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## Analyzing the Role of Parenting in Bullying Behaviour of Children

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### Abstract

The study intended to investigate the role of parenting in bullying behaviour of children. A total of 240 children, age ranged 7 to 17 yrs. (Mean age = 12 yrs.), enrolled in different schools of Gorakhpur city and their parents participated in the study. Multidimensional Parenting Scale (Chauhan & Khokhar, 1995) was administered on parents to determine parenting strategies. Further, School Bullying Checklist (S. Pandey, 2018) was used to assess bullying behaviour in children.

Correlation results revealed close associations among parenting strategies and bullying behaviours. More specifically; dimensions of Positive Parenting i.e., love, encouragement, acceptance, progressivism, democratism, independency and dominance were found inversely related with children's bullying behaviour. Contrary to this, dimensions of Negative Parenting i.e., hate, rejection, autocratism, discouragement, submissiveness, conservatism, and dependency were found positively correlated with bullying behaviour. Moreover, regression results proved that positive parenting strategies exerted favorable role in diminishing bullying behaviour whereas, negative parenting strategies displayed intensifying influence on development of bullying behaviours of children. Present findings can be applicable to aware parents about implication of positive parenting strategies for proper development of behaviours in children. Findings are discussed.

**Keywords:** Children, Bullying Behaviour, Positive Parenting, Negative Parenting.

### Introduction

Bullying is an intentional behaviour that hurts, harms or humiliates people, either physically or emotionally, and can happen while at school, in the community or online. Bullying is an intentional, continual aggressive behavior towards a person, the victim, who cannot defend himself, and this usually involves an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim (Giovazolias & Mitsopoulou, 2013). Bullying at school is recognized as a global phenomenon (Andreou 2000) affecting a significant number of children and adolescents (Seals & Young 2003). The bullying behaviour can be physical (e.g. hitting, pushing, kicking), verbal (e.g. calling names, provoking, making threats) or can include other behaviours such as making faces or social exclusion.

When we are talking about the bullying behaviour there is basically, two parties or categories of people are involved in namely, the bully and the victim. There could be a third party known as the bystander or witness. Bullying can have long-term academic, physical, and emotional consequences on bullies, victims, and bystanders. They have higher absenteeism and dropout rates from school and may show signs of loneliness. They often suffer from humiliation, insecurity, and low self-esteem and may develop a fear of going to school. The impact of frequent bullying may continue and persist into adulthood, where they appear to be at greater risk of depression and other mental health and behaviour related problems (Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention, 2001; Shellard, 2002). Bullying has been associated to a variety of negative outcomes, including emotional and behavioural problems, (Kumpulainen et al., 1999), academic problems and increased involvement in delinquent acts and substance abuse in children and youth.

A number of factors like family, home environment, school climate, community, peer status and peer influence can be related to bullying behavior (Cook, et al, 2010). Many researchers observed that the quality of the home environment and the family could be linked to the

children relationship and behavior at the school (Joronen & Astedt.kurki, 2005). Tripathi and Pandey (2018) examined association between parenting and development of self-esteem in adolescents and identified inverse relationship between negative parenting strategies and domains of self-esteem. Children with negative parenting also showed numerous behavioural problems as compared to children reared with positive parenting strategies (Pandey et.al; 2015)

Therefore, parenting plays very important role in the transition of children from one stage of life to another (Okorodudu, 2010). Studies suggest that children raised with an authoritarian style of parenting have low self-esteem and that this in turn can cause these children to become bullies. Furthermore, research has shown that children with parents who monitor them are less likely to engage in bullying of any kind and parents, who have appropriate expectations for their children, are least likely to bully (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Other researchers have identified that children who experience victimization problems are more likely to come from families with histories of child abuse, poor attachment and poorly managed conflict (Pandey, 2007; Perry, Perry & Kennedy 1992). Hagan and McCarthy, 1997 also showed that delinquent behavior, like bullying, is associated with parental rejection, weak parental supervision and inadequate involvement with the child. In the same vein, Perren and Hornung (2005) contended that maternal behavior, like over protection can sometimes be positively related to bullying behavior and victimization. Likewise, permissive parental behavior predicts the experience of victimization by the child, while authoritarian parenting style best predicts bullying behavior in children (Baldry & Farrington, 2000).

The review of above studies denotes that parenting has differential consequences on children's bullying behaviour. However, research on bullying behaviour in context to parenting strategies is less investigated issue especially in Indian context. Against this backdrop, present study is planned to enrich the understanding of different parenting strategies and their link with children's bullying behaviour.

### Objectives

- To examine the relationship between parenting strategies and bullying behaviour of children.
- To find out the predicting role of various parenting strategies in bullying behaviour of children.

**Table 1:** Correlation between Positive Parenting Strategies and Bullying Behaviours

Dimensions of Positive Parenting	School Bullying			
	Physical Bullying	Psychological Bullying	Sexual Bullying	Bullying (As a whole)
Love	-.705**	-.787**	-.883**	-.898**
Encouragement	-.724**	-.791**	-.887**	-.909**
Acceptance	-.691**	-.781**	-.877**	-.888**
Progressivism	-.707**	-.782**	-.870**	-.892**
Democratism	-.698**	-.781**	-.880**	-.892*
Independency	-.691**	-.789**	-.874**	-.889**
dominance	-.697**	-.766**	-.868**	-.882**
Positive as a whole	-.713**	-.760**	-.867**	-.886**

It is apparent from the results (Table-1), all the dimensions of positive parenting strategies were found negatively associated with different types of bullying behaviours. As well as positive parenting as a whole was also found

### Hypotheses

- Parenting would be found closely related with the bullying behaviour in children. Specifically, positive parenting strategies would be found negatively related with bullying behaviours whereas, negative parenting strategies would be found positively related with the bullying behaviours of children.
- Parenting strategies would be found as strong predictors of bullying behaviour.

### Method

#### Participants

A total of 240 children, age ranged 7 to 17 yrs. (Mean age= 12 yrs.), enrolled in different schools of Gorakhpur city and their parents were participated in the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used for sample selection.

#### Measures

##### School Bullying Checklist (SBC)

To assess the level and forms of bullying behaviour in students, School Bullying Checklist (S. Pandey, 2018) was used. The checklist includes three sub types i.e. Physical bullying, Psychological bullying, and Sexual bullying.

##### Multidimensional Parenting Scale (MDPS)

The MDPS (Chauhan & Khokhar, 1995)) was used to assess parenting style and strategies. This scale has 56 items divided into 14 subscales. The items are related with positive domains are: Love, Encouragement, Acceptance, Progressivism, Democratism, Independency, Dominance and the items related with negative domains are: Hate, Discouragement, Rejection, Conservatism, Autocratism, Dependency, Submissiveness.

### Results

Obtained scores were treated statistically in terms of both correlation and regression analyses.

#### Correlation Results

In order to determine the linkages between parenting style and bullying behaviours correlations were computed. Results are displayed in Table (1 & 2).

#### Positive Parenting and Bullying Behaviour

negatively associated with the different types of bullying behaviours. More specifically;

- Love was found negatively associated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and

- bullying as a whole.
- Encouragement was also found negatively associated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.
- Acceptance was also found inversely correlated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.
- Progressivism dimension of parenting was also found negatively associated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.
- Democratism was inversely correlated with physical

bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.

- Independency the dimension of parenting was found negatively related with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.
- Dominance was also found negatively correlated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.

### Negative Parenting and Bullying Behaviour

**Table 2:** Relationship between Negative Parenting Strategies and Bullying Behaviours

Dimensions of Negative Parenting	School Bullying			
	Physical Bullying	Psychological Bullying	Sexual Bullying	Bullying (As a whole)
<b>Hate</b>	.681**	.734**	.836**	.852**
<b>Rejection</b>	.668**	.761**	.850**	.861**
<b>Autocratism</b>	.651**	.772**	.858**	.861**
<b>Discouragement</b>	.644**	.791**	.874**	.870**
<b>Submissiveness</b>	.676**	.762**	.849**	.864**
<b>Conservatism</b>	.649**	.790**	.882**	.875**
<b>Dependency</b>	.675**	.814**	.903**	.902**
<b>Negative as a whole</b>	.676**	.765**	.871**	.874**

Significant correlations (Table-2) indicated that the dimensions of negative parenting strategies were found positively correlated with different types of bullying behaviours. Further, negative parenting as a whole was also found positively associated with the different types of bullying behaviours. More specifically;

- Hate was found positively associated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.
- Rejection was also found positively associated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.
- Autocratism was also inversely correlated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.
- Discouragement dimension was also found negatively associated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.

- Submissiveness was inversely correlated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.
- Conservatism dimension was also found negatively associated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.
- Dependency like other dimensions was negatively correlated with physical bullying, psychological bullying, sexual bullying, and bullying as a whole.

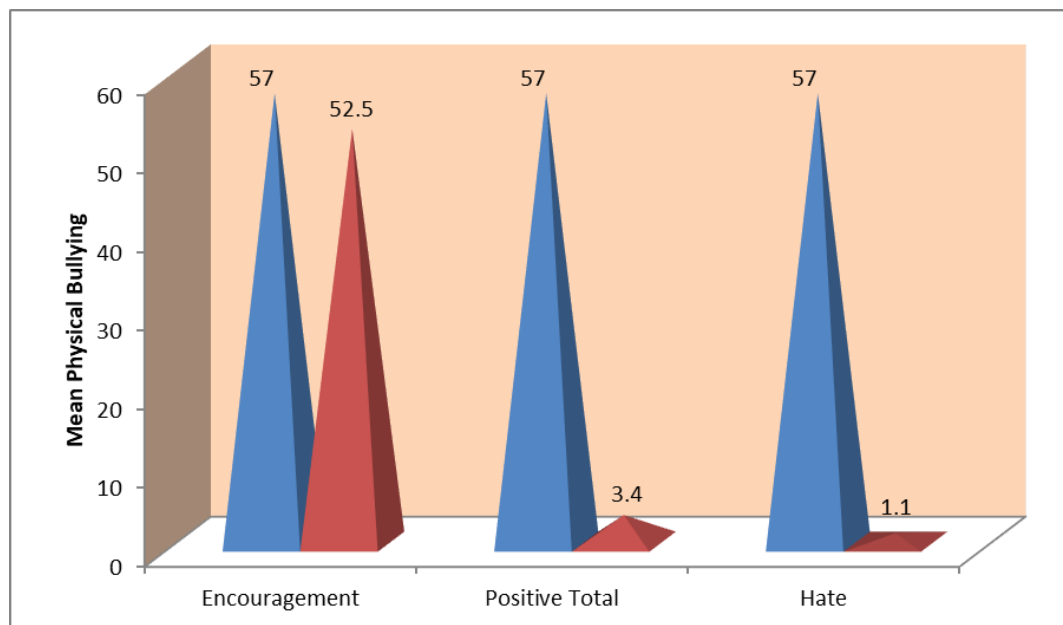
### Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis

To determine the relative contribution of parenting strategies to criterion variable (School Bullying) stepwise multiple regression analysis was done.

**Table 3:** Stepwise multiple regression analysis for physical bullying on to the parenting strategies

Predictor variable	Criterion Variable (Physical Bullying)					
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> (Change)	β(Beta)	t	F-value
<b>Encouragement</b>	.724	.525	.525	-.724	-16.216	262.946**
<b>Positive (Total)</b>	.748	.559	.034	-.349	-4.267	150.079**
<b>Hate</b>	.755	.570	.011	.191	2.490	104.314**

\*\*P<.01, \*<.05



**Fig. 1:** Prediction of Physical Bullying by Parenting Strategies.

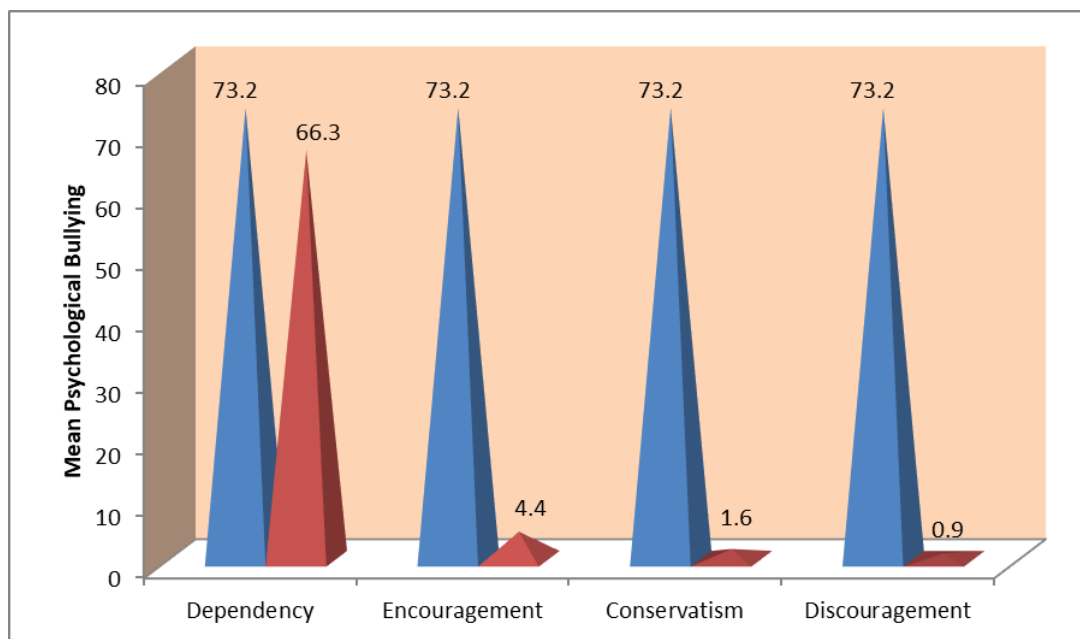
Results displayed in table (3) and figure (1) denotes those three dimensions of parenting strategies predicted physical bullying. Encouragement contributed maximum negatively ( $\beta = -.72$ ,  $R^2 = .52$ ) followed by positive parenting ( $\beta = -.34$ ,  $R^2 = .55$ ), whereas, Hate ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $R^2 = .57$ ) explained

positively to physical bullying. Though independently, encouragement explained 52.5%, positive parenting as a whole 3.4% and hate explained 1.1% variance, but the composite contributions of parenting was found 57% variance in the criterion variable.

**Table 4:** Stepwise multiple regression analysis for psychological bullying on to the parenting strategies.

Predictor variable (Parenting)	Criterion Variable (Psychological Bullying)					
	R	R2	R2(Change)	$\beta$ (Beta)	t	F-value
Dependency	.814	.663	.663	.814	21.634	468.016**
Encouragement	.840	.706	.044	-.372	-5.928	285.154**
Conservatism	.850	.723	.016	.253	3.727	205.072**
Discouragement	.855	.732	.009	.196	2.778	160.111**

\*\* $P < .01$ , \* $P < .05$



**Fig. 2:** Prediction of Psychological Bullying by Parenting Strategies.

Regression results displayed in table (4) and figure (2) reflect those four dimensions of parenting strategies have predicted to psychological bullying. Dependency contributed maximum positively ( $\beta = .81$ ,  $R^2 = .66$ )

followed by encouragement ( $\beta = -.37$ ,  $R^2 = .70$ ) which has explained negatively. But conservatism ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $R^2 = .72$ ) and discouragement ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $R^2 = .73$ ) have predicted positively. However, independently, dependency explained

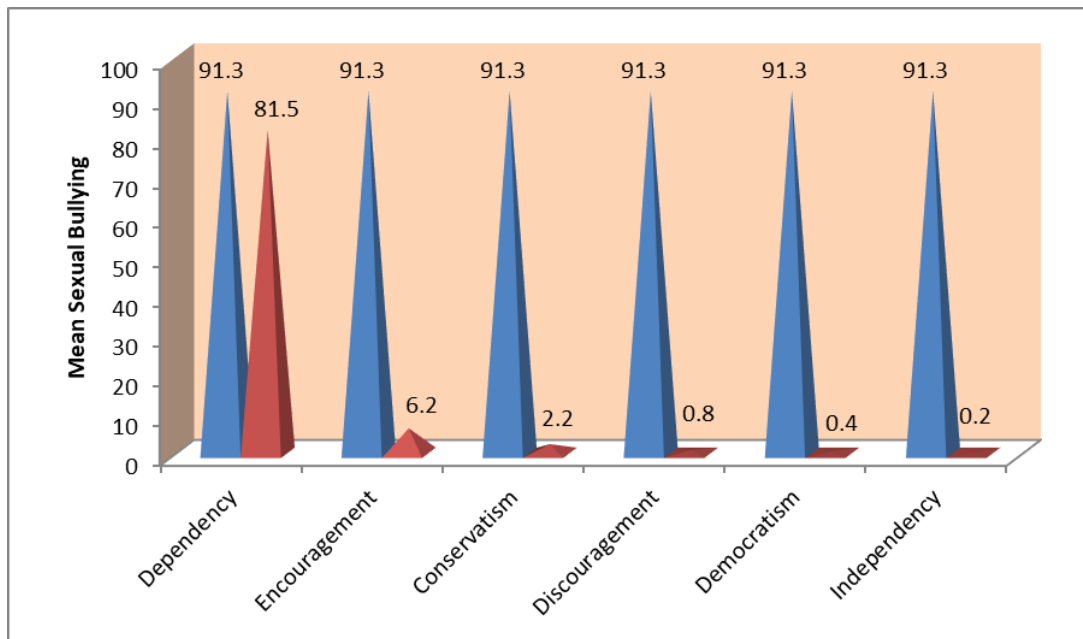
73.2%, encouragement 4.4%, conservatism 1.6%, and discouragement explained 0.9% variance, but the

composite contributions of these parenting strategies were found 73.2% variance in the criterion variable.

**Table 5:** Stepwise multiple regression analysis for Sexual Bullying on to the parenting Strategies.

Predictor variable	Criterion Variable (Sexual Bullying)					
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> (Change)	$\beta$ (Beta)	t	F-value
Dependency	.903	.815	.815	.903	32.363	1047.381**
Encouragement	.936	.877	.062	-.445	-10.941	844.724**
Conservatism	.948	.899	.022	.291	7.075	696.381**
Discouragement	.952	.906	.008	.185	4.425	568.298**
Democratism	.954	.911	.004	-.147	-3.342	476.542**
Independency	.956	.913	.002	-.111	-2.580	407.825**

\*\*P<.01, P<.05



**Fig. 3:** Prediction of Sexual Bullying by Parenting Strategies.

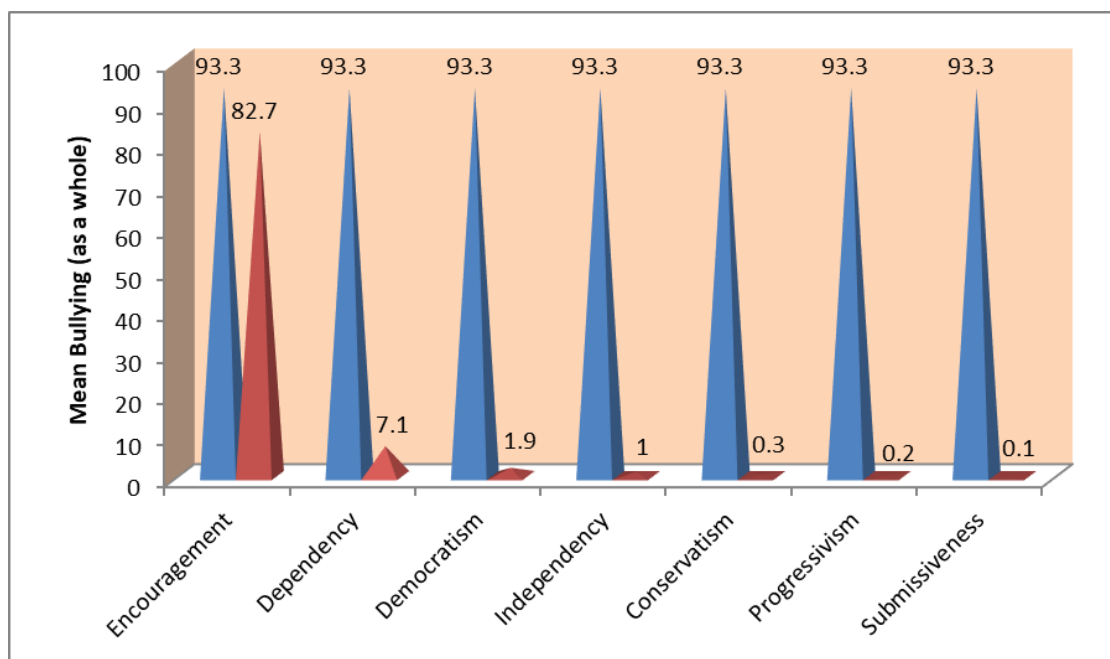
Results presented in table (5) and figure (3) indicates that six dimensions of parenting strategies predicted sexual bullying. Dependency ( $\beta = .90$ ,  $R^2 = .81$ ) contributed maximum positively followed by encouragement ( $\beta = -.44$ ,  $R^2 = .87$ ) which has contributed negatively. Moreover, conservatism ( $\beta = .29$ ,  $R^2 = .81$ ) contributed positively followed by discouragement ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $R^2 = .90$ ) but democratism ( $\beta = -.14$ ,  $R^2 = .91$ ) and independency ( $\beta = -.11$ ,

$R^2 = .91$ ) have contributed negatively to sexual bullying. However, independently, dependency explained 81.5%, encouragement 6.2%, conservatism 2.2%, discouragement 0.8%, democratism 0.4% and independency explained 0.2% variance, but the composite contributions of parenting strategies were found 91.3 % variance in the criterion variable.

**Table 6:** Stepwise multiple regression analysis for Bullying Behaviour (as a whole) on to the parenting Strategies.

Predictor variable	Criterion Variable (Bullying as a whole)					
	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> (Change)	$\beta$ (Beta)	t	F-value
Encouragement	.909	.827	.827	-.909	-33.745	1138.755**
Dependency	.947	.898	.071	.474	12.776	1039.063**
Democratism	.958	.971	.019	-.281	-7.399	868.046**
Independency	.963	.927	.010	-.208	-5.566	741.488**
Conservatism	.964	.929	.003	.115	3.020	615.516**
Progressivism	.965	.931	.002	-.108	-2.613	526.838**
Submissiveness	.966	.933	.001	.078	2.167	459.407**

\*\*P<.01, P<.05



**Fig. 4:** Prediction of Bullying Behaviour (as a whole) by Parenting Strategies.

Regression results (table 6 & figure 4) explain that bullying as a whole was predicted by seven parenting strategies. Encouragement contributed maximum negatively ( $\beta = -.90$ ,  $R^2 = .82$ ) followed by democratism ( $\beta = -.28$ ,  $R^2 = .97$ ), independency ( $\beta = -.20$ ,  $R^2 = .92$ ), progressivism ( $\beta = -.10$ ,  $R^2 = .93$ ) but dependency ( $\beta = .47$ ,  $R^2 = .89$ ) contributed positively followed by conservatism ( $\beta = .11$ ,  $R^2 = .92$ ) and submissiveness ( $\beta = .07$ ,  $R^2 = .93$ ). However, independently, encouragement explained 82.7%, dependency 7.1%, democratism 1.9%, independency 1%, conservatism 0.3%, progressivism 0.2%, and submissiveness explained 0.1% variance, but the composite contributions of parenting strategies were found 93.3% variance. Present findings suggest that positive domains of parenting have predicted negatively but negative domains have contributed positively to bullying behaviour.

## Discussion

The findings of present research have proved the significant role of parenting in bullying behaviours of children. As correlation results revealed that physical, psychological and sexual bullying were found negatively associated with positive parenting i.e., love, encouragement, acceptance, progressivism, democratism, independency, dominance and Positive parenting as a whole. Contrary to this, negative parenting dimensions such as hate, rejection, autocracy, discouragement, submissiveness, conservatism, dependency and negative parenting as a whole were found positively associated with physical, psychological and sexual bullying. Moreover, regression results have reflected that various dimension of parenting have exerted differential role in bullying behaviours. Positive parenting exhibited buffering role to control bullying behaviour whereas, negative parenting played intensifying role in the occurrence of bullying and victimization.

Present study has been supported by several research findings. Earlier, Cook, et al (2010) opined that factor like family or home environment, school climate, community factors, peer status and peer influence are found related to bullying behavior. Fielder (2008) believed that the development of bullying could be viewed as part of a large

process of interaction, with the home at its root. Thus, he opined that bullying behavior is largely believed to be a by-product of family dynamics. Craig et al. (1998) developed and tested a model describing the effects of structural and functional family characteristics on peer aggression. They reported that parenting and family management practices interacted with individual behavioural attributes and contributed indirectly to aggressive behavior such as bullying. In a study, Pandey (2010) identified that children exposed to domestic violence showed high level of bullying behaviour and related negative activities in school setting. Regarding the relationship between specific aspects of parenting and child aggressive behaviour, several studies have shown that permissiveness best predicts the experience of victimization by the child while authoritarianism best predicts bullying behavior (Baldry & Farrington, 2000). Permissive parents tend to have children with difficulties in curtailing their impulsive aggression (Miller et al., 2002). Other researchers have reported that children who bully their peers are more likely to come from families where parents use authoritarian, harsh and punitive child-rearing practices (Espelage et al. 2000). As Hagan and McCarthy (1998) comment, parents who pay attention to their children, monitor them closely and expect them to succeed are instrumental in reducing aggressive behaviour, both within the family and outside. Moreover, responding to the child's needs, having a warm, accepting relationship, being available to discuss the child's problems and helping with difficulties are found inversely related to aggressive behaviour, including bullying. Children from authoritarian families have been found to exhibit poor social skills, high aggressive and bullying behaviours (Pandey et. al; 2015). In another study, Tripathi and Pandey (2018) found that adolescents with uninvolved parenting scored lower on self-esteem. The present study has also strongly proved the pervasive role of parenting strategies in bullying behaviour of children.

## Conclusion

Present study evinced that parenting exerted significant role in bullying behaviours of children. As correlation results



evinced that positive parenting strategies were found negatively associated with bullying behaviour whereas, negative parenting strategies were identified positively associated with bullying behaviours. Further, regression results evinced that various dimensions of parenting exerted differential impact on bullying behaviour of children. The findings have proved that positive parenting played favorable role in controlling bullying behaviour in children whereas, negative parenting strategies exerted intensifying effect on bullying behaviour.

The study provides valuable data to add knowledge in the area of school psychology and the findings can be applied to aware parents, teachers, and counselors about the harmful role of negative parenting in the origin of bullying behaviours in school setting.

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