



## Workplace Bullying in Higher Educational Institutions: A Formulative Review

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### Abstract

The workplace bullying is a perilous phenomenon that has recently captivated the attention of research scholarships situated within the matrix of organizations' interpersonal, structural, and communicative practices. Studies have been established to observe bullying in hotels and restaurants, industries, health care centers, etc. However, the uncivil bullying behaviours in higher education sector are not adequately mapped and critically analysed. This paper aims to investigate the impacts of bullying and negative behaviours in the higher education institution on the health and well-being of employees. This qualitative study, with a research methodology of exploratory or formulative approach, explores institutional misbehaviours and other workplace deviances along with social undermining, harassment and mistreatment leading to incivility and victimization in the higher education sector. By reviewing the literature on bullying in academia or in higher education institutions, it critically analyses the conditions that allow for bullying to persist and its severe consequences for both individuals and the institutions concerned.

**Keywords:** Bullying, higher education, harassment, work bullying, victimization

## INTRODUCTION

Workplace bullying is a phenomenon situated within the matrix of organizations' interpersonal, structural, and communicative practices (Lipinski & Crothers 2014) and is viewed as a form of interpersonal aggression generally experienced in organizations. The prevalence of bullying in organizational workplaces has been observed, researched and documented in recent scholarship. Studies show that about 35% of workers are generally being bullied in organizations (Lester 2013). A set of well publicized surveys reveal that this is an issue endemic in working life globally (Rayner, Cooper, and Hoel 2002). Since every instance of bullying is unique, given the complex dynamic of factors underlying it, this act therefore warrants serious investigation. It is on the rise in higher educational institutions such as colleges and universities. Major attention of scholarship is given to workplace bullying in general and thus only a few studies, if any, empirically examine the prevalence and nature of bullying in higher education institutions. This qualitative study, with a research methodology of exploratory and formulative approach explores all the issues associated with what is becoming a major issue in higher education institutions and organizations. It also explores the impact of bullying in individual and institutions and its ethical and legal implications and the various ways and means to address the related issues.

### Conceptual Analysis and Definition

Researchers define and perceive workplace bullying as an organizational misbehaviour and as a type of frequent and intense interpersonal aggression occurring over a definite time limit. They use this concept of bullying interchangeably with words like 'mobbing,' 'harassment,' 'emotional abuse,' 'mistreatment,' and 'victimization' (Einarsen 1999). It can be a behavioural deviance in the workplace going contrary to its legitimate interests. It is a counterproductive work behaviour that provides deleterious effects on the work itself (Fritz 2014). Ståle Einarsen defines workplace bullying as "all those repeated actions and practices that are directed to one or more workers, which are unwanted by the victim, which may be done deliberately or unconsciously, but clearly cause humiliation, offence and distress, and that may interfere with job performance and/or cause an unpleasant working environment" (Einarsen 1999, 17). There are incidents and researches elucidating negative workplace behaviour are occurring today in higher education institutions. In this sector, the practice of bullying is being replaced with victims enduring the accumulated impact of acts of varied disrespect, such as negative comments or spreading rumours.

It can be experienced through the different forms of “verbal abuse, threatening and intimidating conduct, constant criticism, undermining of work performance, exclusion, marginalization, overloading with work, and taunting” (Lester 2013, ix; Vega & Comer 2005). In this sense, workplace bullying is a continuous unwarranted mistreatment of a co-worker, subordinate or sometimes superiors causing a psychological, emotional or physical harm to the other. Thus it becomes part of negative or anti-social acts. Carroll Brodsky in this regard defines workplace bullying as “repeated and persistent attempts by one person to torment, wear down, frustrate, or get a reaction from another. It is treatment which persistently provokes pressures, frightens, intimidates or otherwise discomforts another person” (Brodsky 1976, 2). The same line of thought is observed in the writings of Andrea Adams, who illustrates workplace bullying as “persistent criticism and personal abuse in public or private, which humiliates and demeans the person” (Adams & Crawford 1992).

In many of the Scandinavian countries bullying is labelled as ‘mobbing at work’ and ‘bullying at work’ in many English-speaking countries (Lester 2013). However, there is a difference in both terms of bullying and mobbing, that the former consists one actor and one or more targets and the latter comprises one or more actors and a single target. Researchers identify almost inexhaustible list of possible constructs of workplace bullying, including, and not limited to, physical and/or psychological aggression, abusive supervision and management, emotional and verbal abuse, social and public undermining, work harassment, continuous scapegoating, insidious work behaviour or misbehaviour, unfair target fixing and non-achievable deadlines, etc. So workplace bullying is any deliberate, repeated and hurtful acts in the workplace including direct or indirect harassment, professional misconduct and misuse and abuse of power and authority leading to unfair, insulting or offensive treatment as well as public or social undermining disregarding the dignity of both the work and the human person. It ultimately causes distress and interferes with job performance and affecting negatively, creates an unpleasant working conditions and job environment.

### Literature Review

Bullying has been identified as the key issue in the workplace in relation to workers’ safety, health, satisfaction and wellbeing (Nauman, Malik & Jalil 2019). Researchers identify different types of bullying behaviours, which they distinguish as (1) work-related as opposed to person-related bullying; (2) passive and active bullying; (3) psychological versus physical bullying; and interpersonal versus organizational bullying (Einarsen *et al.* 2020). Researchers also opine that the workplace bullying is the imbalance of power between the parties, as “a victim is constantly teased, badgered and insulted and perceives that he or she has little recourse to retaliate in kind” (Einarsen *et al.* 2020, 17). The weak points of the targets are utilized for causing bullying. It is perceived as a subjective process of social reconstruction that is not always easy to prove. Bullying is therefore explained as “an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted may end up in an inferior position becoming the target of systematic negative social acts” (Einarsen *et al.* 2020, 26). Referring back to Heinz Leymann’s “Mobbing—psycho terror in the workplace and how one can defend oneself” (1993), Einarsen *et al.* asserted that four factors are prominent in eliciting bullying behaviours at work: “(1) Deficiencies in work-design, (2) deficiencies in leadership behaviour, (3) the victim’s socially exposed position, and (4) low departmental morale”(Einarsen *et al.* 2020, 29).

Brodsky (1976) in his work “The Harassed Worker” discusses three sources of workplace bullying, namely harassment by people, by work pressure, and by the system. According to Brodsky, harassment by people (superiors, colleagues, etc.) relates to the issue of severe control over the other, keeping those subordinates always under a hierarchical dominion. The excessive emphasis on production and the continual pressure to get the maximum out of work and the tediousness of the entrusted task and the consequent boredom cause for harassment by work pressure. In the same way, some working conditions and job atmosphere with constant checking and severe monitoring leads to the construct of harassment by the system. Hence, workplace bullying is a “specific phenomenon where hostile and aggressive behaviours, be it physical or non-physical, are directed systematically at one or more colleagues or subordinates leading to a stigmatisation and victimisation of the recipient” (Einarsen 1999, 17; Leymann 1996). Organizational behaviours that refer to “any intentional action by members of organizations that defies and violates (a) shared organizational norms and expectations, and/or (b) core societal values, mores and standards of proper conduct,” stand as a precursor for workplace bullying.

It is defined as “behaviour intended to hurt the organization or other members of the organization” (Spector & Fox 2002, 271). Researchers identify workplace aggression as part of workplace bullying and is defined as “any form of behaviour directed by one or more persons in a workplace toward the goal of harming one or more others in that workplace (or the entire organization) in ways the intended targets are motivated to avoid” (Neuman & Baron 2005, 18). Thus, “bullying is a direct counter to the good of persons in its effect of degrading the worth and value of persons” (Fritz 2014, 12). In this regard, Einarsen, quoting and analysing D. Zapf, categorises five types of bullying behaviour in the workplaces, that include: (1) work-related bullying which may include changing your work tasks or making them difficult to perform; (2) social isolation; (3) personal attacks or attacks on your private life by ridicule, insulting remarks,

gossip or the like;(4) verbal threats where you are criticised, yelled at or humiliated in public; and(5) physical violence or threats of such violence (Einsarsen 1999, 18).

Therefore, workplace bullying is a common synonym for all inappropriate workplace behaviours and relates to continuous and intentional and deliberate negative acts, often both psychological and physical in nature, directed towards an employee (Rai & Agarwal 2017). The verbal or physical harassment or emotional abuse or any other counterproductive behaviour in the workplace become unethical as these function against social rules that are universally accepted for humanities sustenance and development. Premilla D'Cruz and Ernesto Noronha (2016) describe varieties of workplace bullying relating to emotional abuse at work. They speak about a compounded bullying in connection with interpersonal bullying in relation to level and dual locus bullying in association with internal or external bullying in terms of location (D'Cruz and Noronha 2016a). Researchers are of the opinion that bullying is related to a host of negative attitudes and behaviours in the workplace (Rai & Agarwal 2018). Any unfavourable workplace incidents engender strong negative feelings among employees affecting adversely their attitudes and behaviours in relation to work. Likewise, it is clear that persistency and power disparities are the key features of negative activities in an organization that make them within the category of workplace bullying. Therefore, workplace bullying has very detrimental effects on the contemporary work-life, placing serious implications on employees themselves and on organizations and on society.

The four phases of bullying identified by Einsarsen (1999) are: (1) aggressive behaviour (a subtle form of aggression towards target), (2) Bullying (repeated, intense, direct form of aggression towards the target), (3) Stigmatization (subjection of targets to ridicule by other organization members), and (4) Trauma (intense physical and/or mental effects of bullying on the victim). Workplace bullying as counterproductive work behaviour is illustrated as “any intentional behaviour on the part of an organization member viewed by the organization as contrary to its legitimate interests” (Sackett 2002, 5; Lipinski & Crothers 2014). Three major characteristics of bullying are “(a) the source of mistreatment, (b) the persistence and frequency of treatment, and (c) the superiority (power) of the actor” (Raja et al. 2017, 3). With regard to the sources, it can be any organizational member. Secondly, targets are victimized, by way of insulting, teasing, etc. over a sustained period of time marking its persistence and continuity. As a third feature, workplace bullying generally occurs with power imbalance between the perpetrator and the target.

### Research Methodology

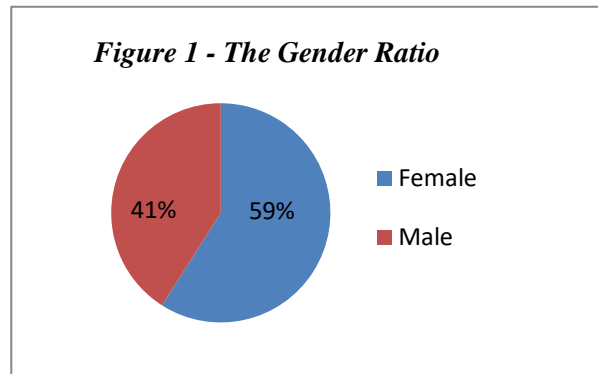
Research methodology is the actual track of doing the research. As a systematic way of conducting a research, a methodology refers to “the principles and ideas on which researchers base their procedures and strategies (methods)” (Holloway & Galvin 2017). The core of objectives of this study comprises the scope and nature of workplace bullying in higher education institutions and its consequences. A qualitative approach was used that consists of questionnaire to collect the primary data regarding elements of workplace bullying and the resultant effects in people working in educational institutions. It is also exploratory in nature and tries to unravel the underlying reasons and motivations of particular attitudinal and behavioural patterns of people employed in the higher education institutions. Since it is difficult to explain human experiences and behaviours in quantifiable or measurable terms, researchers in the field of social sciences appropriately use qualitative methods to foster a deep and a comprehensive understanding of things that occur in the social world. The sample size determined for the study was 158 belonging to various higher educational institutions in Idukki, Kerala. 158 valid responses were analysed.

### Data Analysis and Interpretations

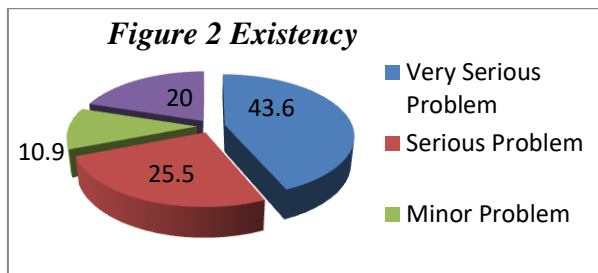
The data analysis process is comprised of different essential elements such as data organization, data reduction through summarization and categorization of available data and then the data analysis. This process of data or result analysis forms the data with order, structure and meaning. The main purpose of the result analysis is to present and illustrate the findings. Interpretations also attempts to identify patterns, or associations and causal relationships in the themes. Recommendations are considered to help employees to improve the program, product or service; conclusions about program operations or meeting goals, etc. and in the contextual situation, within the territory of reaching conclusions and achieving meeting goals. At the beginning of the year 2021, the data is collected from higher education professionals regarding to their experiences with workplace bullying, cyberbullying, and related health issues. The link to the survey was posted in the higher education special interest forums and groups online. The survey was sent further to higher education professionals whose contact information appeared in their respective websites and sent via social media and emails.

### Result Analysis

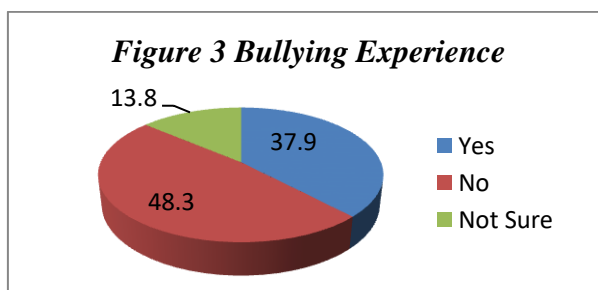
Result analysis is the most complex and mysterious phases of a qualitative study undertaken in any discipline and it receives the slightest thoughtful discussion in the literature. Result analysis often becomes an ongoing iterative process where data is collected and analyzed.

**Figure 1 - The Gender Ratio**

The sample is comprised of 158 relatively young male (65) and female (93) educators in the higher education institutions. The majority of the respondents (59%) were female staff from various higher education institutions in Idukki District. Many of these female respondents were ready to responds, while few of them shared their concerns of fear of punishment and losing the job, if any conceptual intimation goes against the interest of their employer institute. The tabulation of gender variance is given in Figure 1. A majority of the respondents - 69 people in count (43.6%) - find the workplace bullying in higher education institutions is very serious issue that needs to be addressed with a prime concern in all human resource management strategies and praxis. Another 25.5 percent of respondents (40 numbers) consider this as serious problem. Around 10.9 percent (17 people) retorted it as a minor problem. Few of the respondents having 32 people in number (20%) were of the opinion that it is a non-existent problem. Figure 2 explains this tabulation.

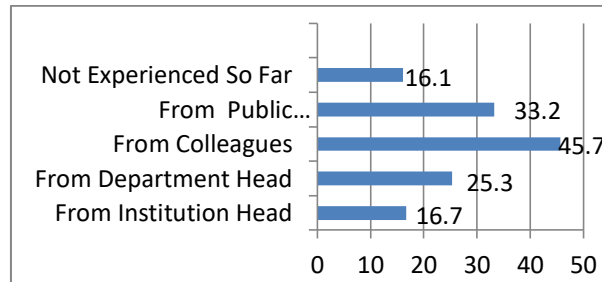
**Figure 2 Existency****Figure-2: Existence**

Around 76 people (48.3%) responded that they have never been bullied at the current place of work. However, many of them supposed it as a serious problem as they have prior experience of themselves or their colleagues having been bullied in the workplace. See Figure 3 for the tabulated account of the same. Around 60 people (37.9%) confirmed that they have experiences of workplace bullying in the higher education institutions. A few of the respondents (13.8%) opined that they (22 numbers) are not quite sure about the instances of being bullied in the workplace, or they can't trace some of the issues of the workplace as part of bullying.

**Figure 3 Bullying Experience****Figure-3: Bullying Experience**

People shared the experience of being bullied in the higher education workplaces starting from the very first day itself. It increases when employees become very close to one another and it is experienced in more elaborated way mostly in probation period. Recalling to the incidents of bullying, people possess and share differences of opinion beginning with the personal characteristics of the leaders and the high work-related demands and pressures. Distrust and disrespect for others along with misunderstanding, racial discrimination and patriarchal mentality and the consequent superiority complex function as main sources of bullying.

A few numbers of respondents never experienced such type of bullying and shared their viewpoint accordingly. For most of them, the experience(s) of bullying is/are from institution (16.7%) or department head (25.3%), from colleagues (45.7%), from public including parents, students, etc. (33.2). From the respondents, a number of 25 people (16.1%) have not yet experienced bullying as such in their respective workplaces. A tabulation of the sources of workplace bullying in higher education institutions is given below in *Figure 4*.



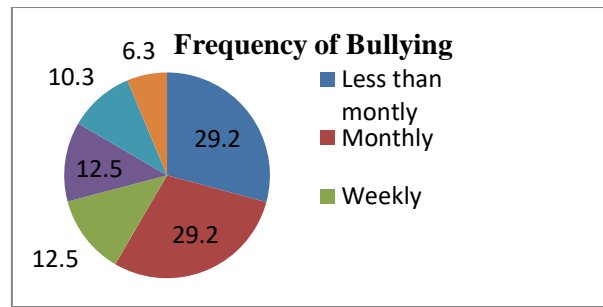
**Figure-4:** sources of workplace bullying in higher education institutions

People in higher education institutions experience bullying through various manipulated means and ways. This bullying increases by the manifold means of unprecedented targeting of people. Among the 158 respondents, only 18 people (11.4%) expressed that they have not yet experienced something like a bullying. The unrealistic targets or the unnecessary alteration of the given targets (38.5%) along with the excessive criticism (38.5%) mark the highest form of bullying experiences for the people in higher education institutions. In equal status, almost 60 people (38.5%) consider humiliation as a crucially influencing means of bullying people. Next comes the excessive work monitoring (34.6%) and malicious lies or rumours (30.8%) spread against the targets. Similarly, shouting and threats (26.9%), purposefully keeping the targets out of things (26.9%) and the consequent victimization of people (26.9%) also become part of direct or indirect bullying experienced in the higher education institutions.

Finally, a set of physical, emotional or verbal abuses and intimidation (15.4%) also befalls the experience of workplace bullying. *Figure 5* illustrates the same.

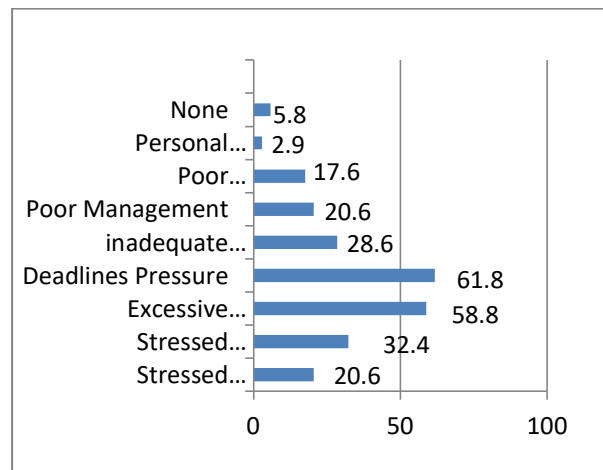


The frequency of people experiencing bullying in higher education institutions is varied according to the institutions and situations. A considerable number of people opined about the targeting of people happening monthly (29.2%) or even less than monthly (29.2%). Almost 20 people (12.5%) expressed that bullying happens even weekly. Similar number of people (12.5%) shared that they never had any experiences of being bullied in the workplace. People also state that bullying is experienced occasionally (10.3%) and even it is very rare (6.3%). The tabulation in *Figure 6* asserts the frequency of bullying.



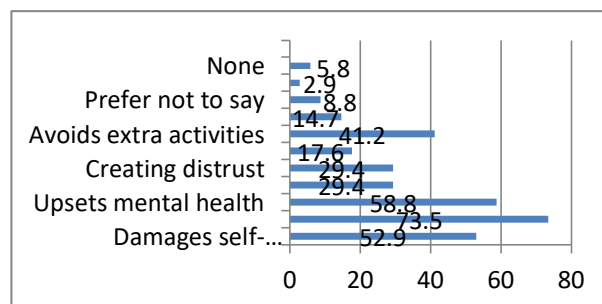
**Figure-6:** frequency of bullying

People identify major causes of bullying as deadline pressure (61.8%) and unreasonable or excessive workloads (58.8%). Other reasons comprise the bullying from the stressed colleagues (32.4%) and the inadequacy of training and other developmental programmes in the institutions (28.6%). Poor management skills of the authority (20.6%) or even the stressed management or head (20.6%) and their poor performance approach (17.6%) along with personal behavioural malpractices (2.9%) cause also for bullying practices in the higher education institutions. *Figure 7* explains the same.



**Figure-7:** major causes for bullying

With regard to the negative impacts of bullying, the respondents had different experiences. Almost 116 people, a substantial number of respondents (73.5%), acknowledged that the experience of bullying, whether small or big, reduces the ability to work freely and avoids (41.2%) taking risk for extra activities. Again, a sizable number of respondents (58.8%) states and proves that it upsets mental health and another 29.4% shares the concerns that it also disturbs physical health. A commendable number of people (52.9%) were of the opinion that it damages self-confidence. People (29.4%) also share their reservation that it creates distrust among colleagues and between the employees and employers. It generates among people fear in public appearance (17.6%) and makes people nervous and anxious (2.9). For almost 14.7% of people it never affected negatively and few others (8.8%) preferred not to answer it. See *Figure 8* for the systematic presentation of the tabulation.



**Figure-8:** negative impacts of bullying



The multiple answers to the question what measures would you suggest to reduce bullying is shortlisted and arranged systematically to get an integral understanding of the matters over discussion. They are given below:

1. Open space for discussion and consultation, responsible behavior, mutual respect and understanding, fair work division, impartial (proper) management system, etc.
2. More staff friendly atmosphere and creative and fair (safe and healthy) working conditions, respect impartial attitude to all people.
3. Sincerity and commitment, equality, openness, understanding and availability.
4. Team work and cooperation, keeping a good relationship between employees and a necessary rapport with the authorities.
5. Train the kids to react against everyone who try to suppress them and teach them to never bully anyone.
6. Strict implementation and the holding of rules and regulations against bullying.
7. Self-respect and effective participation of management and good adherence of civic duties.
8. The head of the institution should understand his/her subordinates and maintain a workable atmosphere at campus by realizing the facts of having or allowing freedom to work

### **Interpretation and Suggestions**

The previous section presented the summarization and analysis of the study conducted in tune with the probable workplace bullying experienced in the higher education institutions. In this section, we reflect on what those results mean for the general understanding of the facts and specifications of bullying in the higher education sector. Here, we also summarize the results and recommend some partial solutions and suggestions.

### **Explored Causes of Bullying**

Einsarsen identifies causes of bullying at work as having mainly two issues: the role of the personality of the victims and the role of psycho-social factors (Einsarsen 1999). He also adds the personality of the bully in it. The peculiar personality characteristics of the victim such as over-sensitivity, low self-esteem, lack of conflict management ability, etc. mark the distinctive causative factors of bullying in relation to the personality of victim. Similarly, the job environment including the positions of power within the organization, the refusal or the denial to take action against bullying, the structural laxity in the workplace, lack of moral discernment in the organization, etc. has been recognized as the second causative issue. Likewise, the personality of the bully, namely, resentment or envy and feeling of insecurity functions as the third cause to the bullying in the workplace. Similarly, it is generally elicited and mostly prompted by a work-related conflict, a typical reason behind this ever increasing workplace bullying.

In the same way, there is a link between work conditions, quality factors and workplace bullying. A set of negative work environments elevates the level of bullying in the workplace (Coyne et al. 2003) along with other organizational changes (Hoel & Cooper 2000), changes in authority, leadership (Hoel et al. 2010) and work-life. As per the current study, the malfunctions in professional socialization process also cause to increase the workplace bullying. Participators of the study also extracted the humiliation as a crucially influencing means of bullying people. Distrust and disrespect for others along with misunderstanding, racial discrimination and patriarchal mentality and the consequent superiority complex function are experienced as main sources of bullying. The amplified unrealistic targets or the unnecessary and sudden alteration of the given targets along with excessive criticism on tiny failures hasten the acceleration of workplace bullying in higher education institutions.

### **Methods and Techniques of bullying**

A non-exhaustive list of various methods and techniques used for workplace bullying in higher education institutions comprises the unfair denial or delaying of tenure, subjective non-renewal of annual contract, consistent public humiliation, open and aggressive challenges in offices, and alienating and cornering from activities. The behaviours of showing inappropriate gestures, undermining credibility by spreading rumours and social isolation and exclusion mark further proficiency for bullying in the higher education institutions. Similarly, people also opine that further discounting the opinions in meetings and devaluation of one's work and efforts demonstrate the yet another ways of bullying along with exposure to teasing, insulting and ridicule and the lack of support, downsizing, and unfair dismissing.

### **Effects of Bullying**

Workplace Bullying is said to be "a combination of many aggressive, hostile, and antisocial interpersonal behaviours that are loaded with devastating techniques that can distort victims' self-image, consequently leaving them so drained (both emotionally and physically) that they become unable to perform their domestic responsibilities" (Raja et al. 2017, 4). Workplace bullying is associated with negative physical and psychological health outcomes (Cooper, Hoel & Faragher 2004). Bullying is observed as a workplace stressor and it jeopardizes employees' life satisfaction (Nauman, Malik & Jalil 2019), especially when, on the one hand, they get the feel of being repeatedly deprived of work tasks in the organizations, and imposing unreasonable and unfair work pressure, on the other hand (Einsarsen 2000). Researchers organize the area of problematic workplace behaviour in a tripartite formula of superordinate (counterproductive behaviour; organizational injustice, misbehaviour, aggression, deviance, violence and

antisocial behaviour), intermediate (emotional abuse, mobbing, social undermining, harassment and mistreatment), and subordinate phenomena (incivility, verbal abuse and aggressiveness, social ostracism, and victimization) of harmful behaviour at work (Lutgen-Sandvik et al. 2007).

The present study also supports these types of behavioural effects of bullying in the higher education institutions. Health problems of workplace bullying in higher education study includes insomnia, needing a counselor, increased alcohol intake, and suicidal ideation. Bullying in higher education institutions increases anxiety and nervousness and leads a person into a vulnerable position of being with decreases self-esteem and increased difficulty in job performance and hence moves with increased risk for depression, stress and blood pressure. Rai and Agarwal point out the increased turnover intentions, decreased form of both in-role behaviours such as commitment and loyalty and extra-role behaviours like that of added dedication to complete the task with perfection (Rai & Agarwal 2019). They observed, “work-related stressors (like workplace bullying) can drain employees’ essential psychological resources and trigger a resource conservation motive wherein employees adopt defensive postures to protect against further losses” (Rai & Agarwal 2019, 212). A set of passive coping strategies (silence and feedback avoidance) are also observed (Rai & Agarwal 2018; Xu et al. 2015) recently from the part of employees who do not wish to make it public due to the fear punishment such as of holding the promotion un-necessarily and of losing job.

The human values of the target or victim is disdained and disrespected in every act of bullying in the workplace, which leads to the procedures of their manipulation, retaliation, elimination and destruction. Researchers show that the self-image of the victims is denied or attacked here and leads to intense emotional involvement (van de Vliert 1984; Einsarsen 1999). Workplace bullying in the higher education institutions can be distinguished, as in general bullying, between work-related bullying and person-related bullying. The work-related bullying comprises of being exposed to unreasonable deadlines, unmanageable workloads or other types of behaviours that make the work situation difficult for the victim, while bullying that is primarily person-related includes insulting remarks, excessive teasing, gossip and rumours, social isolation and exclusion. Victims become anxious, aggressive, provocative, and annoying and differ in terms of personality with their non-bullied counterparts. It is expressed that the victims show and become more oversensitive, suspicious and angry and possess a mixture of depression, distress in social settings. It produces more fear among employees about their capabilities to meet employer’s requirements and leads to reduced organizational citizenship behaviour.

Though in some organisations bullying or physical and/or psychological harassment is institutionalised as a part of the leadership and managerial practice (Ashforth, 1994), and hence the legitimization of the aggressive power, the prejudicial and discriminating overpowering of the authority and the resultant exploitation of the victims become its highly impacted consequences. Thus the vulnerable becomes the easy target of frustration and stress caused by these situational factors (Einsarsen 1999). Bullying thus become and cause to destructive (highly aggressive and authoritarian) leadership, scapegoating processes and acting out prejudice in the organization (Einsarsen 1999). Researchers agree that workplace bullying has been linked to sleep disturbances (Nauman, Shazia, Malik & Jalil 2019). One of the characteristics of workplace bullying is that “it is not a stand-alone event; rather it is a series of the ongoing and steadily escalating thread of episodes that creates a cumulative effect on the victim (Nauman, Shazia, Malik & Jalil 2019). Women are bullied more readily, rapidly and easily by both colleagues and supervisors (Rayner, Cooper, and Hoel 2002). They also experience more post-traumatic stress disorders.

The victims of workplace bullying face a situation that reduces their energy resources very hastily, leading to job burnout in the organizations (Raja et al. 2017). Thus it includes a state of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced efficacy. Workers generally become exhausted while trying to cope with the situation. Researchers observe that workplace bullying such as workplace aggression abusive supervision, has a positive correlation with and leads to work-family conflict (Raja et al. 2017; Demsky et al. 2014; Carlson et al. 2012; Greenhaus & Bantell 1985). For instance, researcher describes that workplace bullying “is a combination of many aggressive, hostile, and antisocial interpersonal behaviours that are loaded with devastating techniques that can distort victims’ self-image, consequently leaving them so drained (both emotionally and physically) that they become unable to perform their domestic responsibilities” (Raja et al. 2017).

Researchers found that there are a relatively strong correlation between bullying and absenteeism, the intention to leave and is also strongly associated with job satisfaction and hence affects the performance and productivity (Anjum et al. 2011; Hoel & Cooper 2000). Researchers identify absenteeism as an alarming issue of organizations and describe it as one of the major consequents of workplace bullying (Anjum et al. 2011). Workplace bullies, who often work with the guidelines and organizational etiquettes of the higher education institutions, lead for the repeated exclusion, intentional marginalizing, down-rating, ostracism and preferential allotment of work projects, etc. Such treatment in the educational sector can leave a target feeling isolated and depressed, and victimized.



## Needs and Recommendations

It is an urgent need to create campus wide and institutions wide campaigns and legislation to address the issue of bullying in the higher education institutions. Similarly, cultural change initiatives are to be charted and implemented and should promote a sound corporate ecosystem in the higher education institutions. A new code of conduct for the campus along with anti-bullying policies and training for faculty and other staff shall be established. In the same way, a more comparative research is required with cross cultural applicability to supply for the globally mobile workforce. Likewise, there is a high need for more contextually driven research to examine the unique nuances operating in institutions in a region or locality.

## CONCLUSION

Workplace bullying in higher education institutions is featured by multi-causality and involves a range of factors established in nuanced expounding levels focusing, on the one hand, upon the behaviour of the actor/doer or upon the target, on the other hand, in tune with consequent perceptions, reactions and responses. This research on workplace bullying in higher education indicates that a considerable number of higher education employees, regardless of race, gender, or age, are affected by workplace bullying. This study indicates that in spite of well-structured policy system, levels of bullying remains significantly high in higher educational institutions, with the considerable number of staff indicating various experiences of bullying behaviour at work. It occurs when someone is subjected to constant negative social acts in the workplaces. The persistent public humiliation, exclusion from public activities, undermining of work performance, creating annoyance, mocking and teasing, etc. in the department, among colleagues, and from management are incidences of bullying that are on the rise in higher education institutions. Here, the physical and psychological abuse, offensive remarks, personal seclusion and isolating tendencies, continuous devaluation of performance, restricting access to information, and persistent criticism even upon a matter of least important obstinate the targets.

The rates of bullying in higher education appear similar to the workplace bullying associated with the corporate world. Bullying is observed as irrational process and means an implicit exercise of power for psychosomatic delight at the expense of others and it is the repeated and the enduring negative acts. The executors of workplace bullying in higher education institutions damage the academic work environment and study culture, and demoralize the all stakeholders concerned. It adversely impacts workforce effectiveness and productivity and has deleterious health effects on victims. Employers need to pay attention to workplace bullying through stricter rules, regulations and it requires taking a firm stand against those who commit to such activities. The ill-treatment in the workplace or the excessive demands for work output makes people ill unable to work claiming permanent and total disability. It requires a dedicated specific team for all its function. To support employees express their concerns, organizations must devise strict compliance standards and corporate ethics. Since every instance of bullying is unique, given the complex dynamic of factors underlying it, this act therefore warrants serious investigation.

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