

## **Knowledge and Experience of Bullying among Secondary Level Students in Kathmandu**

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### **Abstract**

Bullying is problematic human behavior that abuses others. There are different types of bullying. Among them, school bullying is common among students. It impacts overall physical, mental, and emotional health. The study aims to identify the knowledge and experience of bullying among students. A descriptive study was conducted among 145 respondents of class 12 students of one government and two institutional schools of Kathmandu district by using random sampling without replacement method. Results indicate that more than 90 percent (133) of respondents have the knowledge, and 22.62 percent of respondents have experienced bullying. The bivariate (Chi-square) analysis was used to examine the associations between variables. Sex is treated as an independent variable, and experience of bullying is treated as a dependent variable. The test showed that there was no association between sex and experience of bullying ( $p = 0.819$  in  $5\% \alpha$  for 1 d.f). It is concluded that 10 percent of respondents did not know about bullying, and experiences of bullying are not associated with sex.

**Keywords:** bullying, mental health, performance, students, school

### **Introduction**

Bullying is a psychology-related problematic behavior. Bullying is defined as “Which is a repetitive, aggressive act of abusing others because of power imbalance. It can take various forms: verbal, physical, emotional, and cyberbullying” (Bhandari et al., 2023). Verbal bullying is associated with the use of words that hurt, harass, humiliate, and scare others. In physical bullying, persons use their bodies or external objects to hurt others, which is sometimes visible and painful. Emotional bullying is related to individual feelings, and cyberbullying is the use of text, voice, video, and symbols to threaten others by using electronic media. Knowingly or unknowingly, people are involved in bullying activities. That’s why “it is an understudied global phenomenon” (Bergenfeld et al., 2021). Bullying causes different uncommon mental problems in the victimized people which is an emerging risk factor for poor mental health outcomes adversely affecting children and adolescents (Neupane et al., 2020). There are different types of

bullying, and “school bullying is quite common among college students.” (Yu et al., 2022). Bullying affects differently according to the nature of students. “School bullying impacts the overall physical, mental, and emotional health of students and their academic performance and social relationships” (Dangal et al., 2020). The bullying effect affects the entire life of the students and causes disturbance in the learning process.

School bullying takes place on the school premises. Victimized students feel an inferiority complex. They feel insecure and unsafe in school. Their self-confidence is decreased. They want isolation from their community, where they feel bullied. Which is “significantly associated with mental health factors like loneliness, anxiety, suicide attempts, school absenteeism, and risky behavioral factors like smokeless tobacco use and involvement in physical fights” (Neupane et al., 2020). It is a challenge to minimize bullying among school students in Nepal, as “childhood bullying seems to be an increasing trend in Nepal” (Neupane et al., 2020). Every parent, student, and teacher should be aware of bullying and need to minimize it in school. The secondary level is the highest level of school education. Where physically and mentally mature students study. A bullying environment can be created due to aspects such as the relationship between students in the school, the learning environment, following school rules, and the behavior of teachers towards students. Limited literature is available on knowledge of bullying and experiences on school premises. There needs to be more research on the knowledge and experience of bullying among adolescent students at the secondary level. This brings out the situation of bullying conditions in school and prescribes appropriate controlling measures.

This paper attempts to identify the knowledge and experiences of bullying in secondary-level class 12 students in the Kathmandu district. It provides information on curative and preventive action to minimize bullying-related activities. This paper is structured by using the standard scientific “introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusion” format.

## **Methods**

A quantitative (descriptive) study design was applied to identify the knowledge and experiences of bullying. This paper aims to study student bullying in high school in Kathmandu district. Class 12 students of one community and two institutional school students were selected. A total of 230 students were the targeted population for the study. The size of the sample was calculated by using a fixed population sample size online calculator tool with a margin of 5 % error, and 95 % confidence interval. Then prepared the list of targeted students and randomly

selected the sample 145 respondents by using simple random sampling without replacement method. In this study, bullying is treated as a dependent variable, and sex is treated as an independent variable. After the data collection data were entered and analyzed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) 20 version. The univariate analysis was carried out to find out the frequency and percentage. Bivariate analysis was carried out to identify the association with bullying. This Chi-square test was conducted on a level of significant ( $\alpha$ ) 5 %. Data was presented in the table and analysis of the findings of the study. Ethical consideration and informed consent were taken from them before the collection of the data and defending research respondents' rights. With the help of the teacher of the concerned school, the students were informed about the research, the questionnaire was distributed to them voluntarily, and the questionnaire was collected on the same day.

## **Results and Discussions**

### ***Background Information***

Background information provides demographic details about the respondents. It represents the age, sex, religion, number of members in the family, occupation, caste/ethnicity, etc. of the respondents.

**Table no 1.** *Demographic detail of respondents.*

| Description                     | Detail             | Frequency                   | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------|
| Sex of respondents              | Male               | 76                          | 52.4       |
|                                 | Female             | 69                          | 47.6       |
| Age of respondents              | 17 years           | 92                          | 63.4       |
|                                 | 18 years           | 39                          | 26.9       |
|                                 | 19 years           | 14                          | 9.7        |
| Religions of respondents        | Hindu              | 84                          | 57.9       |
|                                 | Buddhist           | 50                          | 34.5       |
|                                 | Others             | 11                          | 7.6        |
| Occupation of family            | Farming            | 19                          | 13.2       |
|                                 | Service            | 28                          | 19.3       |
|                                 | Business           | 82                          | 56.6       |
|                                 | Foreign employment | 10                          | 6.9        |
|                                 | Others             | 5                           | 4.1        |
| Status of mother literacy       | Literate           | 99                          | 68.3       |
|                                 | Illiterate         | 46                          | 32.7       |
| Status of father literacy       | Literate           | 131                         | 90.3       |
|                                 | Illiterate         | 14                          | 9.7        |
| Caste\ Ethnicity of respondents | Janajati           | 65                          | 44.8       |
|                                 | Brahmin/kshatri    | 68                          | 46.9       |
|                                 | Dalit              | 6                           | 4.1        |
|                                 | Others             | 6                           | 4.1        |
|                                 |                    | Total number of respondents | 145        |

Among the 145 sample respondents, 52.4 percent were male. The majority of respondents were aged 17 years old (63.4%) followed by 18 years old (26.9%). According to religious affiliation, 57.9 % of respondents were Hindu, followed by (34.5%) Buddhist. 56.6 % of respondents' families were involved in business, 19.3 % followed by service 13.2 % of respondents' family involved in farming, and 6.9 % in foreign employment. 68.3 % of

respondents' mothers and 90 fathers were literate. The majority of respondents belonged to Brahmin/Kshatri (46.9) followed by Janajati (44.8%) and 4.1 % were Dalit.

### ***Knowledge of Bullying***

Knowledge of bullying indicates the information about bullying. Knowledge creates awareness and develops an understanding of bullying. The experience of bullying represents the suffering that disturbs the student's academic achievement and socialization process. Due to different socio-cultural factors, school bullying is quite common at in secondary level in Nepalese schools. Bullying creates many adverse effects on those bullied in their life and education.

Knowledge of bullying among the sex, caste, religion, and family occupation of the respondents provides knowledge of bullying demography. School is the common place where diverse backgrounds students interact with each other's.

**Table no 2.** *Knowledge of Bullying among Sex, Caste, Religion, and Family occupation of Respondents*

|  |                    | knowledge of |           | Total       |
|--|--------------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|
|  |                    | Yes          | No        |             |
| Sex of respondents                     | Male               | 69 (90.8%)   | 7 (9.2%)  | 76 (100.0%) |
|  | Female             | 64 (92.8 %)  | 5 (7.2)   | 69 (100.0%) |
| Caste of respondents                   | Janajati           | 59 (90.8%)   | 6 (9.2%)  | 65 (100.0%) |
|  | Brahmin/ kshatri   | 63 (92.6%)   | 5 (7.4%)  | 68 (100.0%) |
|  | Dalit              | 6 (100.0%)   | 0 (0.0%)  | 6 (100.0%)  |
| Religions of respondents               | Hindu              | 76 (90.5%)   | 8 (9.5%)  | 84 (100.0%) |
|  | Buddhist           | 46 (92.0%)   | 4 (8.0%)  | 50 (100.0%) |
|  | Others             | 11 (100.0%)  | 0 (0.0%)  | 11(100.0%)  |
| Occupation of the respondents families | Farming            | 19 (100.0%)  | 0 (0.0%)  | 19 (100.0%) |
|  | Government service | 25 (89.3%)   | 3(10.7%)  | 28(100.0%)  |
|  | Business           | 73 (89.0%)   | 9 (11.0%) | 82 (100%)   |

Among 78 males, 90.8 % were aware of bullying. Similarly, among 69 females, 7.2 percent of females didn't know about bullying. More than 90 % of Janajati, Brahmin/ Kshatri were aware of bullying. 90.5 % of Hindu respondents and 92.8 % of Buddhist respondents were aware of the bullying. Less than 10 percent of both religious respondents reported that they did not know about bullying. Respondents belonging to business family background have 89% and Government service background have 89.3% knowledge about bullying. Similarly, respondents from farming family backgrounds have absolute knowledge about bullying.

From the above table, the awareness of bullying was found high across the different categories. Respondents belonging to business family backgrounds have comparatively less awareness (89.0%) about knowledge of bullying. Female respondents have a slightly higher

awareness than male respondents. Dalit community is still socially and economically marginalized in Nepal. However, in the survey, it was found that 100.0 percent of Dalit caste respondents know about bullying. Respondents belonging to other religions (Christianity and Islam) have 100.0 % knowledge of bullying. Hindu and Buddhist respondents have reported that nearly 10 % of both groups didn't know about bullying.

### ***Experience of bullying***

Experience of bullying means suffering from bullying behavior during school life. These are unwanted behaviors that create physical, social, and emotional problems for the bullied.

**Table 3.** *Experience of bullying among sex, caste, age and staying information*

|                      |                  | Experiences of Bullying |             | Total        |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|
|                      |                  | Yes                     | No          |              |
| Sex of respondents   | Male             | 16 (21.9%)              | 57 (78.1%)  | 73 (100.0%)  |
|                      | Female           | 16 (23.5%)              | 52 (7.2)    | 68 (100.0%)  |
|                      | Total            | 32 (22.7%)              | 109(72.3 %) | 141 (100.0%) |
| Caste of respondents | Janajati         | 13 (20.6%)              | 50 (79.4%)  | 63 (100.0%)  |
|                      | Bhramin/ kshatri | 17 (25.4%)              | 50 (74.6%)  | 67 (100.0%)  |
|                      | Dalit and others | 2 (18.1%)               | 9 (81.9%)   | 11 (100.0%)  |
|                      | Total            | 32                      | 109         | 141          |
| Age                  | 17               | 19 (20.9%)              | 72 (79.1%)  | 91 (100.0%)  |
|                      | 18               | 10 (26.3%)              | 28 (73.7%)  | 38 (100.0%)  |
|                      | 19               | 3 (25.0%)               | 9 (75.0%)   | 11 (100.0%)  |
|                      | Total            | 32                      | 109         | 141          |
| Staying with parents | Yes              | 26 (23.2%)              | 86 (76.8%)  | 112 (100.0%) |
|                      | No               | 6 (20.7%)               | 23(79.3%)   | 29(100.0%)   |
|                      | Total            | 32                      | 109         | 141 (100%)   |

Among 141 respondents 22.7 % respondent have experienced bullying in school. 21.9 % of males and 23.5 % of females have experienced bullying. The percentage of females who have experienced bullying is slightly higher than that of males. More than one-fifth of the respondents have experienced bullying.

Out of 63 Janajati respondents, 20.6 % have experienced bullying in school. Similarly, out of 67 Brahmin/ Kshatri respondents, 25.4 % have reported experience of bullying. Among 6 Dalits, 1 respondent (16.7%) has experienced bullying in school. In total respondents, Brahmin/Kshatri respondents have the highest percentage of individuals who have experienced bullying (25.4 %). The percentage of individuals who have experienced bullying is relatively similar across Janajati and other castes and ethnicities. (20.6 % and 20 % respectively)

According to the age 17 years old 19 respondents (20.9 %) have experienced bullying out of 91 respondents. Similarly, 18 years old 26.3 % of respondents reported experiencing bullying and 19 years old 25 % of respondents have experienced bullying. Seventeen years old age group has the highest number of respondents who have experienced bullying. The percentage of respondents who have experienced bullying increased slightly with age, from 20.9 % at 17 years to 26.3 at 18 years, but then it plateaus to 25.0 % for 18 years.

#### ***Types of bullying experiences.***

Bullying can manifest in various forms, and each type of bullying has its characteristics. Males and females experience different types of bullying. The table below represents the experience of bullying according to sex.

**Table 4.** *Types of bullying experiences*

|                    |        | Types of bullying experiences |                 |        |        |        | Total |
|--------------------|--------|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
|                    |        | Physical bullying             | Verbal bullying | Sexual | Social | others |       |
| Sex of Respondents | male   | 2                             | 8               | 1      | 3      | 0      | 4     |
|                    | Female | 2                             | 8               | 3      | 4      | 1      | 8     |
| Total              |        | 4                             | 16              | 4      | 7      | 1      | 2     |

Among 145 respondents, one-fifth of the respondents (32) experienced bullying during their school days. Male and female respondents equally reported experiences of physical bullying. Verbal bullying is the most common type of bullying, and half of the bullying-experienced respondents experienced verbal bullying. Female respondents reported a high number of experiences of sexual bullying compared with males. Social bullying is more



frequently attributed to friends. Both sexes reported experiences of social bullying, although females reported more than males.

### **Who bullied to you**

In school premise selected people like peers, groups, junior students, senior students, teachers and non-teaching staffs interact with each other's. Intentionally or unintentionally these different people engage in bullying in different place of school.

**Table 5.** *Bullied persons*

|                    |         | Experience of Bullying |    | Total |
|--------------------|---------|------------------------|----|-------|
|                    |         | yes                    | no |       |
| Who bullied to you | Teacher | 7                      | 0  | 7     |
|                    | Friends | 17                     | 0  | 17    |
|                    | D I     | 8                      | 0  | 8     |
| Total              |         | 32                     | 0  | 32    |

Friends are the most common perpetrators of bullying. Nearly half of the (17) respondents reported that they were bullied by their friends. Bullying by teachers and discipline in charge is reported less numbers than by friends. This data shows that friends are common perpetrators of bullying within the survey groups.

### ***Bivariate analysis.***

During analysis, it tries to find the association between the experience of bullying and the sex of respondents. In this study, the researcher wants to study the association between the sex of respondents and their experience of bullying. Among 145 respondents, 52.4 percent were male, and 14 of the male respondents had experienced bullying. 46.4 percent of respondents were female, and 18 female respondents had experienced bullying. In this test, Experience of bullying was treated as a dependent variable, and the sex of the respondents was treated as an independent variable. This Chi-square test was conducted on a level of significant ( $\alpha$ ) 5 % and degree of freedom 1. The calculated p-value (0.819) is higher than the significance level, which indicates that the experience of bullying is not associated with sex.

## Findings and Conclusion

Class 12 is the last class of secondary-level education and it is the gateway to higher study. Secondary education aims to provide students with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to become responsible citizens. Responsible citizens respect others' rights and follow a democratic culture. They learned and sometimes they experienced bullying. Above 90 percent of respondents know about bullying. Similarly, they learn about different kinds of bullying and their impact in their course. Among the respondents 22.69 percent of respondents experience bullying. According to the Cross tabulation, Knowledge of bullying is different according to sex and caste/ ethnicity, religion, and occupation of parents of respondents.

The experience of bullying is different according to the sex, age religion, caste/ ethnicity, and occupation of the respondents. Most of the bullied respondents reported that they experienced verbal bullying by their friends. College bullying is a serious problem among secondary-level students. There are socio-demographic factors of the students that affect bullying in school. Knowledge of bullying was another factor that helped to reduce the bullying behavior. Most of the time children spend with their family, their family environment, and their relation with family members helps to determine the student's behavior. Traditional teaching methods and punishing practices to maintain discipline in school also play the role of catalyst for School bullying. It creates different problems for the victimized students. "Adults who had school bullying are more vulnerable to developed future psychiatric disorders" (Ahmed, 2022). Due to bullying, students are afraid of going to school, which interferes with their concentration ability, study, and academic performance. Sometimes it creates severe mental health problems for the students.

Student bullying is an emerging issue among secondary-level students. Above  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the respondents experienced bullying in school. Verbal bullying is quite common among both sexes. Among those bullied, half of the respondents reported that they faced bullying by their friends. It is concluded that the frequency and experience of bullying are different according to Sex, age, caste/ethnicity, religion, and parent's occupation. Among the sexually bullied respondents, 75 percent were female.

The results of the Chi-square test show that the Sex of respondents wasn't associated with the experience of bullying, although girls were more suffering than boys. Class and school were selected purposively. The findings of the study are not generalized due to the limited sample size

and sampling techniques. Only class 12 students participated in it, but it is useful for understanding the knowledge and experiences of bullying in secondary-level students. The following topics are suggested for further study about bullying in school are **Strategies to Combat Bullying in secondary level students, The Role of Parents and Guardians in Preventing Bullying, and Motivations behind Bullying Behaviors among students**

It is concluded that the incidence of bullying has happened in school because still, 10 % of respondents did not know about bullying. Those people who know about bullying were also involved in bullying activities. Only knowledge and awareness programs are not enough to control bullying. The school environment, awareness, school strategies to combat bullying, and respective cultures are essential in school to minimize bullying activities. Curriculum developers, Subject teachers, parents, school administrative staff, and students are also responsible for minimizing bullying in school.

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