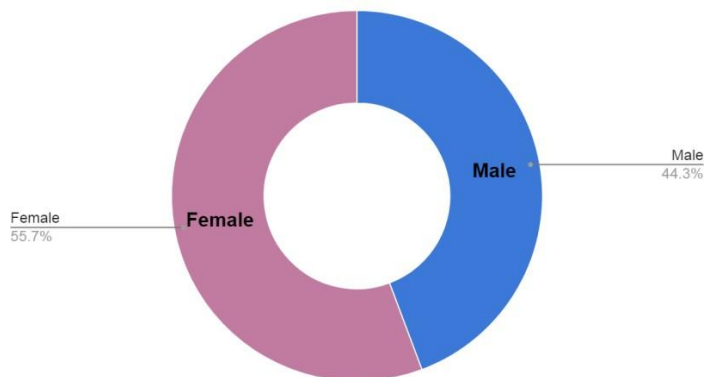
Variable	Factor	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	male	31	44.3
	female	39	55.7
	Total	70	100.0
<b>How would you rate your social skills</b>	Excellent	17	24.3
	Good	32	45.7
	Average	14	20.0
	bad	7	10.0
	Total	70	100.0
<b>Do you think that this bullying episode have caused physical changes in you</b>	yes very often	16	22.9
	maybe , on few incidence	32	45.7
	no never	20	28.6
	not sure	2	2.9
	Total	70	100.0
<b>Do you face low self esteem</b>	yes very often	19	27.1
	maybe , on few incidence	35	50.0
	no never	9	12.9
	not sure	7	10.0
	Total	70	100.0
<b>Do you feel that this bullying episode has been a issue in building</b>	yes very often	18	25.7
	maybe , on few incidence	21	30.0
	no never	24	34.3

<b>and maintaining relationships</b>	not sure	7	10.0
	Total	70	100.0
<b>Do you feel that bullying episodes are affecting your professional life?</b>	yes very often	15	21.4
	maybe , on few incidence	15	21.4
	no never	23	32.9
	not sure	17	24.3
	Total	70	100.0

The above Table (no:1) indicates that distribution of respondents based on the level of bullying which affects the psycho social aspects of the college students. About 56% of the respondents are women, where as 44% of the respondents are men. Among the total respondents 45.7% of them state that they have good social skills. At most 45.7% of the respondents think that the bullying episode has caused physical changes in them. At most 50% of the respondents face low self esteem. 34% among the total respondents feel that this bullying episode has been an issue in building and maintaining relationships. 32% of the respondents feel that these bullying episodes affect their professional life. 38% of the respondents feel that these episodes affect their professional life.

Diagram 1: The distribution of respondents Based on Their Gender

Distribution of respondents based on their Gender



The above diagram (no:1) shows the distribution of respondents of the study on the basis of their gender. Among the 70 respondents, more than 56% of them are women and the remaining 44% of them are men.

**Table: 2**

**Chi-square between the gender of the respondents and at what age they were witness to bullying**

Gender	At what age were you a witness to bullying				Total	Pearson chi square value	P-Value
	6-11 years	12- 17 years	18-24 years	24-35 years			
Male	0	13	15	3	31	3.398	.334 (NS)
Female	4	15	17	3	39		
Total	4	28	32	6	70		

The above table (no.2) indicates that, the 'p' value is greater than 0.05 (.334). It can be inferred that there is no significant difference between gender of the respondents and at what age they were witness to bullying.

**Table: 3**

**Chi-square between the gender of the respondents with regard to their social skills**

Gender	how would you rate your social skills				Total	Pearson chi square value	P-Value
	Excellent	Good	average	Bad			
Male	4	16	10	1	31	8.730	.033 (NS)
Female	0	17	22	0	39		
Total	4	33	32	1	70		

The above table (no.3) shows that Women (W=39) have the lowest value in comparison to men. The 'p' value is greater than 0.05 (.033). It can be inferred that there is no significant association

between genders of the respondents and the respondent's social skills

**Table: 4**

**Chi-square between the gender of the respondents and Bullying faced in school**

gender	Have you faced bullying in school				Total	Pearson Chi- square value	p-value
	yes, very much	maybe, on few incidence	no never	not sure			
Male	9	20	0	2	31	16.648	.001 (sig)
Female	8	12	14	5	39		
Total	17	32	14	7	70		

The above table (no.4) indicates among the respondents who were bullied in school, Men (M=31) have the highest value in comparison to women. The 'p' value is less than 0.05 (.001). It can be inferred that there is a significant association between gender of the respondents and Bullying faced in school.

**Table 5:**

**Chi-square between the gender of the respondents and bullying faced in college**

Gender	Have you face bullying in college				Total	Pearson Chi- square value	p-value
	yes, very much	maybe, on few incidence	no never	not sure			
Male	0	5	22	4	31	21.359	.000 (sig)
Female	15	9	9	6	39		
Total	15	14	31	10	70		

The above table (no.5) indicates among the respondents who were bullied in college, Men (M=31) have the lower value in comparison to women. The ‘p’ value is less than 0.05 (.000). It can be inferred that there is a significant association between gender of the respondents and bullying faced in Colleges.

**Table: 6**

**Chi-square between the gender of the respondents with regard to bullying episode have cause physical change among them**

Gender	think that this bullying episode have cause physical change in you				Total	Pearson Chi- square value	p- value
	yes, very much	maybe, on few incidence	no never	not sure			
Male	12	9	4	6	31	11.233	.011 (NS)
Female	10	11	17	1	39		
Total	22	20	21	7	70		

The above table (no.6) shows that Men (M=31) have shown the highest value in comparison to women. The ‘p’ value is greater than 0.05 (.011). It can be inferred that there is no significant association between gender of the respondents and with regard to the overall Physical Changes of the respondents due to bullying.



**Table: 7**

**Chi-square between the gender of the respondents with regard to the issue of Low Self-Esteem**

Gender	Do you face low self esteem				Total	Pearson Chi- square value	p-value
	yes, very much	maybe, on few incidence	no never	not sure			
Male	10	15	4	2	31	9.535	.023 (NS)
Female	6	17	16	0	39		
Total	16	32	20	2	70		

The above table (no.7) shows that the ‘p’ value is greater than 0.05 (.023). It can be inferred that there is no significant association between gender of the respondents and with regard to the issue of Low Self-Esteem

**Table: 8**

**Chi-square between the gender of the respondents with regard to the bullying episode has been an issue in respondents all round development**

Gender	Do you feel that the bullying episode has been an issue in your all round development?				Total	Pearson Chi- square value	p-value
	yes, very much	maybe, on few incidence	no never	not sure			
Male	10	10	9	2	31	2.170	.538 (NS)
Female	8	11	15	5	39		
Total	18	21	24	7	70		

The above table (no.8) reveals that the ‘p’ value is greater than 0.05 (.538). It can be inferred that there is no significant association between gender of the respondents and with regard to the bullying episode has been an issue in respondents all round development

**Table: 9**

**Chi-square between the gender of the respondents with regard to the bullying episode has caused issues in their professional life**

Gender	you think that these bullying episode has caused issues in their professional life				Total	Pearson Chi-square value	p-value
	yes, very much	maybe, on few incidence	no never	not sure			
Male	9	8	4	10	31	10.198	.017 (NS)
female	6	7	19	7	39		
Total	15	15	23	17	70		

The above table (no.9) indicates the ‘p’ value is greater than 0.05 (.017). It can be inferred that there is no significant association between gender of the respondents with regard to the Issues that bullying episode has caused issues in their professional life

**Table 10:**

**Chi-square between the gender of the respondents with regard to the bullying episode is affecting the respondents personal aspects**

Gender	that the bullying episode is affecting your personal aspects?				Total	Pearson Chi-square value	p- value
	yes, very much	maybe, on few incidence	no never	not sure			
male	14	14	1	2	31	17.661	.001 (SIG)
female	5	13	14	7	39		
Total	19	27	15	9	70		

The above table (no.10) reveals that the 'p' value is less than 0.05 (.001). It can be inferred that there is a significant association between gender of the respondents with regard to the bullying episode is affecting the respondents personal aspects.

**Findings of the Study:**

The study consist of 70 respondents, out of which more than 56% of them are women and the remaining 44% of them are men who are college students from Chennai and from the age group of 18-35 years. Female responds (4%) have been exposed to bullying at a younger age compared to the Male responds. Male respondents (20%) have faced more bullying in both schools and colleges than female responds. Male respondents (10%) are identifies to have low self-esteem in comparison to the female respondents. Male respondents (14%) have shown struggles in maintaining relationships in comparison to the female respondents. Male respondents (10%) believe that these bullying episodes have caused issues in the all-round development in comparison to the female respondents. This study has come to the conclusion that Bullying have affected the male respondents more than the female respondents, which has affected their all-round development, professional and personal life.

### **Discussion:**

This study focuses on how bullying affects young people in Chennai on a psychological and social level. It was discovered that 56% of responders were female and 44% were men. The majority of the female participants have never experienced bullying, in contrast to the male participants. According to the study, those who experienced bullying reported feeling emotionally exhausted, having low self-esteem, and not always feeling at ease with their physical appearance. Also, persons who have encountered bullying did show indicators of mental health difficulties such as despair, anxiety, anorexia and social issues such as social isolation. All categories of victims reported feeling more emotionally alone, which may help to explain why such a large percentage of people were found to have avoidant personality disorders. The findings strongly suggest the necessity for intervention and broaden the field for developing approaches to the problems at hand.

### **CONCLUSION:**

As a result of both physical and social reasons, bullying has affected young adults in both schools and colleges, according to the findings of the current study. Men were more likely than females to encounter the aforementioned incidence. This shows a clear, if disturbing, trend in the south Indian context, particularly in areas like Chennai and environments that are mostly disregarded by parents, peers, teachers, and politicians. In order to decrease the long- term impacts of such bullying and victimisation experiences, our findings highlight the necessity for psychological intervention at the early school level. The outcomes also show that a more focused approach is required to reduce the frequency of such incidents.

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