

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF LAW  
MANAGEMENT & HUMANITIES**  
**[ISSN 2581-5369]**

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**Volume 4 | Issue 1**

**2021**

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# Driving to Suicide from Bullying to Psychological Tortures

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## ABSTRACT

*Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among certain individuals that involves a real or perceived power imbalance in a person's state of mind or physical behavior. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically, verbally or emotionally. Bullying can be caused in-person through a different individual or through technology. Bullying can also start in a person's life at an early age from home. It is said so as the child can be treated miserably or could be physically harassed and mentally abused. Bullying is one of the reasons where a person if bullied can have psychological torture or disturbance and that pressure when not handled can lead to a suicide. There are Child Protection Laws, Women Safety Laws, Anti-ragging Laws, Prevention from Cyber bullying Laws, Information technology laws and most important Indian Penal Code lays down certain provisions for protection of each and every individual. Every person is given Right to Life by our Indian Constitution where Right to Equality and Right to Life with Dignity guarantee a respect full life to every person. Thus, if any person abets anyone for suicide it is considered as punishable as a heinous offence. There are laws for safety but the voice is to be raised by every victim so that bullies are to be stopped from bullying others, in society and there is less no. of suicides than present.*

**Keywords:** *Stages of Bullying, Suicidal Effects of Bullying, how to respond to bullying.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is the act done by an individual or other individuals together who are combative to other people and it so is carried out through their words or their actions. It may include the use of force, abuse, dominate, or intimidating another person. It is a repetitive activity which is an intentional act that is done to hurt another individual physically, mentally, or emotionally. In the past decade, headlines reporting the tragic stories of a young person's suicide death linked in some way to bullying (physical, verbal, or online) have become regrettably common. There is so much pain and suffering associated with each of these events, that affects individuals, families, communities and our society as a whole which

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ultimately result in an increasing national outcry to “do something” about the problem of bullying and suicide. Cyber bullying is also a form of bullying by the use of the internet or electronic communication, such as mobile phones, e-mail, and text messages, to cause humiliation, terrorization, embarrassment, and psychological distress to a person. A study shows that people are more prone to suicidal intentions in cyber bullying than in verbal bullying.<sup>2</sup>

## II. EARLY STAGES OF BULLYING

Bullying is faced by an individual in their day to day life at every phase of it. Bullying starts from very beginning of a person’s life, this includes right from home to schools and colleges to workplace. On addition to this nowadays cyber bullying has taken the concept to a whole new level. When a person is not able to handle his psychological unbalance the last option which seems available to him is suicide. Following are the reasons from where bullying starts:

**Bullying in Family:** Basically bullying starts at home, where one family member abuses verbally or physically to another family member and generally in this category lay women and children. Bullying at home makes a person have anxiety issues because this kind of abrupt behavior starts so early in a person’s life that one is not capable of having the sight of truth or false and issues like depression arises. Psychological so as to say we generally come across the fact that a person comes to be a bully because he may have faced such very similar situations in their past life. In Some cultures that are known for their hierarchy of the family model clearly to say which runs in generations. The man being head of the family; he is of utmost importance, and the mother and children are secondary. This type of hierarchy often leads to bullying that begins in the home, and leaks out into the community, sometimes even it comes to be noted that a large group of people follow the same hierarchy which becomes a culture later on.

**Bullying that happens in Schools:** In 2016, the National Centre for Educational Statistics had reported that out of every five student one is bullied in school. Those who are tortured or are bullied from their fellow students or seniors in some cases teachers even, always feel frightened and powerless. Schools are educational institutions, in some cultures it is said to be a place of devotion, piousness because knowledge is imparted at this place, it is a place where a child grows and walks on the path to build their future but when at the very same place an innocent child is bullied that might hinder their growth mentally as well as physically. This

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<sup>2</sup> Harshul Daiya, *Bullying to psychological tortures*, September 27, 2020 <http://lawpanch.com/>.

very act also depicts the demeaning status and culture of today's society. Children take things, words and action to their heart very easily, every small and tiny thing matters to them a lot. A silly rumor can make them depressed or worried. These kinds of actions that happen with them disturb them to a core level and it leaves behind a deep mark in their hearts giving them grave pain and fear for the coming future. Mainly in schools groups are made who bully their juniors. There are situations or circumstances that follow up where parents send their children to boarding schools or some bigger schools to give them best education and upbringing. But it is here when the schools play the role of<sup>3</sup> negligence by in some cases not even realizing what is going around in their campus and in some case by supporting them in a way by protecting the teachers or other students who are involved in bullying. These schools do not feel the need to take up serious action or a necessary step either to stop the bullying culture or by punishing the people involved in it strictly. Similarly, in *Sanjeev Garg v. Ut of Chandigarh and ors.* It was in this case that the petitioner was shifted to a new city for better education of his children. The father of victim claimed that his son was bullied by other students inside the school premises and the school never took necessary steps in order to put a stop to it and so the school was blamed for causing mental depression on the child. Such situations have a long lasting effect on a child's brain and he might feel like a defeated and failed person for their entire life. Bullying during initial, to be precise at a certain tiny age might even cause permanent damage to the brain of a child. It is so because the child lacks the sense of thinking, feeling optimistic, the thought of moving forward in life in some way are blocked in their minds. They just feel like a loser and this lowly feeling engraves so deeply in them that they aren't capable of making a better future for them.

**College Bullying:** Bullying at any level and at any place is dangerous. When the school is over and when children go to college the pattern totally changes. For an adult it becomes more and more difficult to handle the mental pressure that is given to them by their colleagues and seniors. The college life and bullying that takes place in college is on a whole different level. There are many children who step out of their house for the first time and are away from their family and home for their college studies. There is a vast change in our environment and surroundings and also in the people around them. All of a sudden so many changes and so many new things keep them on the loop and it takes time for these children to adjust in this new environment. Bullying on the other hand has become a tradition in colleges. They say seniors have faced ragging in their time so why the juniors should be

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<sup>3</sup> Harshul Daiya, Bullying to psychological tortures, September 27,2020 <http://lawpanch.com/>.

<sup>4</sup> Aditi Anand, Driving to suicide,October13, 2020.<http://lawtimesjournal.in/>.

immune to this very culture and furthermore as to why they should not follow the footsteps of their seniors. In colleges bullying is more dangerous and harmful for mental as well as for physical health. The ways and the ideas of bullying are on a whole different level in colleges. The seniors opt for such physical and verbal abuse methods to abuse that it hampers the mind of an individual to the very core. Furthermore, if a person is bullied from his own roommate then it becomes almost impossible to escape. This issue has been time and again raised even in Lok Sabha debates where it was contended that there should be legislation that must be brought so as to ban the ragging that is happening widely in colleges. It is because of this ragging culture that students are opting for such horrifying and in a way being coward that death kneels for some students.<sup>5</sup> Even parents also worry about the safety and well being regarding sending their children to colleges in other cities. Government of India in lieu to put a stop at this bullying culture has enacted a regulation called UGC Regulation on Curbing the Menace of Ragging in Higher Education Institutions, 2009 with the objective to prohibit ragging in colleges. Alongside this anti-ragging law there are certain provisions in the Indian Penal Code, 1860 which gives a person protection under law by giving them the right to file a FIR under Section 294, 339, 340, 341, 342, 506 and if in context to this fact if the bullying takes an image of extreme violence Section 323, 324, 325, 326 can be filed. Furthermore if while bullying a person loses their life Section 304, 306, 307 will be charged on the bully who cost a life to the innocent soul. In the case of *Yelchuri Manohar v. State of Andhra Pradesh*, an incident took place which shook the whole state where a girl student who was studying for her practical exam was brutally attacked from behind and hacked to death. The appellant was the master mind of this shocking crime and was convicted for Life Imprisonment under Section 302 under Indian Penal Code, 1860. To add on this fact in order to solve the problem of ragging government of India introduced The Prohibition and Eradication of Ragging Act, 2016 to prohibit and eradicate ragging in educational institutions.

**Bullying at Workplace:** Bullying at workplace is a shameful and disgraceful act for a fact that grown up people work together in an environment. Ragging could be<sup>6</sup> in any form which may be even for a person's professional image. Bullying can be done by anyone in one's workplace be it co-employees or the superior ones. A person may be misled about work or is given incorrect guidelines so that his work may suffer. Unhealthy criticism is also a part of the ragging culture where a person is humiliated and taunted. Bullying may hinder work pace

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<sup>5</sup>UK Essay blog, 19 May, 2017, page14 <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/psychology/>.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. VVLN Sastry, 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2016, Cyber Bullying, <https://www.livelaw.in/>.

of an employee and also his passion towards his work. It can hinder one's personal peace and can lead them to the depths of depression from where one cannot escape. It is the primary duty of the employer rather to say their responsibility to have a check on their employees through subordinates and also stick to strict rules so that no bullying shall take place in their place of work. Employer is directly liable if anything wrong happens to any of the employees. In the leading judgment of *Vishaka and others v. State of Rajasthan*, the Supreme Court gave Vishaka guidelines that defined sexual harassment and also there was obligation put on the employers to provide a safe working atmosphere to the women employed.

**Cyber bullying:** This type has become more prominent in today's world. It happens every now and then online with various people from a commoner to big celebrities. It so happen when a person threatens, harasses or embarrass the other person using technology by digital device. There are cyber bullying laws commonly known as Anti-bullying Laws which are made to punish the offenders and protect the victims who are victimized by the foul language or either texts or bullying that are caused to them. Cyber bullying could be done through several social media platforms. The different forms of cyber bullying can be categorized in various categories as hacking of accounts, posting vulgar messages in a person's inbox or comments or pictures, misusing of banking accounts, threatening a person to commit any heinous crime, stalking etc. Section 67 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 reads in cyber bullying. Section 66 (E) of the IT Act,2000 states the punishment for violation of privacy of any individual where punishment is given to a person who capture, transmits or publishes any private picture of other person. Section 507 of IPC, 1860 also covers the offence of anti-bullying and cyber bullying. It was the very famous *Patanjali Ayurveda Limited & Anr. v. Google LLC. & Ors*, case some defamatory video was uploaded by some unknown person and also some threatening statements were made against the plaintiff. The video was uploaded on YouTube the link of which was posted on Facebook. Plaintiff gave notice to remove such videos which were tarnishing the image of a famous industry. Thus, the High Court of Delhi issued a decree which was in favor of the plaintiff and substantially order was passed to remove the video.

### **III. THE IMPACTS THAT IS IMPRINTED ON HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY**

Bullying is just not an act or a culture followed by bullies but it is a feeling, a thought, a memory that is imprinted in the heart of an individual and it has long-lasting psychological impact on a person. Depression, negativity and anxiety are the most common impacts that are engraved in the mind of the victim. The victim suffers from lack of confidence and will

power to move ahead in making their future for lifetime. They suffer from emotional outbreaks. The problems that they face in day to day life, the fear of being an outcast, the thought of being a loser and also making a full balanced life which seemingly is more difficult for them and it is then that they starts having thoughts of not living anymore. They have a difficulty in making relationship with anyone and also maintaining the existing relationships either with family, friends or their partners. There are times where trust issue is difficult for them because victim is always under the fear of getting bullied again. There is more of emotional harm than physical harm in such situations. Not only the victim but also the bully grows up to be unhappy. The bullies in these cases grow up in depression because they have to remember each day and have to feel as to how bad they have done to others in past. Violent actions do not work for a lifetime for anyone and eventually these people start to feel like losers in their life. They might face problems like problem in retaining a relationship or friendship or even problems at holding a job. When feeling guilty they may have suicidal thoughts to cover up the past doings. Bullies are at greater risk for antisocial personality disorder.

#### **IV. SUICIDAL EFFECTS OF BULLYING**

There are various evidences that bullying raises the risk of suicide, but it is also a fact that bullying alone does not cause or lead to suicide. Depression is one of the main causes that children who are bullied suffer suicide. It is estimated that between 15 and 25 children die by suicide each year in the United Kingdom alone because they are being bullied. There are several communities, including Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Asian Americans, and LGBT people, who are at a higher risk of suicide. If someone feels betrayed by family or friends, the condition of the victim can get even worse. In <sup>7</sup>a self-report study conducted in New York by 9th through 12th graders, victims of bullying reported more depressive symptoms and psychological distress than those who did not experience bullying. It was only a few years later, for both boys and girls, all types of bullying involvement remain associated with depression. Research that followed up two years after the Finnish teens' initial survey showed that depression and suicidal ideation among adolescents who are bullied were higher than those who have not reported experiencing bullying. Avoiding a bully is very easy for some people, but at the same time it can be very difficult for others and they hit a breaking point. There were instances at close quarters of apparent bullying suicides reported by the media. According to voices for education information about

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<sup>7</sup> UK Essay blog, Bullying to psychological tortures, 19 May, 2017, page14, <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/psychology>

suicide, suicide is one of the leading causes of death among young people aged 15 to 24. Less than 16% of students take suicide seriously, 13% have a suggestion and 8% have made a serious attempt.

## **V. HOW TO RESPOND TO AND STOP BULLYING**

There are several programs and activities designed to combat bullying across the globe. Anti-Bullying Day, Anti-Bullying Week, International Pink Day, Global STAND UP to Bullying Day and National Bullying Prevention Month include <sup>8</sup>programs and events to prevent bullying. In 23 of its 50 states, anti-Bullying laws have also been enacted making it illegal to bully in schools. But the basic or rather to say the primary question is does these program really help to put a full stop to bullying? Can these programs put an end to this horrific culture? I personally believe bullying can only be stopped when one responds to it and also when the bullies develop a sense of awareness and sensitivity in them. Bullying is usually a constant phenomenon not a single behavior. Common ways in which people seek to respond is to try to avoid it, challenge the bullies or turn to an authority figure to try to fix it. Ignoring it doesn't stop the abuse, either, and can get worse over time. This may be important to tackle bullying behavior at an early level, as it may be easier to manage the sooner it is detected. Bystanders play an important role in reacting to bullying, since doing nothing can allow it to continue, while small actions that oppose behavior can minimize it.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

With umpteen numbers of reports of cyber bullying, cyber vandalism, nuisance and <sup>9</sup>finally kidnapping and murder through the Internet by the youth, it has become a serious problem for the colleges, parents, law and justice machinery and the society as a whole to maintain peace and inculcate good values in the youth. Cyber bullying is a much neglected problem in India. There was no specific law to prevent cyber bullying activities among students, though there are laws to prevent ragging. There needs to be strict laws regarding bullying be it at any place and through any way. Bullying can only be stopped if every individual from early stage of their lives that is from school and their respective homes be taught the disastrous impact that bullying leaves behind. One shall know how their acts can affect someone's lives totally and completely. Sometimes bullying not only affects an individual but it also affects an entire family. It disrupts someone's life completely. Therefore, I believe awareness campaigns,

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<sup>8</sup> Aditi Anand, Driving to suicide, October 13, 2020. <http://lawtimesjournal.in/>.

<sup>9</sup> UK Essay Blog, Bullying to psychological tortures, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2017, page 16 <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/education/>.



strict laws and basic education in schools and colleges regarding bullying can affect a lot and can also help in reducing the growth of this horrific culture.

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