Teacher's Perception on Bullying in Early-Primary Years

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of Brac Institute of Educational Development in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

Brac Institute of Educational Development
Brac University
November 2019

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

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Approval

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of Fall, 2019 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
the degree of Master of Science in Early Childhood Development on November 4, 2019.

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Date: _____

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Title of Thesis: Teachers' Perception on Bullying in Early-Primary Years

Source of population: Early-Primary teachers from English medium schools

- Does the study involve (yes, or no)?
  1. Physical risk to the subjects
  2. Social risk
  3. Psychological risk to subject
  4. Discomfort to subjects
  5. Invasion of privacy

- Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)?
  1. Nature and purpose of the study
  2. Procedures to be followed
  3. Physical risk
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- Will Signed verbal consent form be required (yes or no)?
  1. From study participants
  2. Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects?

- Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee
  1. Proposal
  2. Consent Form
  3. Questionnaire or interview schedule

ETHICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Research Authorization

Title: Teachers' Perception on Bullying in Early-Primary Years

Source of population: Early-Primary teachers from English medium schools

The Research Checklist indicates

☐ Approved without amendments

☐ Approved with advice to research

☐ Not Approved. Resubmission is required

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Executive Summary

This paper addresses the early primary teachers' perceptions on bullying in school. Bullying is an alarming issue creating an obstacle to the school going children's mental health and hence ceasing their physical, mental, academic growth. The paper has followed a qualitative approach to conduct the research using Interviews and FGDs as tools to convey the teacher's perceptions on bullying. The collected data were analyzed the findings. The findings are categorized in three parts; teacher's perception, practice and challenges relating to bullying in the schools of Bangladesh. Although teachers have clear idea about bullying, they seemed to differ in the severity of the problem. The schools lack in quality trainings and policies. The GOs and the NGOs need to step forward in this matter to arrange some sort of programs to aware the teachers about bullying. It is very important to prevent bullying for the children's sound mental health.

Keywords: Bullying, Bully, Bullied victim, Early Primary teacher, Teacher's perception, Early Primary Years, Peer bullying.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to all my students and the future representatives of Bangladesh. It is their mental health that made me concerned enough to proceed this paper.

Acknowledgement

This thesis has been conducted with sincere efforts, competence, and honest participation of a number of people who deserve my sincere gratitude.

First, I would like to thank the Almighty Allah for making me able to complete this research in sound health.

Next, I would like to demonstrate my gratefulness to my honorable supervisor, Ms. Syeda Sazia Zaman, who guided me through writing the report, from the very beginning of selecting this fascinating topic till the end of making it presentable. I would not be able to consummate this report without her useful remarks and consistent encouragement. Her thorough support and feedback made my paper much stronger and helped me increase in knowledge.

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Table of Contents

List of Acronyms

AAP   American Academy of Pediatrics

ECD   Early Childhood Development

FGD   Focus Group Discussion

GO   Government Organization

IDI   In-depth Interview

NCAB   National Community Advisory Board

NGO   Non-Government Organization

NSA   National Student Assessment

SEN   Special Educational Needs

TG   Teachers' Guide

Chapter 1: Introduction

Bullying in literary word means to threaten or force someone, who is seemed to be vulnerable. There are two individuals in this scenario, one who is bullying; 'the bully' and the victim; 'the bullied'. Bullying includes hostile, imbalance of power, provocation, distress etc. (Oakes, 2019). School bullying has become a concern nowadays as kids get bullied by their peers in schools. School is supposed to help a kid affirmatively in his/her academics, behavior, self-esteem etc. but bullying in school impedes a kid's wellbeing. Bullying is a serious problem among the school going children especially who are in early and primary years (Yurtoğlu, 2018). Although, bullying is recognized to be a problem in adolescence or among the high school kids, it is not acknowledged that the problem arises in early years and takes a much uglier form later (Newman et al., 2000).

Researches have been conducted to evaluate the extent of bullying in preschools and its association with the negative impact of child development. Bullied victims might suffer from depression and low self-esteem that can affect them in the long run (Olweus, 1993).

It has been found that, teachers often underestimate the prevalence of bullying whereas it is severe in school classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, lunchrooms, auditoriums, and bathrooms (American Association of University Women, 2001). The possible reasons could be the lack of trainings in this subject matter. Teachers play a huge role in building up a child's confidence, so the right action to this issue would help prevent bullying.

Bullying at an early age is even worse than at a later period of one's lifetime since that is contemplated as a crucial age in developmental psychology. This should be addressed and controlled as soon as possible. The negative effects of bullying will be discussed in this paper referring to the examinations of renowned psychologists (Veenstra et al., 2005).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Perception of teachers plays a crucial role in eradicating the problem of bullying. Since, school bullying is a newly addressed issue in Bangladesh, it is very important for the teachers to have an explicit idea of bullying to prevent it. Studies say that bullying mostly occurs in the schools. Waseem (2013) reports that bullying does not only does hurt the bulled victim but also negatively impacts the bully, other children, parents, school staff, and health care providers. Bullying often leads to serious emotional and behavioral symptoms. It causes low self-esteem and depression and usually has a long-term effect on a child's mental health. Bullying is when an individual or a group of people with more power, repeatedly and intentionally cause harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless or weaker to respond (Najam & Kashif, 2018).

According to Bradshaw and others (2013), teachers underestimate the frequency and negative impact of bullying. Bullying is not identified as an issue in the early primary education. And one of the reasons why bullying is increasing is because the teachers and schools do not identify the issue as a problem. If the teachers do not have an accurate understanding of bullying, they would not be able to identify it and hence would not be able to take necessary actions to prevent it.

Teachers play a very important role in a child's psychological development, but it is an irony peer bullying arises in schools. So, the teachers have a huge responsibility in dealing with this issue. If a teacher fails to recognize bullying, a child might continuously face bullying. Children play a huge role in the future of the development. It is very important to take care of their mental health alongside their physical health. It is evident that the early primary teachers to be aware and gain expertise in bullying to ideally deal with it or else, the children's mental health will be at stake (Espelage et al., 2014).

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this paper is to address the teacher's perception, practice and challenges relating bullying in the schools of Bangladesh. As a first step to prevent this acute problem, it is really important for the teachers to understand bullying so that they know how to react in a situation where bullying occurs. They also need to take necessary steps as a precaution simultaneously. The study intends teachers' understanding on bullying, their suggested methods on preventing and handling the matters, challenges early primary teachers face to resolve those matters. Also, it expresses the kind of initiatives the teachers and the schools have taken to combat the issue.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study of bullying in the early primary years is mostly ignored. But we know that this is the stage when the mental development of a child occurs and hence is the most crucial time for a child to be taken care of both mentally and physically. A bullied child might become a bully himself later or as the study says that a bullied child always thinks he/she is not good enough and so always tries to prove him/herself to be better, that later on creates anxiety, depression etc.

Bullying has a long-term effect on a child's behavior and that should be addressed so that necessary steps are taken to control bullying (Gini and Pozzoli, 2009). As we know that the quality of student-teacher relationship can play a positive role on students' behavior. Hence raising awareness among the teachers is very important, which is one of the objectives of this study.

Very few realize the importance of confronting the issue at an early stage to prevent it at a later period. There are almost 16 million primary schools in Bangladesh which tells us the high number of enrolled students aged 6 to 8 years. Both teachers and parents play an

important role at this stage of every children's life (Lajoie, McLellan, & Seddon, 2003). This paper will address the fact of dealing with the issue by the teachers. Discussing the experience of the teachers will help us to know the extent of severity of bullying among early primary students in the schools in Bangladesh (Nansel et al., 2001).

School is the most common arena of getting bullied. So, the teachers can play an important role to prevent this. Raising awareness among them is a necessity (Espelage, Rao & Rue, 2013). Because of the lack of awareness and necessity initiatives teachers do not know the appropriate ways to combat the problem. According to surveys this is one of the main reasons why it is on the rise (Barone,1995).

We have to keep in mind that no intervention efforts can be successful if teachers have difficulty recognizing and responding appropriately to bullying scenarios. This paper includes teachers' understanding on bullying, their experience on dealing with the issue and their regular obstacles handling the matter. This will help us understand the necessity of raising awareness through trainings and campaigns among the teachers regarding bullying.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objective of this research paper is:

•   To assess teachers' knowledge on bullying in early-primary years

•   To explore the practice of bullying by the teachers in early-primary years

•   To identify the challenges of the teachers in early-primary years who are dealing with bullying/bullied children

1.5 Research Questions

The report will discuss the comprehensive answers of the following questions:

- What is the early-primary teacher's perception on bullying?

- What kind of practice do the teachers intake or follow on bullying for early-primary years children?

- What are the challenges teachers are facing while dealing the early-primary years bullying/bullied children?

1.6 Operational Definition

Bullying: Bullying is defined by Olweus (1993) as behaviors or words targeting an individual or group with the intention of controlling, harming, and/or embarrassing the victim. Moreover, bullying is an act of verbal or physical aggression with an imbalance of power between perpetrator and victim that is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, again and again (Cohn-Vargas, 2013). Similarly, Adewale (2004) defined bullying as a hostile behavior that is displayed by an individual to harm another person or a group of people.

Bullying includes hostile, imbalance of power, provocation, distress etc. Nowadays school bullying has become a concern as kids get bullied by their peers in schools (Lereya et al., 2015).

According to Dombeck (2007), bullying is a serious problem not only in schools, but also at homes and workplaces. Bullying acts are entrenched in a social context that supports unwanted aggressive behaviors and thus, increases the chances of future aggressive acts (Farmer et al., 2012).

Teacher's Perception on Bullying: Teachers' perception explains their understanding regarding some practices which they have gathered through knowledge, experiences, culture

and beliefs. Their perception, beliefs and expectations help them to become effective teachers (Pajares, 1992).

Teacher's defined bullying in terms of physical and verbal abuse and forcing people to do things they do not want to do (Boulton, 1997). On the other hand, there are teachers who describe bullying rather narrowly as physical aggression only (Monks & Smith, 2006).

Additionally, teachers also identify emotional and other non-physical forms of bullying (Bauman & Rio, 2005). According to Beaty and Alexeyev (2008), teachers think being bullied is dangerous for students but few of them also think that it is a natural occurrence.

Therefore, studies have showed that teachers responses to bullying is not effective as they do not perceive it properly (Beebout-Bladholm, 2010).

Peer Bullying: Generally, peer bullying is categorized in three terms; physical bullying, verbal bullying and social exclusion (Gökkaya, 2017).

According to Espelage and Swearer (2003), being bullied by peers is correlated to poorer physical health that includes psychological problems in childhood. In another way, peers who are relatively more powerful, ridicule and torment the other children and thus, Bullying or Peer Abuse occurs (Oswalt, 2019).

Although peer bullying is widespread, and it affects a large number of children, the focus on bullying prevention policies and programs are limited (Pells et al., 2016).

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Bullying leads to negative impacts on a child's psychological development. This section will look into the rigorous explication of bullying. It will also discuss the surveys and experiments done by researchers, psychologists and teachers in this regard. The way a teacher should contemplate bullying in school will also be viewed, meaning the possible necessary initiatives should be taken by them to prevent the issue. The study will see the severity of bullying and its impacts worldwide, highlighting the practices in Bangladesh.

2.1 Bullying and its Types

Bullying can be a physical aggression, verbal (name calling), or social (social exclusion) in nature. Bulling in primary school has been ignored for many years until recently it is found that children in younger age tend to get bullied more (Snow, 2014).

Although there are various definitions of bullying, the following definitions will help understand the concept better: Bullying is an aggressive behavior that is intentional, repetitive in nature, and involves an imbalance of power between the aggressor and his or her target (Vaillancourt, 2003). Bullying involves glaring behaviors (known as direct bullying) such as hitting, pushing, and teasing and as well as less blatant behaviors (known as indirect bullying) such as stealing, unreasonable rejections, and spreading rumors (O'Brennan et al., 2014).

A teacher is someone who is responsible for maintaining a positive and productive class and building up an environment that fosters cooperative learning. Therefore, it is important to understand how teachers react to bullying (Grumm and Hein, 2012). It is an irony that teachers are not aware of bullying always (Veenstra et al., 2014). In other cases, teachers will either ignore or condemn the behavior using disapproving gestures or language (Gardner, Moses, & Waajid, 2013).

However, it is common for teachers to focus more on direct bullying while struggling to identify indirect bullying behaviors (Cheng et al., 2011). According to Elledge et al. (2013) educators who punish in the classroom for bullying usually cause students to find new ways to victimize their victims. As stated by Strohmeier & Noam (2012) it is important that teachers learn the following things:

- Recognizing bullying in their schools

- Differentiating light cases from serious ones

- Intervening in bullying incidents with the bullies, victims, and bystanders; and

- Preventing bullying from occurring in school

Bullying leads to low self-esteem and that precedes aggression. Although negative self-related perceptions are related to bullying, they predict a greater likelihood of being a victimized bully (Cook et al., 2010). Recent evidence shows that narcissism or self-obsession and callous-emotional traits or lack of empathy and shame are associated with bullying (Fanti & Kimonis,2012).

Whitney & Smith (1993) conducted research on various forms of bullying. The most common forms of bullying according to the researchers are; insulting someone, name-calling, hitting, direct aggression, theft, threats, and social exclusion or isolation. Again, hitting, direct and indirect aggression in the form of verbal abuse, threating in gestures and destruction of property are considered as major forms of bullying (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). In addition, Berger (2007) reports that verbal abuse, sexual harassment, and violence are forms of bullying too. It has been proven that, the levels of cyber bullying is increasing day by day (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009). Bullying is commonly classified in several types according to a survey in American schools (Newman et al., 2000). Few of the types are discussed below as per various child psychologists and reports:

i. Physical Bullying: Physical bullying is described as a repeated unwelcomed contact between two people where one person continuously harms another. These actions may consist of pushing, shoving, throwing objects, kicking, beating someone up, spitting, stabbing, tripping, choking, poking, or punching (Olweus, 1978).

ii. Verbal Bullying: Verbal bullying is bullying through verbal language, for instance: insults, teasing, abusive words etc. by an individual. This shows that the individual wants to gain power over his or her peers to verbally ridiculing other (BRIM, 2017).

iii. Emotional Bullying: Students sometimes use a non-verbal, non-physical type of psychological action referred to as emotional bullying. This type of emotional bullying may come in the form of rejection, exclusion, isolation, writing bad notes or pictures, or causing others to unfriend students (Nansel et al, 2001).

iv. Prejudicial Bullying: Prejudicial bullying mainly bullying kids that differ from the common mass. It includes bullying different culture, religion, race, sexual orientation etc. This kind of Bullying encompasses all the types of bullying. It is very critical and builds up hatred inside a kid that may lead to terrible crimes in the future (Gordon, 2019).

These are the most common types of bullying among the kids aged 6 to 8 years. The children in younger ages are less stable, so there is a possibility that a child who is a bully today may become a bully-victim later. Aggression is more common in open spaces like in activity areas, block corners, and playgrounds inside a school premises (Snow, 2014).

Bullying leads to damaging effects on children's health and behavior like depression, bedwetting and low self-esteem etc. The consequences of bullying hamper a child's physical, psychological and academic achievements (Bogart and colleagues, 2014).

When a child is being bullied, he or she constantly feels insecure. Even if he/she is not being bullied he is very conscious that it might start anytime and tries to escape the bully's notice.

A sense of fear is always on his/her mind. A victim of bullying feels unaccepted, isolated and angry (Lyness, 2013). Bully-victims are a distinct and are highly rejected by their peers and show both externalizing and internalizing problems. They often come from the most adverse home environments, characterized by maltreatment and neglectful parenting (Lereya et al., 2015). Bully-victims score high on reactive aggression and often show a different socio-cognitive profile (Toblin et al., 2005).

Empirically in a study conducted by Gini and Pozzoli, bullied Children and Psychosomatic Problems: A Meta-analysis accumulated with 6 studies, they found that bullies have a higher risk of psychosomatic problems that is caused or aggravated by a mental factor like an internal conflict or stress. Children who are target of bully-victims are at a higher risk of psychosomatic problems. The victims have similar characteristics; low emotional adjustment, poor relationships with classmates, and health problems, are commonly found widely in many surveys. In this meta-analysis, it is found that bullies are at lower risk for psychosomatic problems. An interesting literature on the psycho-social adjustment of children, who are involved in bullying has shown both similarities and differences between bullies and bully-victims. As a similarity, both groups of children have difficulties in academic achievement. On the contrary, victims tend to have low self-esteem, loneliness, depression, and anxiety. But the bullies seem to have more externalizing problems like; poor school adjustment, and frequent alcohol and drug use etc. The bully-victims are usually socially awkward and isolated (Gini and Pozzoli, 2009, p. 1059)

Moreover, another study from past research findings that has been extended, show that children with disabilities and bullying victims usually watch more television. Television watching is an additional adverse outcome associated with bullying, supported by many reports. The extent of bullying relates to peer relationships that is complied with their sense of belonging, self-esteem and adjustment to school. Peer rejection and victimization have

been associated with lower levels of well-being and higher levels of internalizing problems including health problems, that leads to higher number of school dropouts (Cornell et al., 2013, p. 149).

2.2 Global Context

Bullying is spread across the world. Although it has recently caught the attention in Bangladesh, it always existed. Multiple studies found a higher rate of bullying in schools than other places globally. Various reports and surveys by Government programs, NGOs, experts recognize this world issue will be discussed in the reviews of this section.

Bullying is a global issue that is acute among the school going children. A survey published in Pediatrics in Review shows that, 14% children are either bullies or victims in Norway, 15% of primary school students claim to be bullied in Japan and 17% students in Australia and Spain have experienced bullying. Again, 1.3 million children are involved in bullying in Britain (Lajoie, McLellan, & Seddon, 2003).

Another survey of about 2,972 pupils in 21 schools by Professor Amos Rolider reveals that 65% of the students complained of getting smacked, kicked, pushed or molested by their fellow pupils (Fareo & Oluremi, 2015). Western countries suggest that 4–9% of youths frequently engage in bullying behaviors and that 9–25% of school-age children are being bullied. A small group of students who are both bully and get bullied has also been identified in a recent meta-analysis on bullying and cyberbullying prevalence. The sample of the study were 335,519 students of 12–18 years and the authors estimated a mean prevalence of 35% for traditional bullying; both perpetration and victimization roles, where prevalence of cyberbullying was 15% (Modecki et al., 2014). It is an irony that very few researches have been done in low- and middle-income countries whereas, extensive research has been

conducted on bullying and victimization in Western and Eastern high-income countries (Zych, Ortega, & Del, 2015).

Results show a high prevalence of bullying in Latin America with 40–50% of teens in Peru and Colombia reporting that they bully others (Oliveros, Figueroa, & Mayorga, 2009). The records of bullied victims state 47.3% students, who are aged 8 (Del & Ortega, 2008). As for Africa, a percentage of 564% of South African students report to be bullied (Greeff and Grobler, 2008). Another recent study in Algeria showed a level of direct and indirect forms of bullying approximately 25–35%, consisting a sample of 1452 school children aged 8 to 12 years (Tiliouine, 2015).

Peer bullying or bullying among school children occurs worldwide. It takes place in small schools, large schools, single sex schools, co-educational schools, traditional and progressive schools etc. It occurs in both primary and secondary schools. The most common form of bullying for both sexes is verbal that includes teasing, harassment and name-calling (Bell & Horne, 2007). Research shows that it is the most impactful form of bullying. However, coercion, physical violence, spreading rumors, exclusion from the group, damage to property and threats are also regarded as bullying (Shetgiri, 2013).

The playground is the most common place for bullying to occur inside a school premises. The bullied victims have a mindset that bullying cannot be stopped. In a study of US, a Bully Police found that, approximately 442,157 students representing 16.37% were involved in bullying out of 2,701,022 school age children in Florida. Bullying occurs more frequently among boys than girls (Rigby, 2002). While both girls and boys report that making fun of the way one looks or talks is the most common way of bullying, boys are more likely to report being physically hit, slapped or pushed ("The Daily Star," 2018).

Also, in a study of fourth to eight graders, above 15% of the respondents reported being brutally distressed by bullying and 22% reported being academically affected by bullying (Hoover and Oliver, 1996). A recent report of UNESCO confirms that school violence and bullying are major problems worldwide. The publication of '*Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying'* released at the world's largest gathering of education and skills Ministers in the Education World Forum took place in London (UNESCO, 2019).

It states that some countries have made significant progress towards reducing school violence and bullying despite the density of the problem. By analyzing global and regional prevalence and trends, it shows the evidence of school violence and bullying, the nature and impact of the issue, and successful national responses. It holds a range of quantitative and qualitative data from global and regional surveys that involves 144 countries and territories in all regions.

The highlights of the publication regarding bullying in the global context are given below:

- Approximately 32%, that is 1 in 3 students has been bullied by their peers at schools last month.

- Physical bullying is the most frequent type of bullying in most of the regions, with an exception of North America and Europe. Psychological or Emotional bullying is more common over there. Physical bullying is common among boys, while the latter is more prevalent among girls.

- Children who are considered to be a bit different in a particular way are more likely to be bullied. It can be related to race, nationality or skin color. This kind of bullying is known as prejudicial bullying as discussed earlier. It is often found that physical appearance is the most common cause of bullying.

- Bullying tends to make a child feel like an outsider and thus it is more likely for a bullied child to miss school.

Bullying indeed has a significant negative effect on children's mental health, quality of life and academic achievement. The bullied children have worse educational outcomes than their peers and are most likely become dropouts (UNESCO, 2019, p. 7-9).

The level of bulling and aggression is alarming. The prevalence of the kind of destructive behaviors bullying is associated with is not reasonable in any culture explicitly. Because of the severity on this issue, researchers and clinicians are trying to develop a solution (Whitted and Dupper, 2005).

Moreover, a survey program on the preventive measures of bullying, suggests that the primary question should be on finding out the most appropriate way of employing staffs. This was concentrated mainly on the teacher-efficacy and school climate in controlling bullying (Slee, 1994). A program named the Bully Busters found that aggression and bullying are behaviors borne of social skills deficits and the most effective means of reducing aggression and bullying behaviors in the school is through increasing the awareness, knowledge, and efficacy of teachers regarding how they deal with school-based aggression and bullying (Newman-Carlson & Horne, 2004).

Again another program named Bully Busters intervention was established by researchers, to increase the teachers' knowledge and train them with the use of intervention skills, teacher self-efficacy in intervening with bullying, and subsequent effect change in the school climate by: (1) increasing the students' exposure to strong social models who can effectively and benevolently manage bullying behaviors, (2) reducing exposure to aggressive and bullying behaviors (3) providing the teachers and students with materials and activities to facilitate classroom discussions related to the factors and effects of bullying and victimization, and (4)

offering controlled exposure to basic social skills related to managing conflict. cording to (Bell and Horne, 2010, p. 258),

Although bullying at school is a growing concern, there has been little research on examining the differences between the perceptions of the student and staff on the frequency of bullying, most common areas and forms of bullying, severity of bullying, social norms related to bullying, and responses to bullying. Teachers for all grade levels highly underestimate the actual frequency of bullying. Staff efficiency can certainly resolve the issue better (Bradshaw et al., 2013).

2.3 Bullying in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is no exception when it comes to school bullying (Mahmood and Islam, 2017). According to Dan Olweus (1994), "A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself." Bullying and harassment have more fatal consequences among young girls in Bangladesh (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, UNICEF, 2011).

35% students get bullied on a regular basis in Bangladesh. Even globally three out of ten students in 39 industrialized countries admit to bullying peers. Girls and boys are equally at risk of bullying. Girls are more likely to become victims of psychological forms of bullying, whereas boys are more at risk of physical violence and threats. This affects their learning in the short term but affects deeper psychologically in long term by leading to depression, anxiety and even suicide ("bdnews24.com," 2018). The UNICEF is taking effective measures to prevent bullying in schools. The UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore stated that, education is the key to building peaceful societies, and it is an irony that, school itself is not safe for millions of children around the world (Pells et al., 2016).

Students face multiple hazards, including fighting, pressure to join particular groups, physical violence etc. In the short-term this impacts their learning, and leads to depression, anxiety and even suicide in the long term. Violence is a haunting lesson that no child needs to learn (Burk et al. 2011).

However, the problem is that school bullying in Bangladesh is given much less attention. Parents shy away and even teachers sometimes ignore the issue for the lack of awareness. School bullying can be a multi-faceted problem that results in an increase number of dropouts, more anti-social kids and behavior problems in kids. International and national studies prove that every 9% to 15% of any student population is a bullied victim (Mahmood & Islam, 2017, p. 79).

The students around Asia including Bangladesh, regularly report of witnessing and experiencing bullying. Bullying is not a playful or friendly act that just happened in a way. It is repeated and intentional (Eslea et al, 2003). The incidents of bullying have no physical boundary, it happens inside and outside school premises where monitoring and supervision is limited (Sittichai & Smith, 2015). Students who bully others have been bullied themselves (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Other factors contributing to bullying is hostile home experience and attention seeking behavior (Jimerson et al., 2010). The targeted matter of the victims are commonly; race, physic, social class etc. of being bullied. Also, those who are physically distinct from others are specifically targeted for bullying (Batsche, G.M. & Knoff, 1994).

Studies show that racial issues are also often a cause to be victimized. Thus, the Bihari students, (Pakistanis who were refused to enter in Pakistan after liberation war) face them. Gender difference is also demonstrated (Mahmood and Islam, 2017).

Studies state that students with disabilities were more likely than other students to have reported all types of bullying (Department of Education, 2013). Other previous research

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indicates that children with SEN, especially learning difficulties, are particularly likely to be bullied more (Norwich and Kelly, 2002).

A newspaper reported, the incident of a student in Viqarunnissa Noon School committing suicide as a result of getting bullied by her teacher, startled the entire country in December 2018. As a reaction the education ministry submitted a policy draft on the prevention of bullying at schools to the High Court Division. The policy draft defined bullying of three types, they are: verbal, physical and social. It emphasized the role of guardians and family to prevent bullying ("New Age," 2019).

It has been observed that, bullied victims are suffering from poor performance in school, sleep issues, anxiety and many more. These issues could extend to adulthood in future ("Dhaka Tribune," 2018). The presented policy draft suggests that, the teachers should give mental support to the bullied students while dealing with their incidents. Also, if the situation become serious then the institution of bullying prevent committee will speak to the bullied victims separately. According to them, teachers should help students to prevent bullying and cope up with the bullied victims ("New Age," 2019).

In 2010, the government banned corporal or physical punishment in schools, but it is still in wide practice. A Shishu Adhikar Forum reported of around 1079 incidents on this, during the period of January 2012–November 2018. The High Court (2009) order states, to form sexual harassment prevention committees in all institutions, public and private, including educational institutions. Again, the empirical reports oppose to the order and only few follow them. Despite the orders, lack of monitoring and evaluating are the reasons why they are yet to be practiced.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Study Design

This was a qualitative study. Through this study, teacher's perception and experience were expressed. Also, this describes the participants, the study approach, the ways used to confirm validity and reliability of the data, ethical issues, data collection procedure etc. The following two data collection methods were used in order to achieve the objectives:

- Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
- In-depth-interview (IDI) Questionnaire and

It was a qualitative study that is based on In-Depth Interviews (IDI) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Here the purpose of the researcher was to find in depth information as well as the information about aspects of a situation or behavior of the group. The in-depth information will include expertise and experience of the participant.

3.2 Study Setting

The study was mainly reflected the urban area. Data was collected from two English medium schools located in Dhanmondi and Mohammadpur of Dhaka city as per convenience of access and feasibility.

3.3 Study Population

The study population were the English medium, early- primary years school teachers of Dhaka city.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Method

A sample of 12 teachers from 2 different schools were taken for FGD, 6 from each school. They early-primary school teachers were selected through purposive sampling.

Also, 4 in-depth interviews will be taken; 2 from each school.

- 2 FGDs were done in holding 6 teachers in each group who teach children of 6 to 8 years in two different English Medium Schools.

- 4 teachers were selected for In-depth interview from two different schools to capture the different status of teachers and diversities in their practices.

- Purposive sampling technique was used in this study as the researcher selected the Early-Primary years school teachers who facilitate children aged between 6-8 years.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Teachers of early- primary year students (aged 6-8 years), were selected with minimum qualifications
- Male and female teachers/Early-primary years school teachers/ 2 English medium schools of urban areas selected as per their voluntary participatory role

Exclusion Criteria:

- Teachers of Middle years or Final years of schools
- Teachers from Bengali medium and rural areas
- Teachers who were not willing to participate or continue at any point of time

3.5 Measures

The following two measures were considered in conducting the research:

- In-depth interview (IDI) Questionnaire

  ➢ Semi-structured questionnaire

  ➢ Validity & reliability of questionnaire was ensured through pilot testing

- Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guideline

  ➢ 2 FGDs

Both the methods had necessity roles to play, make this paper successful.

In depth interviews was only be taken only of 2 teachers (from each school). This kind of interview was one on one and so it was helped the interviewees became more comfortable and reveal more personal experiences that he/she might not wanted to confront in front of others.

Whereas, the FGD was more like an in-depth discussion within a group of people, where the researcher was able to take notes from the perceptions, thoughts and ideas of the participants. An FGD of 6 teachers (from each school) was obtained. These guidelines were checked and verified by the experts from BIED before applying.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

First, the authorization of the schools was taken to get access to the school premises. Then with due consent, a Focus Group Discussion was organized with the early primary teachers. Teachers who were solely engaged with kids aged from 6 to 8 years. This will take around 60 minutes based on the developed questionnaire.

Then another in-depth interview was conducted with only two early primary teachers individually. All the information was collected via recording, taking notes etc. Before taking the interview, I made rapport with all the teachers to get validity of my study. I used recorder, field notes and journals to collect data.

3.7 Data Analysis Plan

It was always difficult to analyze data in a qualitative study. Data analysis was started during the process of data collection through taking field notes. First, data was organized and sorted in three categories. The most important data was highlighted in accordance with the research questions. Next, data was reviewed to find out themes and organized according to the themes and finally, main points were summarized under each theme with some direct citation of the data. Here, the researcher was looking at the concept of bullying from the perspectives of the selected early-primary school teachers since an IDI and FGD were the two tools of data collection.

The steps were followed for an FGD are: planning an FGD, choosing the target group, developing a guide and format to record response, conducting the FGD and interpreting responses. Six early-primary teachers from each school was chosen as target groups for the survey. FGD enables the participants to speak freely without any personal inhibitions.

The steps of an IDI include; writing journal, reading and memoing, categorizing data while memoing, coding theme and interpreting. Since it was an in-depth interview, a lot of question may be impromptu. It was very necessary to make the interviewee feel comfortable and trust the interviewer with the confidential information. The recorder was used with the interviewee's consent.

3.8 Ethics

Consent was taken from the school authority before the entering the premises to conduct interviews. The teachers' permission was taken for participating in FGD and IDI.

The whole process of data collection was maintained utter confidentiality. Any information was not disclosed without permission. In case a teacher wanted to share a student's (i.e. bully or bullied) experience, pseudo names were used to respect everyone's privacy. Any information was disclosed without the permission of the school authority.

3.9 Limitations

- Lack of sample size- only two schools were observed
- Lack of resource- Bullying in Bangladesh has recently got attention and so there is only handful research done on this topic

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

Here, the findings will be presented obtained from the interviews and FGDs. It represents the primary data from the sample size. After providing the findings, the collected data will be discussed in the perspective of the researcher and supported secondary data.

4.1 Findings

This section will present the findings from the primary collected data, to demonstrate this paper. Data from 2 FGDs and 4 in-depth interviews of 2 different schools will be produced and analyzed here in two particles. First, the demographic details of the participants will be given and then, the results of the interviews will be provided following the content analysis method where the findings will be presented in themes and sub-themes.

4.1.1 Demographic Details and Teachers

12 teachers participated in the FGD. They all were early primary teachers of two different English medium schools. They all were both male and female teachers. The age range of the teachers would be from 25 to 45 years. Most of them were very experienced and have been working as an early primary teacher for more than 10 years. Majority of them did not have a master's degree since it is not a requirement to be an early primary teacher in many schools in Bangladesh. 4 of them has a master's degree, 7 of them has a bachelor's degree and 1 of them has a A-level degree to be precise. One of the schools is campaigning programs on anti-bullying and so around 40% of the teachers were aware of the topic.

A one-on-one interview was also taken among four of these teachers. Those who were both subject and class teacher were targeted purposively in this matter. Because, class teachers are well-aware of each of their students than a subject teacher, since they regularly interact with both the students and parents.

4.1.2 Early-primary teachers' perception on bullying

Different teachers have different opinions based on their individual views and experiences. Their approach to this matter considering their understanding, practice and knowledge will be comprehensively discussed in this section.

Understanding on Bullying:

Most of the teachers stated that bullying is hurting someone again and again even he doesn't like it. One of them said, *"For me bullying is when someone is repeatedly attacking another one physically and emotionally."* (FGD # 1, Date: 28 August 2019)

Some of them did not have the clear idea of bullying. They think teasing someone is called bullying.

One teacher said, "*Making faces or joking around is known as bullying. This might hurt the victim's feelings. For example, a child is teasing another child that you cannot run faster than me or you're very slow. May be this is true but the way he mocked the other child is a kind of*

bullying." (FGD # 2, Date: 29 August 2019*)*

From the above discussion, it is clear that most of the teachers have the knowledge about bullying and they are aware of it.

Teachers' Response: The response in this matter was heterogenous. Few of the teachers seemed to agree on the fact that bullying is alarming among the early primary students and they think it should be eradicated as soon as possible. On the other hand, few teachers seem to be less concerned as they do not think bullying has reached that level of attention. They think that since kids cannot remember so much, they get over bullying easily and befriend the

bully again. One of them said that, "*Children tend to forget easily.*" (Personal communication: Interview # 3, Date: 29 August 2019)

Another one said, "*A child would say and do anything, does it really impact on anyone? I have never experienced such harsh incident among kids that seemed crucial to me to take immediate action.*" (Personal communication: Interview # 4, Date: 29 August 2019)

It is probably because of they do not have a good understanding or any related experience enough to take immediate action. But all of them agreed that prevention is better than cure and they would certainly not want something like this to happen to their students.

Another group of participants seemed to have great concern to prevent bullying although they had not experienced something like that.

Types of Bullying: A large number of participants mentioned about two types of bullying, physical bullying and verbal bullying. Few of them stated about other bullying such as sexual bullying and cyber bullying. Their personal experiences all along present a similar notion that, physical bullying is common among boys, whereas verbal bullying is common among the girls.

One of the participants stated about a different type of bullying. She said: "*There are different types of bullying. Among them emotional bullying often goes unnoticed by the teachers. I feel most of the bullying occurs during the tiffin break.*" (Personal communication: Interview # 1, Date: 28 August 2019)

According to her, tiffin-break or recess is when all the kids get a temporary dismissal from class. They are usually under loosened monitoring or supervision at this hour. They engage in communication with peers, grabbing quick snacks, playing etc. Sometimes children make carefree remarks on each other's tiffin or physique that is inappropriate and offensive.

She added, "*Once I heard few children teasing a girl because of her complexion. I was astonished, instantly stopped them and later gave them a brief, saying God has created all of us beautifully and they should never utter such things. But I am scared if that will help stopping them to repeat the same thing.*" (FGD # 1, Date: 28 August 2019)

One teacher mentioned that bullies have different styles to bully. She said, "*Every bully has a different style of bullying and uses different tactics to hurt the victim.*" (FGD #1, Date: 28 August 2019)

Two of the teachers talked about the social bullying. they said, *"Often it is hard to get the social bully because sometimes children lie and spread rumors that wasn't even happened."* (FGD #2, Date: 29 August 2019)

All of the teachers agree on the fact that kids bully both intentionally and unintentionally. The intended bullying is the worst of all, as they do it on purpose and fear of punishment and detentions will only stop him or her temporarily.

These findings give a reflection on the concept of the types of bullying that, the teachers have an approximate idea about this.

Causes of Bullying: From the FGD and IDIs, enormous causes of bullying are found. One class teacher shared an experience where a student was just mimicking her parents which resulted in bullying other children by scolding, making fun of others, using an offensive tone etc. She said, *"Children are imitators. They do what they see."* (Personal communication: Interview # 2, Date: 28 August 2019)

All of them agreed on the fact that kids see bullying in their environment and thus they repeat. Another teacher thinks that, different TV shows also promote bullying unintendedly. One of the English teachers said, "*A student in my class exactly talks like Angelica, copying*

her accents from the cartoon 'Rugrats' who is a bully." (FGD #1, Date: 28 August 2019) He is also a father of a 7-year old and showed his concerns for the children nowadays.

It is also seen that children in broken families are mostly bullied. It is probably because of their low self-esteem and less confident manner according to few teachers.

One teacher who also studied Psychology said that, "*Children who were bullied themselves become bullies later. Because of few bad experiences, they turn out to be ultra-defensive and sometimes bully others to portray a strong character beforehand.*" (Personal communication: Interview # 2, Date: 28 August 2019)

Children who get bullied are usually found to be a bit neglected in the family and very sensitive. The reason why they take a lot of their peers' comments very personally. They often cannot get over bitter experiences emotionally, according to her.

There can be several reasons why a child bullies or gets bullied. All the participants agree on the fact that environment, upbringing, bitter experiences and media play a strong role that causes bullying. They spoke from their personal experiences and consider them as the main causes of bullying.

Effects of Bulling: The most common and widely accepted effect of bullying would be missing school. One said that, "*Once a student stops coming to school regularly, we understand that something must have been wrong.*" (FGD #2, Date: 29 August 2019)

They start hating school and even if they come to school they isolate themselves. A P.E. teacher added, "*I have seen that bullied boys do not like to participate in physical exercise classes. They would make an excuse not to play in the field or miss school on the particular days when they have PE in routine.*" He added, "*It saddens me how bullying is so negatively affecting our kids.*" (FGD #1, Date: 28 August 2019)

The bullied students are also found to be inattentive in class, sometimes they fall asleep and seem very gloomy. Reportedly, they start bedwetting because of a sudden fear all the time. A class teacher shared a case study of her student in the in-depth interview about this.

There was a teacher who also thought it is natural for a 6 or 7-year old to bed-wet sometimes out of bad dream. She said, "*I do not think it is a big deal or necessarily has to be related to bullying.*" (Personal communication: Interview # 3, Date: 29 August 2019)

Teachers may not recognize the effects of bullying always. It is an obscure issue.

One of the teachers in the FGD said, "*A boy in my class was doing very poor in his academics. Although he was very attentive and quiet in class, he would never raise his hand or participate in class. He had no friends and I thought he was just shy, but it is much later, I realized that he gets bullied by his peers regularly that lowered his self-confidence in studies and even hindered him in speaking with others sometimes*." (FGD #2, Date: 28 August 2019)

Another fact that a bullied today might become a bully tomorrow, has already discussed in the causes of bullying.

All the effects that are discussed above are negative and indicates that bullying brings no good. Bullied children are usually introverted and hesitant. The discussion tells that they have a common set of characteristics and reaction towards bullying.

4.1.3 Teachers' practices to prevent bullying

Teachers have shared couple their actions prevent bullying. This includes their opinion and experience.

Initiatives to stop bullying: Initiatives taken by the school is very essential to prevent bullying. all the teachers agreed that more campaigns can raise awareness. Few of the

teachers introduced the issue to children in a healthy way to let them know that it is not okay to bully someone, and they should be helpful to each other as peers.

A teacher engaged in the campaign of anti-bullying program of the school said, *"In my 7 years of career, I feel like I have neglected these manners in my class because of lack of knowledge, this program has helped me to ponder on any irregular manner of a student more."* (FGD #1, Date: 28 August 2019)

Most of the schools in Bangladesh neglect this issue and hence very few teachers have an explicit idea about bullying. all the teachers think there should be training so that they can deal with the kids who are bullied or bully.

One of them said, *"We do not have much experience since all the anti-bullying trainings are given to the middle and final year teachers."* (FGD #2, Date: 29 August 2019)

There should be at least one teacher for each age range, who is an expert in counselling in every school. The oldest participant thinks that, teachers should be more approachable.

"We teach kids, we should not be so harsh or strict that they find it difficult to talk to us when in need." She added. (Personal communication: Interview # 1, Date: 28 August 2019)

Hands on learning to stop bullying: There should be a better and more effective approach to stop kids from bullying because kids do not realize what they are doing is bad.

One said that, *"I have a boy in my class who understands when I stop him from bullying but then after one or two days he would repeat the same activity!"* (Personal communication: Interview # 2, Date: 28 August 2019)

Several hands-on learning to stop bullying were offered by the teachers, who are actively engaged in the anti-bullying campaign. They suggested of play conducted by the children

themselves to understand bullying and its negativity, posters created by the students on anti-bullying etc.

One of them also suggested that, *"Day long seminars with fun activity arranged for kids might help too. This will help them take a break from the regular classes along with learning from them."* (FGD #2, Date: 29 August 2019)

The teachers who are not engaged in this campaign suggested they need trainings to come up with these kinds of creative ideas.

Encouragement on Doing Good Deeds to Stop Bullying: : All the teachers think that encouraging the kids in doing good by rewarding them is very effective.

 A teacher said, *"I have instilled manner-chart in my class. This encourages the students to be well mannered and say positive things to their peers*." (FGD #2, Date: 29 August 2019)

Students should be encouraged through activities and receiving rewards to stop bullying. She added, "*Values or moral education for each class can help."* (FGD #1, Date: 28 August 2019)

Some of the teachers stated that more religious discussions help the children to be more courteous and well mannered. A moral education teacher said,

"*I always try to discuss religious and ethical values with the student and advice parents to make careful choices of the TV shows that they let their children watch."* (FGD #1, Date: 28 August 2019)

There has to be a particular teacher or expert the bullied students can share about their hesitations with. All of the teachers think there should be arrangements for the bullied or the bully to have conversation with counselor or expert in the school every week to check the children's mental health.

One of them said, "*I think it is also a necessity to have an assigned counselor or expert, who would come every week to check with the kid's mental health.*" (Personal communication: Interview # 4, Date: 29 August 2019)

Majority of the participants think that teachers need to be friendly and encouraging in this matter. Some of them suggested that,

"Students should have an access to complain about someone or to talk about their feelings to the teachers." (Personal communication: Interview # 3, Date: 29 August 2019)

Since most of the schools lack in putting emphasis in this matter in the early primary the teachers feel the necessity to have such arrangements inside the school to stop bullying.

4.1.4 Challenges for dealing the bullying

Dealing with bullying is a challenge in itself. Here, the challenges or the obstacles preventing bullying is discussed according to the teachers. Some of the teachers also faced incidents where they did not know how to respond or to even identify bullying.

Lack of Interaction: Many a times, teachers lack interaction with children because of the education system that we have. A participant shared her concern saying,

"*The academic pressure the kids have at such a young age makes us focus on studies more.*" (FGD #1, Date: 28 August 2019)

Teachers know that it is very essential to have one on one interaction with each student. Another teacher added. "*We know that this group of age needs more attention.*" (FGD #2, Date: 29 August 2019)

The lack of interaction is found to be a common challenge among all the participants.

Difficulty in Identifying the Bullied children: The teachers have a hard time identifying bullying. One of the reasons is also lack of interaction as discussed above. The participants have themselves faced incident where they did not know if it was to be classified as bullying or not. One said,

"The student to teacher ratio is very high in a classroom to individually pay attention to each child all the time." (Personal communication: Interview # 3, Date: 29 August 2019)

Sometimes parents make it more difficult for a teacher to address bullying. Since a child spends most of the time at home, the parents can monitor the activity of him/her better. But if parents hide or are unaware of a child's irregular reaction to his usual routine that becomes a challenge for a teacher to help out a bullied victim.

a teacher added. *"Parents also hide a lot of things that makes it harder for a teacher."* (Personal communication: Interview # 3, Date: 29 August 2019)

Again, teachers came up with the same comment that there should be better management from school where a child can share his/her trouble and the teachers should be more accessible to reach out to students.

Moreover, this is also a problem of lack of knowledge and training regarding bullying.

Lack of knowledge Regarding Bullying: The lack of knowledge about bullying among the teachers is evident. As presented earlier how teachers' opinions vary on the importance of controlling bullying. It might also be the case that they have not experienced such incidents to know enough about its dreadful impact.

A participant thinks, *"There should be enough trainings, so that we can learn how to handle a bullied victim or a bully."* (FGD #1, Date: 28 August 2019)

One of the teachers who is an active member of the anti-bullying program stated, "*I did not pay attention to bullying until I was engaged in the campaign. I have learned so much from this.*" (FGD #1, Date: 28 August 2019)

Another member added, "I actually realized that I did not understand what bullying was and therefore could not take any action against it before." (FGD #2, Date: 29 August 2019)

This shows that teachers really need these sorts of programs/campaigns or trainings to know better about bullying and raise awareness.

Lack of Rules and Regulations

School policy plays an important role in terms of a child's safety and security. Although both the schools have strict security system they do not have any written document of safe guarding policy.

A teacher reported that, "*It would be even better if the policy includes all the affairs about bullying too.*" (FGD #1, Date: 28 August 2019)

They all agreed that code of conducts in a school helps in this matter too. The teachers said that, "*We strictly follow the code of conduct provided by the school that includes mannerism and behavior.*" (FGD #2, Date: 29 August 2019)

Both the schools claimed that they have code of conducts given by the authority to each parents when a new student is admitted. But they think more briefing on those rules to the students would be more effective.

one said. "*When a new session starts very less importance is given on the orientation; the teacher-student meeting or meeting and greeting peers etc.*" (FGD #1, Date: 29 August 2019)

Discipline is also considered as a very important tool in this regard. According to the AAP, positive discipline strategies that effectively teach children to manage their behavior, keep them from harm while promoting healthy development. Thus, bullying can be controlled.

So, the above discussion presented from the teachers' FGD and interviews tell us the chosen schools lack in equipment, training and activities to stop bullying although they have a fair idea about it. The teachers need the help of the school authority, government and NGOs to combat this problem.

Dealing with the Bullied Children: Most of the teachers reported that it is hard to identify bullied children, it leads to difficulty in dealing with them.

"Sometimes we really face problems to deal with bullied children because they don't open up easily. Also, we don't have proper training, so we don't even know how to get things out from them." Besides, often teachers face problems with the parents. One participant said, "*Once I wanted to make a parent understand that her daughter is going through some difficulties, but her parent didn't agree with me.*"

All children are different individuals. Each bullied child has different issues. Although the challenges are acute, through proper knowledge and training we can deal the bullied children.

4.2 Discussion

This section analyzes the findings from the collected data. An observational analysis of the data relating to the objective and research questions will be discussed here. It will consist of perception, practice and challenges faced by the early primary teachers on bullying.

4.2.1 Early-Primary Teachers' Perception on Bullying

Result of the current study showed that most of the participants are well aware about the significance on bullying in early-primary years. They perceived that bullying is an alarming issue among the students and it has to be removed as early as possible. Additionally, a recent publication of UNESCO (2019) confirms that school violence and bullying are major problems worldwide.

Similar findings has been seen in a study that, approximately 32%, that is 1 in 3 students has been bullied by their peers at schools last month. Another survey of about 2,972 pupils in 21 schools by Professor Amos Rolider reveals that 65% of the students complained of getting smacked, kicked, pushed or molested by their fellow pupils (Pajares, 1992). Teachers' perception explains their understanding regarding some practices which they have gathered through knowledge, experiences, culture and beliefs.

Most of the participants are concerned about this matter and are interested to resolve it as soon as possible. Few of them had no idea about the seriousness of the issue. According to them, these subtle fighting and arguments are very normal among the kids. Their lack of understanding and experiences show that the teachers need more trainings, workshops and programs regarding the issue for their better comprehension.

Most of the participants' view on bullying seemed limited to physical and verbal bullying. That is due to their personal experiences. But bullying can also be emotional, prejudicial, social and in other forms too. All the participants think that it is difficult to identify these kinds of bullying. Although they heard about other types of bullying like cyberbullying, they think it cannot be perceived among such small kids. Regarding the types of bullying, there is a study where Cyberbullying is bullying through the use of technological devices such as cell

phones, Facebook, Twitter, and text messages and 37.5% of the teachers described cyberbullying to be the most predominant form of bullying among the elementary schools in US (Department of Health and Human Service, 2008). With the rapid advancement of technology in Bangladesh, we too need to be careful of cyberbullying and prevent it.

 Teachers' perceptions are very important in preventing bullying. The success of the prevention programs by implementing the appropriate tools in a school depends on the teacher's approach. It is very important to identify the bully and the bullied at the first place. It will be easier to take measures more effectively if the causes behind a bully is known. Children who bully tend to be friends with other bullies. They are usually leaders in their social group (Smith, 2004). Teachers think that the bullies in class tend to be less cooperative when it comes to helping behaviors. The participants mutually blame the environment of the bullies because a child merely imitates. The TV shows sometimes make them bully unintentionally. Whereas the bullied victims usually have low self-esteem and are insecure in nature. They passively accept the bullying rather than fighting back. Students who display aggressive behavior has been typically defined as lacking social and problem-solving skills; being disruptive and impulsive, shunned by their peers, unpopular with teachers, and chastised by parents (Bell & Willis, 2016).

According to early childhood specialists, the bullied victims tend to be shy and less socially experienced than other children. They may have a strong desire to fit in but face difficulty in making friends and entering social groups. They tend to be submissive and cannot raise voice to say "No" or "Stop that", when something is bothering them.

The effects of bullying are found to be negative for both the bully and bullied according to all the participants. The bullies may develop strong and persistent patterns of bullying behaviors that they might carry into middle school, high school and beyond. They may become the

reason of trouble to peers and even the school. Again, the bullied may start reacting physically such as headaches or stomachache, they may feel sad or depressed and at worst they may refuse to go to school. Their experiences may result into lower self-esteem and difficulties with social relationship. They cannot keep up with the academic pressure and are most likely to be dropouts in the future (UNESCO, 2019, p. 7-9). It troubles them both mentally and physically. The participants experienced these at worse.

Some children are more likely to be targeted because they appear small, weak, insecure, sensitive, or more importantly different i.e. different in ethnicity, skin color, culture, dress up etc. from their peers. The early primary teachers need to look out for young children who are most at risk for becoming involved in bullying. It's important to pay attention when a child is withdrawn, sad, or upset or do not want to participate in activities etc. According to studies, once children become repeated victims of bullying, other children often show a dislike for them and don't want to be their friend. Children avoid victimized children because they want to maintain their position in the social hierarchy and sometimes fear becoming targets themselves. Victims of repeated bullying eventually become isolated, and reluctant to join social groups (Storey & Slaby, 2013).

According to Gini and Pozzoli (2009), when a child is being bullied, he or she constantly feels insecure. Even if he/she is not being bullied he is very conscious that it might start anytime and tries to escape the bully's notice. A sense of fear is always on his/her mind. A victim of bullying feels unaccepted, isolated and angry. According to research, teachers for all grade levels highly underestimate the actual frequency of bullying. Currently the level of bulling and aggression is alarming (Bell & Horne, 2010). School is the most common area for all forms of bullying. Hence, teacher efficacy can certainly resolve the issue better. It is suggested that the teacher's role in preventing bullying efforts is extremely critical.

According to Skinner, Babinski, & Gifford (2014) effective teacher interventions depend on two different but related concepts:

- Positive expectations that teachers have for the student's future outcomes in the classroom, i.e. "Is it possible for the student to be successful at some point in the future?" and

- Teachers' beliefs in their capability in resolving bullying incidents, i.e. "Do I have the necessary skills to intervene and improve the situation?"

So as mentioned earlier the teachers need better understanding to clear their perception about bullying, severity of the problem, social norms related to bullying, and responses to witnessing bullying. The lack of awareness leads the teachers not knowing the appropriate ways to combat the problem, which is one of the main reasons why it is on the rise.

4.2.2 Teachers' Practices to Prevent Bullying

The FGD participants have taken different initiatives and approaches based on their personal experiences. They tried hands on learning method, campaigning methods and others to the severity of the issue as a solution. UNICEF reports that, 35% students get bullied on a regular basis in Bangladesh.

One of the participant schools had already taken initiatives through campaigns. They not only have better understanding on this, they can also act on appropriately when comes to identify bullying or deal with the bullies. When dealing with bullying situations, it is important that teachers understand the dynamics of bullying. Understanding how bullying affects youth is critical to recognizing and considering when and how to intervene (Bells & Willis, 2016).

The participants agreed on having more campaigns and workshops initiated by the school will help. They think that each age range needs an expert in every school. They came up with

remarkable ideas like hands on learning through fun activities for the kids to address this issue. Most of the time a child does not know that he/she is doing something wrong. The participants think it is a great idea to use the rewarding/punishing method, handling the bullies. Since they are at such an early stage this is an effective method. This approach includes instilling manner charts, seat change, loss of privileges, administrator referrals, and counseling referrals.

From the literature reviews we can infer that, the teachers do not follow any specific approach rather intake various techniques when they witness a bullying. Some would try to speak with students if they witnessed bullying acts. On the other hand, some reported that they would refer a student to an administrator if they observed bullying. Conversely, 75% of the participants reported that they would automatically refer students to an administrator when bullying is reported to them.

It is very necessary for the children to be able to complain, when something is bothering them. Whoever it may be, an expert or a teacher or a counselor in the school, it is important to inform. Sometimes teachers might not see that something is troubling the child and so it is very essential for a student to have the access to a particular person in the school. Some of the participants suggested religious discussions; moral class etc. could be an effective solution too.

4.2.3 Challenges for Dealing the Bullying

The data findings of the study suggest that school bullying in Bangladesh is given much less attention. Parents shy away and even teachers sometimes ignore the issue for the lack of awareness. The participants have themselves faced incident where they did not know if it was to be classified as bullying or not. The major challenges are lack of awareness, identifying the

bullied children, lack of knowledge etc. Researchers have reported the difficulty of teachers distinguishing between peer conflict and school bullying (Strohmeier & Noam, 2012).

Bullying has a long-term effect on a child's behavior and that should be addressed so that necessary steps are taken to control bullying. As we know that the quality of student-teacher relationship can play a positive role on students' behavior. Hence raising awareness among the teachers is very important.

According to OECD (2019), an ideal teacher to student ratio is 1:16. It is an irony that all the participants reported that they have a higher ratio than the ideal number in their schools. The teachers claimed that sometimes that may not give the attention to each child individually. The early primary years need a lot of attention and care and the schools need to design the classrooms ideally for the betterment of each child.

The trainings and workshops are really necessary in order to raise awareness and hence resolve the issue. Research suggested that it is critical for the educators to learn (1) how to recognize bullying in their schools, (2) how to determine light cases from serious ones and how to effectively intervene with bullies, bystanders, and victims, and (3) how to prevent bullying from occurring in the first place (Strohmeier & Noam, 2012).

Teachers claimed themselves that how little they know about bullying. The participants who are now attending the anti-bullying campaign, stated that the campaign has helped them a lot to combat the problem. The participants showed their interest to learn and participate in workshops and trainings. They are waiting for the school authority to step forward. The government and other organizations also need to take initiatives for the mental health of our future generation.

4.3 Conclusion

The previous literature and the empirical studies have showed that, it is high time we address bullying in early-primary students. The initiatives taken to prevent bullying are mostly observed by the adolescents. They are few for the kids aged 6 to 8 years in a global context and fewer in Bangladesh. As the study presents teachers' perception on bullying, it proceeded with their practice regarding the matter and the challenges they face handling an incident associated with bullying. Addressing all these are just an initiative to an action plan that will certainly help prevent bullying in schools and help the children develop a healthy mental state.

4.4 Recommendation

The recommendations are given below:

- Ensure systematic and effective training for teachers so that they can prevent bullying.
- Collaborative approach among professionals (teachers, psychologists, counselors) & parents to build a network.
- Awareness raising program need to address in mass media
- Policy formulation requiring to address bullying in educational sectors and ensure quality training, discussion and programs among teachers who started teaching from early-primary years including counselling support to the early- primary years.
- More extended research with larger sample & different population group for more detailed analysis on this topic.

Lastly, it is hoped that a comprehensive and strategic measure with effective intervention will help prevent bullying soon.

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Appendix A: Guideline for Focus Discussion

Date:

Location:

Start Time:

End Time:

Number of Participants:

Participation List

Teachers' Name	Gender	Teaching (classes)	Teaching (subject)

Appendix B: Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

To Assess Teacher's Perception on Bullying in Early-Primary Years

Questionnaire: Perception/ Practice/Challenge

Perception

1. What do you know about bullying? What are the types of bullying?

2. What are the reasons of bullying or being bullied in early primary years?

3. Why do you think children are bullied?

4. What about the children who sometimes bully others – what are they like?

Practice & Challenge

5. Are teachers aware of bullying? How much of a concern is bullying for you personally?

6. How much schools are aware of bullying in early primary years?

7. Did you get any training on preventing bullying?

8. How much schools are aware of preventing bullying?

9. How frequently teachers are facing the bullying issues among the children?

10. What are your experiences with children who are being bullied?

11. What about the children who are bullied - what help do you think they need?

12. What values and behaviors should the policy encourage among the whole school community?

13. What do you think the effect of bullying on child development in respect of Bangladesh?

Appendix C: In-depth Interview Questionnaire

Research Title: Teacher's Perception on Bullying in Early-Primary Years

Section A: Demographic information

Date: ....

1. Name: ....

2. School (Name & Address): ....

(Please put a tick mark)

2. Age: ☐ 20-30 years ☐ 30-40 years ☐ 40+

3. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

4. Education Level: ☐ SSC ☐ HSC ☐ Graduate ☐ Masters ☐ Other

Specify

5. Teaching Experience: ☐ 0-1 Y ☐ 1-2Y ☐ 2-3 Y ☐ 4 or more Y

6. Received Teachers' Training: y/n

If yes, name and duration of the program:

Section B: Perception and current practices of early primary teachers

Perception

1. What is bullying? What's the difference between 'just joking around' and bullying? Do you know the types of bullying?

2. How important is bullying issue in early childhood development? How much priority should be given to prevent bullying in child development?

3. How can this bullying issue be stopped/reduced?

4. What do you think from where did the children learn bullying? What are the common arena of getting bullied in school?

5. What are the damaging effects on child's health and behavior of bullying?

6. Do the children know what is bullying at their age? Y/N - how do they know that?

7. If they chose to tell someone, who'd be the best person to tell?

8. What about parents – do you think they should be told? If so, when or to whom?

9. What sort of help do you think might change a person's bullying behavior?

10. What do you think should happen if the bullying child is reported but doesn't stop?

Practice

11. How do you know that the young child is being bullied by his peers? Is there any measure taken by you as a teacher?

12. Did you get any training on the prevention of bullying from your school?

13. Do you know the types of bullying? How do you handle if a child verbally bullies another child in the classroom environment?

14. How do you engage children in hands-on learning to stop bulling in the class?

15. What types of activities do the school practice to prevent bullying?

16. Do children have opportunity in your class to communicate with the teachers? How and why do you provide this opportunity?

17. What types of games and activities do you initiate to encourage children to talk? How do these encourage prevent bullying?

18. How can the practice be made effective of reducing bullying in schools?

19. Why do you think some children don't report it? What methods you might encourage children to report?

20. How do you help children to stop bullying? How does your participation help in development of the children?

Section C: Challenges on Preventing Bullying

21. Do you think what you know to stop bullying can be practiced in your class? (Y/N) if not, why?

22. What are the challenges that you face to communicate with early primary school children regarding the prevention of bullying in the class? Please explain.

Appendix D: Consent Form for the Teachers

Title of the study: **Teacher's Perception on Bullying in Early-Primary Years**

By: Sufia Binte Islam, M.Sc. Student, BIED, Brac University

Brac Institute of Educational Development (BIED), Brac University mandates conducting a research as a partial requirement of achieving the master's degree in early childhood development (ECD). Here, the research will focus on the perception of the early school teachers on bullying. The aim of the current study is to explore teachers' perception, practice and challenges due to peer bullying.

This study will be conducted by an M.Sc. student, as a part of her master's program. If you want to take part in the research, please sign on three prescribed form. Your participation is totally voluntary, and you may change your mind and withdraw at any time before and during the study. If you agree to participate, we will ask you some questions for information on the issues mentioned above. It will take approximately an hour and a half to complete the discussion/interview.

We will maintain your privacy and confidentiality about any information (sensitive information). Your names will not be written on any of the materials, and only the researcher will have access to your information. All materials with your information in it will be stored in a safe, locked location. The researcher will be responsible to ensure the protection of the information.

The research will not benefit you personally. The information you provide will however, have significant contribution to the learning and improving BIED's development programs. If you are willing to participate in this research, we would request you to sign this consent form.

Participant's signature: _____

Appendix E: Timeline

Title of the study: **Teacher's Perception on Bullying in Early-Primary Years**

The study has been conducted within four months, from July to November.