



Peer Victimization among School Children

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ABSTRACT

In present scenario victimization has become a matter of great concern in schools. In this paper researcher will discuss about peer victimization among children which can be defined as children experiencing spiritual, physical, or property damage from a person or group in a aggressive and unfriendly environment. Peer victimization associated with many types of adjustment difficulties. Students who are constant victims of school bullying often rejected by their peers and they feel depressed, anxious, and lonely. Thus the aim of the present study was to assess the peer victimization among school children. The present study was undertaken on 1070 children (570 rural and 500 urban) of secondary and senior secondary schools of Hisar district of Haryana state. The study was conducted with all children enrolled in classes 6th to 10th from six selected schools (three schools from urban area and three schools from rural area i.e. Ladwa). Multidimensional Peer-Victimization Scale was used to assess the victimization among school children. Children were personally interviewed about their victimization behaviour. Frequency, percentages and Chi- square test were used to analyse the data. The results of the study highlighted that there was no association between peer victimization and rural-urban setting but among boys and girls there was association between sex of child and peer victimization and found to be significant. Further, results depicted that majority of children were mildly victimized. Percentage of boys was greater in moderate and severe peer victimization behaviour as compared to girls.

Key Words: Peer victimization, sex, rural, urban

INTRODUCTION

Peer victimization is a problem of social concern for researchers, educators, and clinicians. Children pursuit for peer aggression are variously expressed as being bullied (Rigby, 1996), being victimized or sometimes as being rejected. Peer victimization as single or repeated episodes of peer-perpetrated aggression that results in real or perceived harm to others (Finkelhor *et al*, 2012). Peer victimization has been defined as child suffering being exposed to intentional injury or discomfort from one or more age mates in the form of physical bullying (hitting and pushing), verbal bullying (making threats, calling a disliked nickname, and spreading rumors), or other forms of bullying (Olweus, 1994). Further Peer victimization has been defined as children

experiencing spiritual, physical, or property damage from a person or group in a aggressive and unfriendly environment (Anonymous, 2013).

Among school children it is expected that 40 percent to 80 percent of children experience bullying at some point during their school careers. Earlier peer victimization has been considered an inevitable childhood occurrence. Parents, school personnel, and health professionals have accepted the impact of being victimized on a range of psychosocial adjustment problems, but now policy changes within schools have lagged, resulting in few improvements in the situation.

Peer victimization is not only quite prevalent even it also associated with many of adjustment difficulties (Juvonen and Graham, 2001). Students

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who are constant victims of school bullying often rejected by their peers and they feel depressed, anxious, and lonely. Many studies suggested that victimized youth also have physical problems and they frequent visits to the hospitals (Nishina *et al*, 2005).

In a study it was found that peer victimization commonly occurs in school grounds where the level of supervision is low (Vaillancourt *et al*, 2010). Many terms can be use to describe peer victimization such as bullying, peer harassment, peer abuse, and bullying victimization (Vitoroulis and Vaillancourt, 2015). This study was conducted with an objective to assess peer victimization among school children.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sample for the present study consisted of 1070 school children (500 from urban and 570 from rural schools) from the six selected schools in Hisar district of Haryana State. The samples were selected from both urban and rural (village Ladwa) areas. To draw the sample three secondary and senior secondary schools each were selected randomly from Hisar city and each from rural area. All the children participated in the study were enrolled in 6th to 10th classes.

Tools

Multidimensional Peer-Victimization Scale by Mynard and Joseph (2000) was used to assess victimization in children. This scale included 16 items and students were asked to respond on a three-point Likert-type scale with the assigned values for not all (0), once (1), more than once

(2). So, the range for the victimization could be 0 to 32 with higher scores indicating severe status of victimization in school children. Victimization status was categorized in four categories *i.e.* not involved, mild, moderate and severe.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of peer-victimization among rural and urban children

The data (Table 1) revealed that 17.94 per cent of the children had not been peer victimized at all but about 60.18 per cent rural children and 60.0 per cent urban were mildly victimized by peers. This was followed by moderate (17.48 %) and severe peer victimization (4.49%). χ^2 depicted no association between peer victimization and rural-urban setting.

It can be interpreted from these results that about 18 per cent children were not at all victimized by peers. Majority of children were mildly victimized and about 5 per cent children were severely victimized. Some of these results get support from the previous literature. (Troop-Gordon, 2017) studied and found that approximately 10-15 per cent of youth continues to be victimized by peers throughout adolescence. Haltigan and Vaillancourt (2014) showed that majority of youth followed a trajectory of low and declining victimization between 5th and 8th grade and a small percentage, 14.5 per cent showed moderate and declining victimization over time. Another study also found that children have higher frequency of peer victimization during middle-school years than during high-school years

Table 1. Extent of peer-victimization among rural and urban children. (n=1070)

Extent	Rural (n=570)	Urban (n=500)	Total (n=1070)	2-value
Not at all (0)	100 (17.54)	92 (18.40)	192 (17.94)	0.28
Mild (1-10)	343 (60.18)	300 (60.00)	643 (60.09)	
Moderate (11-20)	100 (17.54)	87 (17.00)	187 (17.48)	
Severe (21-32)	27 (4.74)	21 (4.20)	48 (4.49)	

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

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Table 2. Extent of peer-victimization among boys and girls (n=1070)

Extent	Boys (n=571)	Girls (n=499)	2-value
Not at all (0)	85 (14.89)	107 (21.44)	47.56**
Mild (1-10)	317 (55.52)	326 (65.33)	
Moderate (11-20)	128 (22.42)	59 (11.82)	
Severe (21-32)	41 (7.18)	7 (1.40)	

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages, **significant at 1% level of significance

(Hong and Espelage, 2012).

Extent of peer-victimization among boys and girls

Table 2 depicts the extent of peer victimization among boys and girls. It was evident that 14.89 per cent boys and 21.44 per cent girls were never victimized. Finding also revealed that 55.52 per cent boys and 65.33 per cent girls were mildly victimized by peers, 22.42 per cent boys were in moderate category of peer victimization and 7.18 per cent belonged to severe category of peer victimization. Among girls 11.82 per cent were in moderate category of peer victimization and only 1.40 per cent belonged to severe category of peer victimization. χ^2 was computed to examine association between sex of child and peer victimization and was found to be significant ($\chi^2=47.56$, d.f=1, $p<.01$).

It can be interpreted from these findings that boys were more victimized by their peers as compared to girls. On the other hand, many researchers found in their study that boys were more physically victimized and girls were more likely to be victims of relational victimization (Chokprajakchat *et al*, 2015). Among urban youth 32.8 per cent of boys and 27.3 per cent of girls were involved in physical peer violence victimization (Swahn *et al*, 2008).

CONCLUSION

On the bases results it can be concluded that there was no association between peer victimization and rural-urban setting. But among boys and girls there was significant association was between sex of child and peer victimization. Majority of children were mildly victimized. Majority of the children

both boys and girls were engaged in mild level of peer- victimization. Percentages of boys were greater in moderate and severe peer victimization behaviour as compared to girls.

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