

**IMPACT OF PEER HARASSMENT ON SCHOOL
CONNECTEDNESS AND ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN SIKKIM**

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By

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is referred to as a transitional stage of physical and psychological development that generally occurs during the period from puberty to the age of legal adulthood. In other words it is a period of “Storm and Stress” in the life of an individual (Hall, 1904). It is in this period that an adolescent tries to establish a sense of identity which in turn helps them to avoid any form of role confusion and ultimately lead to the development self-concept. According to A.T. Jersild (1963), ‘Adolescence is that span of years during which boys and girls move from childhood to adulthood, mentally, emotionally, socially and physically.’ Erikson’s Psychosocial Development Theory (1950) states that there are eight stages of psychosocial development and each stage corresponds to different developmental crisis faced by an individual during their life time. However with regard to adolescents, the psychological crises that are usually faced by them are that of identity versus role confusion or role diffusion (Chauhan, 2012). It is during this stage that adolescents start exploring their independence and develop a sense of self which leads to a conflict that is centered on developing a personal identity (Cherry, 2017). According to Erikson (1951), adolescents who have resolved the conflicts in the earlier four stages are much better equipped to resist pressures from their peers and find their own identity as they mature. However the ones who are unable to resolve their conflicts faced in the previous stages lack trust in others, feel guilty and shameful and may have low self esteem and at the same time depend on others instead of finding their own individual ground. (Jamir, Premika, Lenin, Roshan & Sameeta, 2006).

Adolescents gradually start craving for independence which causes them to create distances from their parents and create stronger social bonds with their immediate peer circle. It is under such circumstances that they come under the influence of peer pressure in order to fit in the group and engage in such activities which ensure them as a part in their respective social circle (Cicarelli & Meyer, 2006). Thus adolescents under the pressure of their peer group may involve in various negative and high risk activities and peer harassment becomes an integral part of these activities.

1-1 Peer Harassment

Outside the family, schools are one of the primary socialization forces in a society. It has always been suggested that safe school environment is promoted when there is a caring, supportive, meaningful and productive relationships maintained in the school context (Konishi, Hymel, Zumbo & Li, 2010). However with regard to student-student relationships, bullying has been viewed as a major threat to creating a safe school environment (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler & Feinberg, 2005) and is now recognized as a serious problem in schools around the globe (Espelage & Swearer, 2003) with evidences showing that bullying affects child's mental and physical health. Peer harassment or bullying is an act which has existed for centuries and involves the aspect of frequent aggression towards individuals who are unable to defend themselves. According to Olweus (1996), "we say a student is being bullied when another student or several other students say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names, completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose, hit, kick, push, shove around, or threaten him or her, tell lies or spread false rumors about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her and do other hurtful things like that." Peer harassment in schools acts as one of the

key factors in the psychosocial functioning of adolescents (Crosnoe, 2011). It is defined as repeated aggression from one peer against another peer who is unable to protect himself/herself (Rigby, 2003). The most common outcome of such harassment patterns involves victimization which include face-to-face confrontation (e.g., physical aggression, verbal abuse, nonverbal gesturing) or social manipulation through a third party (e.g., social ostracism, spreading rumors). The crucial element that distinguishes peer harassment from other types of negative encounters, such as conflict, is that there is an imbalance of power between perpetrator and target. Such asymmetric power relations can take many forms, such as when the physically strong bully the weak, numerical majorities intimidate numerical minorities, older youth harass younger targets, or the intellectually superior deride their less competent peers (Juvonen & Graham, 2001).

1-1.1 Forms of Peer Harassment

In order to understand the concept of peer harassment and its degree of impact upon the students, it is first essential to understand the various forms of harassment patterns experienced by the students. The most common types of harassment observed in schools can generally be categorized into the following groups (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996b):

a. Physical Harassment

It refers to any unwanted physical contact between the bully and victim. This form of harassment occurs most commonly in schools. It includes being hit/ kicked and / pushed forth and involves fighting, headlocks, hazing, pinching, shoving, using nearby objects as weapons, touching, playing pranks, pulling hair, punching, threatening, tickling etc. (Bolton, José, Graeve & Stan 2005.)

b. Verbal Harassment

It is usually described as negative statements which are either told directly to the victim or spread as rumors against the victim (Evans, 1992, 1996, 2010). The main aim behind such form of harassment is to gain status as superior to the person targeted and to bond with others against the target. Generally the bully knows no other way to connect emotionally with others. (Evans, 2012). Verbal harassment can show either direct or indirect harassment patterns. In its direct form the harassed adolescents are called by names or threatened, using foul language at target, using derogatory terms or deriding the person's name, personal abuse, mocking and belittling, teasing etc (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996). On the other hand in indirect verbal harassment, adolescents believe that they are being talked about behind their backs. It may also involve spreading malicious rumors about the target, ignoring on purpose, provoking others etc (Graham & Juvonen, 1998).

c. General Harassment

It generally includes picking up on any individual for the sake of bullying (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996). The most common forms of general harassment in schools are those of emotional and social harassment.

According to the British non-profit parent-support organization Ask Wiltshire (2015), emotional harassment is a deliberate attempt to hurt someone else which causes damage to a victim's psyche and/or emotional well-being. (Bolton, José, Graeve & Stan, 2005; Shivani, 2016). It includes spreading of malicious rumors, getting certain students to "gang up" on others, ignoring on purpose (via the silent treatment or pretending the victim is non-existent), provoking others, cruel teasing, talking viciously about the victim behind their backs, and excluding kids from group activities (Shivani, 2016).

Social/relational/covert harassment on the other hand refers to hurting someone's reputation or relationships (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014). It include leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, embarrassing someone in public, teasing unpopular children, ridiculing another child's clothes, making fun of the way he speaks, and mocking his academic achievements or his race or culture (Shivani, 2016). Social bullying can occur within the context of large social groups as well as within small social networks, close friendships, or romantic relationships. It can involve direct social interactions or confrontations between a student who bullies and a student who is targeted as well as indirect acts that engage other members of the social group or network in the bullying interaction (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014). Social harassment can therefore be considered as a form of emotionally aggressive harassment behavior which include a set of closely related, often overlapping behaviors that share the effect of undermining social status and threatening feelings of support, security, and closeness in youth relationships (DeVoe & Kaffenberger, 2005; Copeland, Wolke, Angold & Costello, 2013).

Apart from the above mentioned traditional bullying practices cyber harassment and sexual harassment also becoming quite prevalent nowadays.

Cyber harassment is an extension of the traditional harassment practices and includes the use of electronic or digital media by individuals or groups to communicate hostile or aggressive text messages or emails, embarrassing pictures and rumors posted on social networking sites and distorted profiles intended to inflict harm or discomfort on others (Tokunga, 2010). It differs from the traditional forms of bullying that the aggressor often remains anonymous (Ybara & Mitchell, 2004). The terms cyber harassment and cyber bullying are sometimes used synonymously, though some

people use cyber bullying specifically to refer to harassment among minors or in a school setting (Allison 2008). According to a report published in one of the official website of United States (2017), cyber harassment includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. The most common places where cyber harassment occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter
- SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices
- Instant Message (via devices, email provider services, apps, and social media messaging features)
- Email

Sexual harassment on the other hand according to National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (2011) refers to any bullying behaviour, whether physical or non physical, that is based on a person's sexuality or gender. It is when sexuality or gender is used as a weapon by boys or girls – although it is more commonly directed at girls. It can be carried out to be a person's face, behind their back or through the use of technology.

Irrespective of the various types of harassment, based on the means in which harassment is inflicted upon students, it can be either direct or indirect (Marini, Dane, Bosacki & Cura, 2006).

- a. Direct Harassment:** It is the most obvious form of harassment which involves a relatively open attack on a victim that may be physical and/or verbal in nature (Hirsch, Lowen & Santorelli, 2012). It usually involves overt behaviors that are directed against another individual, observable by others.

They may include physical aggression or non-violent physical actions such as staring, laughing at the victim, and stealing items etc (Ross, 1998). Direct bullying may also be verbal in nature, such as teasing, saying hurtful things and using unpleasant nicknames directly to the person.

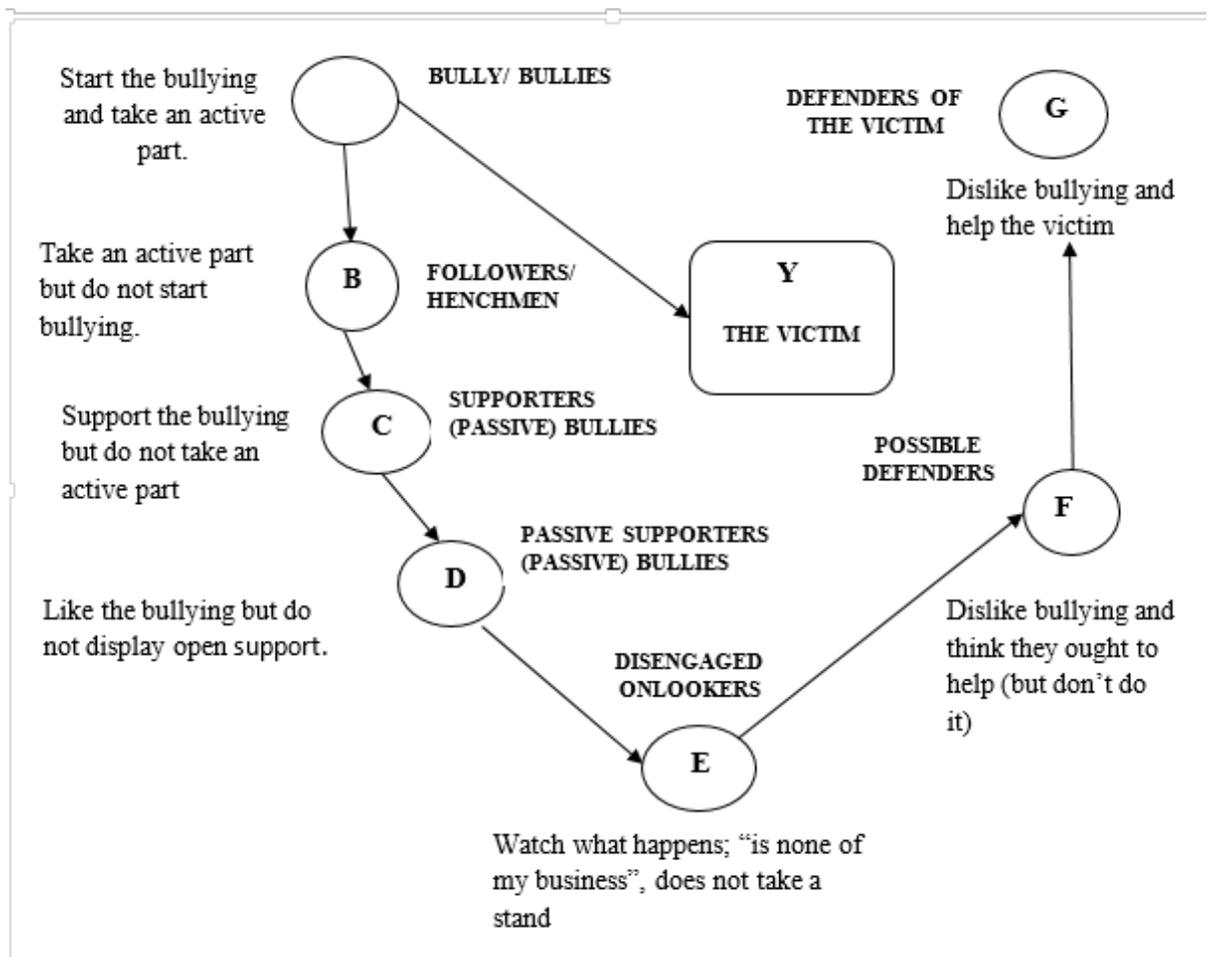
b. Indirect Harassment: It is more subtle and harder to detect. According to a study undertaken by Harris & Hathorn (2006) in secondary schools, harassment is more indirect and is more likely to occur with an older student bullying a younger student. They have categorized these indirect behaviours into the following four categories: relational aggression, verbal bullying, racial bullying, and other. Relational aggression mostly involve social isolation through intentional exclusion, spreading rumors to defame one's character or reputation, making faces or obscene gestures behind someone's back, and manipulating friendships or other relationships (Hirsch, Lowen & Santorelli, 2012; Gordon, 2017). Apart from relational aggression seen among students, the other forms of indirect harassment such as verbal bullying, racial bullying, educational bullying etc. are also quite prevalent in educational settings.

1-1.2 The Peer Harassment Process

Harassment that is faced by students in most cases usually reflect certain common patterns which include: aggressive or intended to harm; carried out repeatedly over time and occurs in an interpersonal relationship where a power imbalance exists (Eisenberg & Matthew, 2005). It is therefore important to understand how harassment by peers takes place in schools. On the basis of the teacher handbook developed from the intervention program by Olweus (1999), some aspects of the ways students in a group or classroom may react to acute bullying episodes can be elaborated. One can also see this as a description of various roles students can occupy in relation to bully

or victim problems in a class or school. These roles are illustrated and briefly described in the conceptual scheme presented in Figure: 1 below commonly referred to as, “*The Bullying Circle*” (Olweus, 1999).

FIGURE 1: THE BULLYING CIRCLE: STUDENTS’ MODES OF EACTION/ROLES IN AN ACUTE BULLYING SITUATION (Juvonen & Graham, Pg. 15).



The scheme provides a general idea as to how the process of harassment progresses in schools. It reflects the various roles or ways of reactions which brings forth different combinations of the student’s basic (inner) attitude to the bullying (positive–neutral/indifferent–negative) and his or her way of acting or not acting in a bullying situation (Juvonen & Graham, 2001). Based on the Bullying Circle proposed by Olweus (1999), the US Department of Health and Human Services (2012) also tried

categorising individuals involved in the process of harassment under the following categories:

- **Bully:** Student with social and/ or physical power who repeatedly picks on another student or group of students with the intent to inflict harm or discomfort.
- **Victim:** The target of the bullying.
- **Bystander:** Student who observes bullying; they may ignore it, encourage it, encourage it, or defend the victim.
- **Student who assists:** They do not start the bullying, but helps and is encouraged by surrounding peers to do so. They may feel that their social status will be damaged if they are not involved.
- **Student who reinforces:** They play a minor role in bullying, such as laughing at the bully's insults.
- **Outsider:** Usually not involved in bullying but are constant witnesses in the process.
- **Defendant:** They defend the victim or console them afterwards.

When it comes to harassment, bullies can also be categorized into various types based on the patterns they show while inflicting harassment upon their victims. Barbara Coloroso (2001), in her book "The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander" has provided a detailed description about the various types of school bullies:

- **Confident Bully:** Ones who have a very high opinion of themselves and feels a sense of superiority over other students.
- **Social Bully:** They are the ones who use rumors, gossips and verbal taunts to insult others. According to Coloroso, social bullies are typically females and possess low self esteem and therefore try to bring others down.

- **Fully armored bully:** They show very little emotion and often bullies when no one will see or stop them.
- **Hyperactive bully:** These have been categorized as ones who typically have problems with academics and social skills. Such students usually bully someone and put the blame upon others.
- **Bullied bully:** These are the ones who have a history of being bullied and therefore tend to imitate those bullying patterns upon other victims.
- **Bunch of Bullies:** More often referred to as a “gang of bullies” and includes either a group of friends who gang up on others. Usually members in such gang are drawn together due to their desire for power.

Peer harassment has gradually become one of the most prevalent issues that cause academic and social problems for students which ultimately lead them to feeling isolated and are scared of going to their schools or spend more time thinking about their safety rather than their performance (Urbanski, 2007). Fear of harm or embarrassment creates a threat which shuts down the learning process (Mendler, 2001).

1-2 School Connectedness

School connectedness refers to student’s relationship to school and is defined as an integral part of school climate which creates a feeling of belonging to the school and being accepted by others (Blum & Libbey, 2004; Blum, 2005). It reflects the extent, to which students feel personally accepted, respected, included, and supported by others in the school social environment (Shochet, Dadds, Ham & Montague, 2006). In many cases the term ‘school connectedness’ is also loosely referred to as school engagement, school bonding, and school attachment (Libbey, 2004). Connectedness to school includes students’ experiences of caring at school and a sense of closeness

to school personnel and environment (Smith, 2004). It involves the student's comfort level at school and comes from the feeling that adults there care about them. In alignment with the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (2002), school connectedness includes the degree to which students feel close to people at school, are happy to be at school, and feel like a part of the school (Libbey, 2004). It is a function of attachment, interpersonal support, and experiences of belonging and includes the acts of giving back to, being involved with, and being affectively invested in other people, places and activities (Gerler, 2004). On the basis of studies undertaken by Monahan, Oesterle & Hawkins (2010) school connectedness comprises of two components. Firstly it is characterized by affective relationships that a student shares with others at school. In their description of school connectedness, Monahan, Oesterle & Hawkins (2010) break school connectedness into two components. The first component, attachment, is characterized by affective relationships with others at school. It is usually seen that adolescents rely less on the family as part of the individuation process and as a result depend more on relationships with friends and others at school (Shochet, Dadds, Ham & Montague, 2006). The second component is commitment, which is described by investing in and doing well in school (Monahan, Oesterle & Hawkins, 2010). It is through these components that a student is able to form a bond to school. This bond influences youth to establish conformation to the norms and values of the school (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996). Thus, students who experience school connectedness like their school, feel that they belong, believe teachers care about them and their learning, believe that education matters, have friends at school, believe that discipline is fair, and have opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities (Blum, 2005). Students are more likely to engage in healthy behaviours and succeed academically when they feel connected to school. Research

has shown that young people who feel connected to their school are less likely to engage in many risk behaviours, including early sexual initiation, alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, and violence and gang involvement (Resnick, Bearman, Blum, Bauman, Harris & Jones, 1997). Students who feel connected to their school are also more likely to have better academic achievement, including higher grades and test scores, have better school attendance and stay in school longer (Klem & Connell, 2004). Such students also show meaningful attachment to adults, possess a sense of belongingness, are also more likely to feel engaged, to work harder, and to be involved with positive activities in and outside of school time (Whitlock, 2003). School connectedness has become an important factor in understanding youth development and behaviour and from the studies conducted by Kirby (2001) it can be seen that connectedness to others in conjunction with group norms are the two most important factors in explaining and addressing risk behaviour in adolescence.

1-2.1 Factors Affecting School Connectedness

According to a study conducted by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine (2004) a series of factors have been identified which are responsible for promoting school connectedness among adolescents. These include:

- a. Adult Support:** Children and adolescents who feel supported by important adults in their lives are likely to be more engaged in school and learning (Croninger & Lee, 2001). In the school setting, students feel supported and cared when they see school staff dedicating their time, interest, attention, and emotional support to them. Students therefore need to feel that adults care about them as individuals as well as about their academic achievement (Resnick, Bearman, Blum, Bauman, Harris & Jones, 1997). This ultimately promotes students to feel a sense of belongingness towards their school.

- b. Belonging to a Positive Peer Group:** Students' health and educational outcomes are influenced by the characteristics of their peers, such as how socially competent peer group members are or whether the peer group supports pro-social behaviour (e.g., engaging in school activities, completing homework assignments, helping others (Furlong, Whipple, St. Jean, Simental, Soliz & Punthuna, 2003). When one becomes part of a stable peer network, they get protected from being victimized or bullied (Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000). Strong interpersonal skills thus enable students to maintain healthy relationships. Students who report feeling most connected to school also report having the most friends at school and having friends from several different social groups (Blum, McNeely & Rinehart, 2002).
- c. Commitment to Education:** It is important that both students and adults are committed to learning and are involved in school activities. Students who are personally invested in school and believe that a good education is important for reaching their life goals spend more time on homework and in school activities and have an increased sense of connectedness to school (McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum, 2002). Students who are engaged in their own education exhibit behavioral traits such as persistence, effort, sustained attention to tasks, and a higher level of preference for challenge and mastery. School staff who are dedicated to the education of their students build school communities that allow students to develop emotionally, socially, and mentally, as well as academically (Croninger & Lee, 2001).
- d. School Environment:** Connectedness is enhanced by a healthy and safe school environment and a supportive psychosocial climate. A clean and pleasant physical environment promotes a positive and respectful relationship

among individuals (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2001). Good classroom management is critical to establishing a positive school environment and increasing school connectedness. When classrooms are well managed there exist a positive relationship not only among students, but also between teachers and students and as such students are more engaged in learning and in completing homework assignments (Blum, McNeely & Rinehart, 2002). Teachers who promote mutual respect in the classroom foster a sense of safety and connectedness by reducing the threat of harassment by peers (Ryan & Patrick, 2001).

- e. **Parental attachment and early childhood experiences:** A strong relationship with parents is an important factor which makes young people to feel connected to school during their middle and high school years. Youth with histories of parental neglect or violent behavior during the elementary school years are less likely to feel connected to school later, possibly because their ability to approach new relationships in a positive and supportive way has been compromised (Whitlock, 2003).

Thus school connectedness not only promotes healthy behaviour among students but also help them to succeed academically (Resnick, Bearman & Blum, 1997).

1-3 Academic Achievement

Academic achievement refers to the extent to which a learner is profiting from instructions in a given area of learning i.e., the achievement which is reflected by the extent to which skill or knowledge has been imparted to him (Crow & Crow, 1969). It reflects the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals. Academic achievement is commonly measured through examinations or continuous assessments but there is no general agreement on how it

is best evaluated or which aspects i.e., procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts are most important (Ward, Stoker & Murray-Ward, 1996). In today's highly competitive world academic achievement has become an important key feature to determine a child's future. It is also a major goal, which every individual is expected to perform in all cultures. Academic achievement is therefore a key mechanism through which adolescents learn about their talents, abilities and competencies which are an important part of developing career aspirations (Nuthana, 2007). As schools mostly define cognitive goals that either applies across multiple subject areas (e.g., critical thinking) or include the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in a specific intellectual domain (e.g., numeracy, literacy, science, history). Therefore, academic achievement is a wide ranging multifaceted construct which comprises different domains of learning (Steinmayr, Meiner, Weidinger & Wirthwein, 2017). In the present day competitive world high academic achievement among students is very essential for a successful life. Academically successful adolescents usually show higher self esteem, have lower levels of depression and anxiety, are socially inclined, and are less likely to abuse alcohol and engage in substance abuse (Regier, 2011). In this context it is important to determine the various factors that affect the academic achievement of a student.

1-3.1 Factors Affecting Academic Achievement

Based on several studies conducted by various researchers the following factors may be considered, which affects the academic achievement of students:

- a. Parent's Socio-Economic Condition:** According to Jeynes (2002), social and economic status of students are determined generally by combining parent's qualification, occupation and income standards. As such among many research studies conducted on academic achievement, it is a general trend that socio-

economic status is one of the main elements studied while predicting academic performance (Ali, Haider, Munir, Khan & Ahmed, 2013).

- b. Individual Differences among Students:** Individual differences in intelligence and personality among students have an impact on the academic achievement of students. Students with higher mental ability as demonstrated by IQ tests and those who are higher in conscientiousness (linked to effort and achievement motivation) tend to achieve highly in academic settings. A recent meta-analysis also suggested that mental curiosity (as measured by typical intellectual engagement) has an important influence on academic achievement in addition to intelligence and conscientiousness (*Von Stumm, Benedikt & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2011*).
- c. Cognitive Factors:** Cognitive factors such as attention, memory and reasoning (Danilli & Reid, 2006) which are often measured through various forms of standardized and teacher made examinations provide an idea about the academic achievement of students (Hannon & Marie, 2014).
- d. Non Cognitive Factors:** Various non cognitive factors like academic self-efficacy, self-control, motivation, expectancy and goal setting theories, emotional intelligence, and determination also have an impact on the academic achievement of students (Gutman & Schoon, 2013). It is usually observed that students who are motivated to improve upon their previous or upcoming performance tend to perform better academically than peers with lower motivation (Friedman & Mandel, 2011). Not only motivation but also students with better self control, academic self- efficacy and emotional intelligence shows favorable academic achievement.

- e. **Extracurricular Activities:** Studies conducted by researchers have revealed that organized extracurricular activities have yielded a positive relationship with high academic performance including increasing attendance rates, school engagement, grade points, higher education, as well as a decrease in drop-out rates and depression (Darling, 2005; Bruzzi, Lenis, Romero, Maser & Morote, 2016). Moreover involvement in various extracurricular activities has also led to positive developmental outcomes in youth (Mahoney, Taylor, Kanarek & Samuel, 2005).

Apart from the above mentioned factors, inclusion of various educational programmes (Flecha & Soler, 2013) such as those to prevent absenteeism, truancy, drop-out and educational programmes on students with special needs, vocational educational programmes have also contributed significantly in the academic achievement of students.

School environments are nowadays being constantly confronted with bullying, sexual harassment, and mean spirited teasing that have become a normative process poisoning the climates of schools (Sprague & Walker, 2005) depriving children of the right to be educated in an environment that is both physically and emotionally safe. Researchers have revealed that peer harassment acts as one of the important predictors for various school related issues such as school connectedness, academic achievement etc (Telljohann, 2003).

1-4 Effect of Peer Harassment on School Connectedness and Academic Achievement

Connection through proper interpersonal relationships is an important component for a safe school environment where learning takes place to the fullest and each and every student can develop their potentialities to the fullest. Although connectedness to

friends is a component of school connectedness, it can also have a different impact on student behavior. Gerler (2004) reports that a strong connectedness to friends paired with a low connectedness to school increases the student's risk for engaging in violence. Harassment by peers in schools works against creating a healthy and safe learning environment (Telljohann, 2003). Students who are targeted or harassed not only show various behavioural problems but also show poor school functioning which ultimately affects their academic achievement. Certain adolescents also develop aggressive patterns in order to defend themselves and thus adopt hyperactive behaviours which also interfere in their learning process (Haynie, Nansel, Eitel, Crump, Saylor, Yu & Morton, 2001). When a child feels unsafe, they become more vulnerable to anxiety and lose interest to discover, to remember, and to find joy in the process of learning (Cohen, 1999). Bullying behaviour in schools has always been ignored or viewed as a normal rite of passage that all children must go through; however there is evidence to show that bullying can have serious consequences for all involved (Florida Office of Safe and Healthy Schools, 2005). Research over the past decade shows that low level, underlying violence in schools may not be as overtly threatening as weapons but occurs with greater frequency and has a profound impact on a student's emotional health and school performance (Dupper & Adams, 2002). According to Social Emotional Learning theory, when schools attend systematically to the students' social and emotional needs, the academic achievement of children increases, incidents of problem behaviour decrease, and quality of relationships surrounding the child improves (Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenberg & Haynes 1997). Therefore it is imperative that school authorities pay attention to the social and emotional needs of students as well as their academic achievement.

Studies conducted by Eisenberg, Neumark & Perry (2009), revealed that high school students who are harassed by peers report lower school connectedness which ultimately affects their achievement adversely. Moreover, the characteristics of one's close friends can influence school connectedness because, over time, individuals tend to become more like their friends. This means that youth who have close friends who are connected to school are likely to become more connected to school as well (Steinberg, 1996) which will ultimately help in improving their academic achievement. Negative effects of peer harassment have been documented by studies conducted in many countries (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Olweus, 1991; Rigby, 2001). Students who suffer humiliation at the hands of their peers are likely to experience a variety of social-emotional and behavioural problems and usually suffer from depression, anxiousness, and anger, have excessive stress, and feel helpless as though their life has fallen apart ultimately leading to significant drop in school performance, absenteeism, drop out and ultimately forcing such individuals to commit suicide commonly known as bullycide (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Sharp, Thompson, & Arora, 2000). Anxiety, depression and psychosomatic symptoms are common among both bullies and their victims. Among such individual alcohol and substance abuse is commonly seen later on in life (Heino, Rimpelä, Rantanen, and Rimpelä, 2000). In comparison to their non-harassed peers, victims of harassment also show higher levels of withdrawal, worry, and fear (Byrne, 1994). Repercussions of bullying usually occur as two major forms. These include:

- Short term effects of bullying can produce feelings in anger, fear, guilt and sadness. Bystanders who witness repeated victimization of peers can experience negative effects similar to the victimized children themselves.

- Long term effects may lead to insecurity, lack of trust, exhibit extreme sensitivity (hyper vigilance); develop a mental illness such as psychopathy, avoidant personality or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In cases of long-term bullying, a child or teen may require professional counseling to overcome bullying effects so they can move on. Without professional help, negative long term effects may make it difficult for victims to live a productive life.

In addition to these behavior problems, adolescents who are harassed experiences impaired school functioning. Absenteeism, perhaps due to fear of continued attacks, has been documented in individuals who are bullied (Reid, 1985; Greenbaum, Turner & Stephens, 1988 and Olweus, 1992). For example, Fried and Fried (1996) noted that victimized students are more likely to drop out of school than are non-victimized students. Difficulties concentrating on schoolwork and negative attitudes about school have also been reported (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Mellor, 1999). These combined results suggest that the experience of harassment places students at risk for poor school functioning, which may, in turn, affect academic achievement.

According to a report published in one of the leading magazines *The North East Window* (2017), the rising tide of bullying in India has made parents, psychologists and counsellors very concerned for the welfare of young students. Many parents consider bullying a threat to their children's academic future. Instances of bullying are often being ignored by schools or schools simply warn the perpetrators and then let them go. Such actions can frustrate the efforts of parents and students who want to stop bullying and create a safe school environment. By not taking decisive action to stop bullies and their harassment, teachers send the message that bullying is tolerated to some extent in their schools. Student victims often have no idea as to

how to deal with bullying since they cannot trust their teachers for help and support. A passive stance against bullying can instil fear in students that they will be the next target. Therefore in order to promote school connectedness it is essential to curb peer harassment which will ultimately help students to flourish their capabilities in an efficient manner both academically as well as non-academically.

1-5 Review of Related Literature

The literature review is an integral part of the research process and makes a valuable contribution to almost every operational step. The literature review can play an extremely important role in influencing the nature of the research problem thus conditioning our thinking about choosing our research problem. Literature review also helps in improving our research methodology. It helps us to broaden our knowledge base in our research area.

Fineran & Bennett (1999) conducted a study on “Gender and Power Issues of Peer Sexual Harassment among Teenagers”. From it was observed that overall, 87% of girls and 79% of boys report experiencing peer sexual harassment, whereas 77% of girls and 72% of boys report sexually harassing their peers during the school year. Further it was revealed that girls experience the overtly sexual forms of harassment more often than boys and boys perpetrate sexual harassing behaviors more often than girls.

Hand & Sanchez (2000) undertook a study on “Gender Differences in Experience of, and Reactions to, Sexual Harassment among U.S. High School Students” and found that girls are far more likely to perceive harassment as harmful as boys and to experience a far greater frequency and severity of harassment. This article documents that girls are more likely to be targets of physical sexual harassment than boys and

that physical harassment rather than derogatory or verbal and/or visual forms of harassment exacerbate the gender gap in educational outcomes.

Joshi (2000) in his study on “Neuroticism, Extraversion and Academic Achievement as related to Gender and Culture” concluded that there existed a significant difference between boys and girls of rural areas on academic achievement.

Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simmons-Morton & Schmidt (2001) conducted a study on the topic entitled “Bullying Behaviors among US Youth”. The study was conducted across a broad sample of more than 15,000 students in grades 6 of 10 public and private schools throughout the United States. The study revealed that there was no difference in victimization in urban, sub-urban, town or rural locations. However there were slightly more students (3–5%) who reported perpetration in rural locations.

McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum (2002) in their study on “Promoting School Connectedness: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health” observed that female students felt less connected to school than male students. It was also observed that there was no difference in youth reports of school connectedness for rural, suburban, or urban schools.

Eisenberg, Neumark & Perryl (2003) conducted a study on the topic entitled “Peer harassment, School Connectedness and Academic Achievement”. Some of the objectives of the study were to determine the extent of peer harassment with regard to gender and also explore the relationship between peer harassment and both school connectedness and academic achievement. The sample comprised of 4,746 students from 31 public schools in Midwestern US. The study revealed that female students were more harassed than male students. A high relationship between peer harassment, school connectedness and academic achievement were also observed.

Klem & Connell (2004) from their study on “Relationships Matter: Linking Teacher Support to Student Engagement and Achievement” observed that as many as 40%–60% of all youth i.e., urban, suburban, and rural reported being disconnected from school indicating that they do not like their teachers, lack interest in school, and do not find schoolwork meaningful or engaging.

Kim, Koh & Leventhal (2004) conducted a study on the topic entitled “Prevalence of School Bullying in Korean Middle School Students”. From the study it was found that 40% of all children participated in school bullying. It was seen that the most common subtypes of victimization were exclusion (23%), verbal abuse (22%), physical abuse (16%), and coercion (20%) and boys were more commonly involved in both school bullying than girls.

DeSouza & Ribeiro (2005) from their study on “Bullying and Sexual Harassment among Brazilian High School Students” found that boys bullied and sexually harassed their peers more often than girls.

Popoola (2005) conducted a study on the topic entitled “Prevalence of Peer Victimization among Secondary School Students in Nigeria”. The study investigated the prevalence of peer victimization among secondary school students in a state in South Western Nigeria. From the study it was revealed that there existed high levels of peer victimization with attack on property as the most frequent form of peer victimization. It was also observed that there existed significant differences between male and female participants on all forms of victimization with females reporting higher level of social victimization, verbal victimization and attack on property than males.

Zaborskis, Cirtautiene & Zemaitiene (2005) from their study on “Bullying in Lithuanian Schools in 1994- 2002” found that male students were both bullied and

bullying the most in comparison to female students. It was further revealed that there existed a significant difference in responses on the basis of locale with higher percentage of pupils living in village being bullied as compared with pupils living in town.

Harris & Hathorn (2006) from their study on “Texas Middle School Principals’ Perceptions of Bullying on Campus” explained that gender difference existed in bullying among students with boys being bullied more frequently than girls. It was seen that physical bullying was more common in the younger years and verbal bullying more common in the senior years.

Li (2006) undertook a study on “Cyberbullying in Schools a Research of Gender Differences” and found that almost half of the cyberbullies used electronic means to harass others more than three times. When gender was considered, significant differences were identified in terms of bullying and cyberbullying. Males were more likely to be bullies and cyberbullies than their female counterparts.

Scheithauerz, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert (2006) conducted a study on the topic entitled “Physical, Verbal, and Relational forms of Bullying among German Students: Age Trends, Gender Differences, and Correlates”. From the study it was revealed that bullying was more prevalent among boys than girls. It was also found that incidence of physical bullying were higher among boys than girls.

Winefield, Trainor, Dollard, Anderson, Metzger & Hammarstrom (2006) from their study “Peer and Teacher Bullying/Victimization of South Australian Secondary School Students: Prevalence and Psychosocial Profiles” found that most bullying occur at school rather than outside school and involved verbal aggression rather than physical harm. Boys were significantly more likely to be bullied than girls, with the highest rates being observed amongst boys attending single-sex government schools.

Girls were more likely to be subject to bullying if they attended coeducational private schools.

Egbochuku (2007) undertook a study on “Bullying in Nigerian Schools: Prevalence Study and Implications for Counseling” and found that 78% of the children have been victims of bullying on at least one occasion and 71% have lashed out at others at least once. However, more boys than girls were found to be both bullies and victims. The result also revealed that bullying was more common in government schools than in private schools.

Nuthana (2007) undertook a study on “Gender Analysis of Academic Achievement among High School Students”. The study aimed to compare demographic variables like gender and locale on academic achievement.. From the present study it was observed that there was no significant difference in gender with that of academic achievement. However it was observed that urban students were having higher academic achievement than rural students.

Urbanski (2007) conducted a study on the topic entitled “The Relationship between School Connectedness and Bullying Victimization in Secondary Students”. The study revealed that school connectedness acted as a statistically significant predictor for the occurrence of bullying victimization. It was also found that gender was not statistically significant in variance of frequency of bullying.

Omerod, Collinsworth & Perry (2008) conducted a study on “Critical Climate: Relations among Sexual Harassment, Climate, And Outcomes for High School Girls and Boys”. The study revealed that more frequent, severe peer harassment especially sexual harassment was associated with female students than male students.

Beran & Lupart (2009) conducted their study titled “The Relationship between School Achievement and Peer Harassment in Canadian Adolescents the Importance of

Mediating Factors”. The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between school achievement and peer harassment which was examined using individual and peer characteristics as mediating factors. From the study it was found that adolescents who are harassed by their peers were at the risk of experiencing poor school achievement.

Joshi & Srivastava (2009) conducted a study on “Self-esteem and Academic Achievement of Adolescent”. One of the objectives of the present study was undertaken to investigate the academic achievement of urban and rural adolescents, and to examine the gender differences in academic achievement. The study showed that there were significant differences with regard to academic achievement of rural and urban adolescents. Urban adolescents scored higher in academic achievement as compared to rural adolescents. Significant gender differences were found in academic achievement. Girls were significantly higher on academic achievement as compared to boys.

Mlay (2010) conducted a study on “The Influence of the Language of Instruction on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools: A Comparative Study of Urban and Rural schools in Arusha-Tanzania”. This study highlighted the impact of using English as the language of instruction on students’ academic performance in secondary schools particularly contrasting urban and rural schools in Tanzania. From the study it was found that students in urban secondary school performed better than students at the rural school.

Olsen (2010) conducted a study on the topic entitled “Bullying Trends and Reporting Preferences among an Urban, Suburban, and Rural School” From the present study it was seen that bullying is a prevalent issue that students face and its intensity varies depending on the location of the schools.

Simmons (2010) from the study on “Academic Performance Differences among Male and Female African American Students: An Urban High School Study” found that that there was no significant difference in academic achievement with regard to gender.

Sunday & Olatunde (2010) conducted a study on the topic entitled “School Location and Academic Achievement of Secondary School in Ekiti State, Nigeria”. The study looked at the location of schools as it relates to academic performance of students in Ekiti state of Nigeria. The results showed that there was a significant difference between students’ academic achievement of rural and urban secondary schools in senior school certificate examinations. It was further revealed that students in urban areas had better academic achievement than their rural counterpart.

Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) conducted a study on “Gender Differences in Factors Affecting Academic Performance of High School Students”. The following study examines gender differences existing in performance attained in school subjects of Literature and Mathematics. It was observed that gender differences existed in the academic performance of students.

Kamau (2011) studied on “Effects of Participation in Competitive Sports on School Connectedness among Public Secondary School Students in Murang’a County, Kenya”. One of the objectives of the study was to establish the effect of gender on school connectedness. The study established that there were no significant differences in school connectedness between boys and girls.

Skues, Cunnigham & Pokharel (2012) conducted a study on “The Influence of Bullying Behaviours on sense of School Connectedness, Motivation and Self Esteem”. The result revealed that male students were subjected to more direct form of bullying than female students. However there were no significant differences in

gender in indirect forms of bullying. Findings also supported that students who were harassed by their peers at school tended to report having lower levels of school connectedness and showing low academic performance.

Bosede & Emiloju (2013) studied on “Rural and Urban Differential in Student’s Academic Performance among Secondary School Students in Ondo State, Nigeria”. This study investigated the difference between the academic performance of students from rural environment and students from urban environment. The result revealed that there was no significant difference in the academic performance of students from rural and urban environment.

Chandra & Azimmudin (2013) studied “Influence of Intelligence and Gender on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students of Lucknow City”. One of the objectives of the present study is to examine the influence of gender on academic achievement of secondary school students of Lucknow city. The findings of the study revealed that gender has not significantly influenced the academic achievement.

McCaskill (2013) conducted a study on “Bullying Prevalence in Mississippi: A Comparison of Urban and Rural Schools”. The study aimed to identify whether gender and locality had an influence on bullying among schools. The study showed that there was no significant difference in the prevalence of bullying at urban and rural schools. In addition, the study also revealed that there was a significant difference in the prevalence of bullying among gender sets.

Pengpid & Peltzer (2013) conducted a study on “Bullying and its Associated Factors among School-Aged Adolescents in Thailand”. The aim of this study was to assess bullying and its associated factors in school-going adolescents in Thailand. The study found that significant gender differences were seen in cases of bullying with 32.9% of

cases being observed among males and 23.2% of cases being observed among females.

Silva, Pereira & Oliveira (2013) conducted a study on “The Involvement of Girls and Boys with Bullying: An Analysis of Gender Differences”. The study was conducted to identify the prevalence of bullying in a sample of 387 students from Portugal and to analyse the data regarding the gender of those involved in the violence. Result showed that there were significant differences involved in bullying between genders and male students were victimized more.

Smokowski, Cotter, Robertson & Guo (2013) conducted a study on “Demographic, Psychological and School Environment Correlates of Bullying Victimization and School Hassles in Rural Youth”. The participants in this study included 3,610 racially diverse youth from 28 rural schools of Southeastern United States. In the study it was observed that male students showed greater bullying victimization than females.

Türkmen, Dökgoz, Akgöz, Eren, Vural, and Polat (2013) from the study on “Bullying among High School Students” found that majority approximately 96.7% of the students were involved in bullying behaviours as aggressors or victims. For a male student, the likelihood of being involved in violent behaviours was detected to be nearly 8.4 times higher when compared with a female student.

Franson (2014) undertook a study on “The Link between School Connectedness and Alcohol-Related Hospitalization in Adulthood: A Cohort Study”. The aim of the current study was to investigate the gender-specific association with that of school connectedness. With regard to gender differences, the current study showed, that males had a higher prevalence of both school-connectedness problems (5.3% of the males and 2.9% of the females had school connectedness problems).

Igbo & Anselm (2014) conducted a study on “Gender Differences, Delinquent Behaviours and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Nigeria”. One of the aims of the study was to explore the influence of gender and location on student delinquent behaviours and academic achievement. The results indicated that gender significantly influences academic achievement of secondary school students whereas location has no significant influence on students based on their academic achievement and gender.

Malhi, Bharti & Sidhu (2014) conducted a study on “Aggression in Schools: Psychosocial Outcomes of Bullying among Indian Adolescents”. The objectives of the study was to examine the prevalence of school bullying and to investigate the behavioural, emotional, socio- economic and demographic correlates of bullying behaviours among Indian school going adolescents. The sample comprised of 209 students from government and private schools of a North Indian city. Results revealed that peer harassment was related to differences in gender and differences in management.

Neupane (2014) conducted a study on “Gender Role in School Bullying”. School bullying with reference to gender was performed in Kathmandu. The general aim of this research was to analyze the relationship between bullying and victimization with response to gender among Nepalese school adolescents. The result from the survey indicated that boys reported higher instances of bullying and peer victimization than girls.

Rezapour, Hamid & Khodakarim (2014) conducted a study on the topic entitled “Epidemiological Pattern of Bullying among School Children in Mazandaran Province-Iran”. From the study it was revealed that boys were more involved in all

forms bullying behaviors than female students. Moreover rural students were more involved in bullying than urban students.

Singh (2014) studied on “A Comparative Study on the Academic Achievements between the Students of Private and Government High Schools within Imphal East District (Manipur)”. The present study was conducted with the aim of studying the effect of various demographic variables (gender and type of management) on academic achievement. From the study it was found that there was a significant difference in the academic achievement of students with regard to gender and type of management.

Wang *et.al.* (2014) studied on “School Climate, Peer Victimization and Academic Achievement: Results from a Multi-Informant Study”. The study aimed to determine whether gender had any impact on achievement and harassment. Moreover the research aimed to determine whether peer academic achievement had any impact on peer harassment. From the study it was found that boys and girls reported no differences in victimization by their peers, although boys had lower G.P.As than girls. Peer victimization was related to lower G.P.A. Results also speak to the importance of viewing peer victimization as being harmfully linked to students’ academic performance.

Agrawal & Teotia (2015) conducted a study on the topic entitled “Academic Achievement and Self-Concept of Secondary Level Students”. One of the purposes of the study was to investigate the relations of academic achievement in relation to gender, area of school and type of the school of secondary level Students. From the study it was observed that there was no significant difference in academic achievement with regard to locale and management variation but significant differences in relation to gender were observed.

Ahir, Singhal, Dhaked & Sharma (2015) conducted a study on “A Comparative Study on Protective Factors, Mental Health and Violence among Male Adolescent Students of Urban and Rural School of Udaipur (Rajasthan), India”. One of the objectives of the study is to compare the prevalence of protective factors, mental health issues, and violence among the urban and rural adolescents. The study showed that issues on violence and bullying like physical fight were significantly higher in urban adolescents than rural students.

AlMakadma & Mikler (2015) undertook a study on “Student, School, Parent Connectedness, and School Risk Behaviors of Adolescents in Saudi Arabia”. From the study it was observed that there exist a significant difference between school connectedness and the demographic variables of gender and type of management.

Chung-Do, Goebert, Hamagani, Chang & Hishinuma (2015) studied on “Understanding the Role of School Connectedness and Its Association with Violent Attitudes and Behaviours among an Ethnically Diverse Sample of Youth”. It was found that although not statistically significant, males reported lower levels of school connectedness compared with females in the study.

Eshetu (2015) conducted a study on “Gender disparity analysis in academic achievement at higher education preparatory schools: Case of South Wollo, Ethiopia”. The study tried to investigate the impact of gender on academic performance of preparatory secondary school students. The findings revealed that there is statistically significant difference between male and female students.

Langille, Asbridge, Cragg & Rasic (2015) undertook a study on “Associations of School Connectedness With Adolescent Suicidality: Gender Differences and the Role of Risk of Depression”. From the study it was revealed that school connectedness varied with regard male and female students.

Uduma, Samuel & Agbaje (2015) conducted a study on “Prevalence and Forms of Sexual Harassment of Girls by Male Students of Secondary Schools in Ohafia LGA, Abia State”. One of the objectives of the study was to determine the prevalence of sexual harassment among girl students with regard to the location of the school. Based on the findings it was observed that girls in rural schools experienced sexual harassment more than girls in urban schools by male students.

Anandharaja, Balakrishnan & Lawrence (2016) studied on Academic Achievement of Tenth Standard Government and Private School Students in Social Science Curriculum: A Comparative Study. The aim of the study was to compare the academic achievement of government and private school students in Social Science curriculum. The results revealed significant difference between X Standard government and private school students in their academic achievement in Social Science.

Aslam (2016) from the study on “Scientific Temper and Academic Achievement of Rural and Urban Secondary School Students” concluded that there existed significant mean difference between rural and urban students on their academic achievement and urban students showed higher academic achievement as compared to rural secondary school students.

Foen, Zakaria, Lai & Confessore (2016) undertook a research on “A Study of Time Use and Academic Achievement among Secondary-School Students in the State of Kelantan, Malaysia”. The present study was conducted to study the effect gender on academic achievement of the students. It was observed from the study that female students achieve higher than males.

Gea, Ruiz & Sanchez (2016) conducted a study on “Peer Sexual Harassment in Adolescence: Dimensions of the Sexual Harassment Survey in Boys and Girls.” The

study revealed that boys were more involved in victimization and aggression than girls.

Malik & Mehta (2016) conducted a study on “Bullying among Adolescents in an Indian School”. A sample of 45 students was selected using Peer Relations Questionnaire in order to study harassment behaviours with regard to gender difference. Results revealed that gender differences existed in harassment behaviours with boys engaging as well as becoming more victims than girls.

Mili (2016) conducted “A Study on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students of Dibang Valley and Lower Dibang Valley Districts of Arunachal Pradesh”. The present study investigated the academic achievement of secondary school students in Dibang district of Arunachal Pradesh. The finding of the study reported that there was not any significant difference in academic performance of government and private school students; no significant difference in the academic performance of boys and girls school students; and there was no significant difference between in the academic performance of rural and urban secondary school students.

Oluwatosin & Ajeigbe (2016) studied on “Comparative Study of Private and Public Schools Student Engagement and School Effectiveness Indicators”. This study examined differences in school connectedness between the students of government schools and private school. The study revealed no significant differences were found between public and private schools on student connectedness to peers and school.

Nadeem & Ahmad (2016) undertook “A Study on the Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement of Higher Secondary Students”. One of the objectives of the study was to academic achievement of higher secondary students with regard to gender difference. The study highlighted that male higher secondary students have higher academic achievement than female higher secondary students.

Nnamani & Oyibe (2016) studied on “Gender and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Social Studies in Abakaliki Urban of Ebonyi State”. The study focused on gender and academic achievement of secondary school students in Social Studies. The findings of the study revealed that the mean achievement score of female secondary school students was higher than the mean achievement scores of male students.

Rigby (2016) conducted a study on “School Perspectives on Bullying and Preventative Strategies: An Exploratory Study” and found that overall 16 of 25 schools estimated that less than 10% of their students were bullied every few weeks or more often. The researcher further concluded that in no cases were proactive strategies entirely successful in preventing cases of bullying from occurring completely, although schools generally reported as being only partially successful in reducing bullying. Schools indicated a need for more effective training in the uses of anti-bullying methods, especially in tackling cases of actual bullying.

Uzezi & Deya (2017) studied on “Relationship between Peer Group Influence and Students’ Academic Achievement in Chemistry at Secondary School Level”. The research was designed to examine the influence of gender difference of the peer group on academic achievement of secondary school students in some selected secondary schools in Jalingo metropolis of Taraba State. The study showed that there was no significant difference between the academic achievement of male and female chemistry students that are involved in peer group.

Summary of Reviews

From the studies conducted by Li (2006) and Rigby (2016), it is concluded that peer harassment is a pertinent issue faced by students in schools nowadays. On the basis of the researches undertaken by Kim, Koh & Leventhal (2004); DeSouza & Ribeiro

(2005); Li (2006); Scheithauerz, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert (2006); Skues, Cunningham & Pokharel (2012); Pengpid & Peltzer (2013); Silva, Pereira & Oliveira (2013); Smokowski, Cotter, Robertson & Guo (2013); Türkmen, Dokgöz, Akgöz, Eren, Vural & Polat (2013); Neupane (2014); Rezapour, Hamid & Khodakarim (2014); Gea, Ruiz & Sanchez (2016) and Malik & Mehta (2016) significant gender differences were observed among students being harassed with male students being harassed more than female students. However according to various studies conducted by Fineran & Bennett (1999), Hand & Sanchez (2000), Eisenberg, Neumark & Perry (2003), Popoola (2005) and Omerod, Collinsworth & Perry (2008) it was observed that female students experienced more harassment than male students. Gender difference did not play any significant role in peer harassment as seen among students (Urbanski, 2007). Locality of the school played a significant role in the harassment that students experienced and this was observed from the study undertaken by Olsen (2010). On the basis of the school's locale, students studying in urban schools experienced more peer harassment as seen in the studies conducted by Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simmons-Morton & Schmidt (2001) and Ahir, Singhal, Dhaked & Sharma (2015). On the contrary, according to the studies conducted by Zaborskis, Cirtautiene & Zemaitiene (2005); Rezapour, Hamid & Khodakarim (2014) and Uduma, Samuel & Agbaje (2015) rural school students exhibited more harassment by their peers. Locale of the school did not play any role in peer harassment as seen in the research undertaken by McCaskill (2013). Type of management of the school also played an important role in peer harassment seen among students according to Winefield, Trainor, Dollard, Anderson, Metzger & Hammarstrom (2006); Egbochuku (2007) and Malhi, Bharti & Sidhu (2014). It was

observed from the study conducted by Egbochuku (2007) that government school students showed higher peer harassment than private school students.

With regard to school connectedness, gender difference affects the level of connectedness (Langille, Asbridge, Cragg & Rasic, 2015 and AlMakadma & Mikler, 2015). Male students show less connectedness towards their school according to the studies conducted by Franson, (2014) and Chung-Do, Goebert, Hamagani, Chang & Hishinuma, (2015). According to the study conducted by Kamau (2011) there was no influence of gender on school connectedness. Locale of the school played no significant effect upon school connectedness of students as seen from the studies conducted by McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum (2002) and Klem & Connell (2004). Type of management of the school had a significant effect on the level of school connectedness among students according to AlMakadma & Mikler (2015). However study conducted by Adediwura, Oluwatosin & Ajeigbe (2016) showed that there was no effect of management of the school on school connectedness.

In context of academic achievement, gender had an effect on the achievement of students (Joshi, 2000; Ghazvini & Khajehpour, 2011; Eshetu, 2015 and Nnamani & Oyibe, 2016) with females having higher academic achievement than males (Joshi and Srivastava, 2009 and Foen, Zakaria, Lai & Confessore, 2016). No influence of gender on academic achievement was observed from the studies conducted by Nuthana (2007); Simmons (2010); Chandra and Azimmudin (2013) and Uzezi & Deya (2017). Locality of the school had an effect on the academic achievement of students (Singh, 2014 and Aslam, 2016) and urban students showed higher achievement than rural students (Nuthana, 2007; Joshi & Srivastava, 2009; Mlay, 2010; Sunday and Olatunde, 2010 and Aslam, 2016). However studies conducted by Bosede and Emiloju (2013), Agrawal & Teotia (2015) and Mili (2016) showed that

locality of the school had no effect on the academic achievement of the students. Type of management also has a significant effect on the academic achievement of the students (Mili, 2016).

According to the studies conducted by Eisenberg, Neumark & Perryl (2003) and Skues, Cunnigham & Pokharel (2012) peer harassment has an impact on the level of school connectedness among students. Academic achievement also depends on the peer harassment that a student experiences and this was seen in the studies undertaken by Eisenberg, Neumark & Perryl (2003); Urbanski (2007); Beran & Lupart (2009); Skues, Cunnigham & Pokharel (2012) and Wang *et.al.* (2014).

1-6 Need and Significance of the Study

Peer harassment in India is by far one of the serious issues that are being faced by students going to school every day. A survey conducted by Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) a top Indian marketing research company and Parent Circle (2015) indicated that 'every third child' was harassed in Indian schools. A news report indicated that peer harassment in Indian schools is quite high and is more prevalent in northern parts of India and reports suggest that most of the harassment happens within the classroom. (Kshirsagar, Agarwal and Badhekar, 2007). A baseline study that was carried out by Nielsen for UNICEF's Meena Radio Programme (2012) in rural government schools in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh showed that among children aged 11- 14 years, more than 60% of students were aware of peer harassment. It was seen that adolescents who were harassed typically got involved in fights and quarrels. This caused them to suffer from various academic related problems, one of the most prominent being school connectedness. High degree of connectedness in school was always found to reveal consistent positive developmental pattern such as improved academic achievement (Wilson, 2004), but the relationships

between the impact on peer harassment and school connectedness and academic achievement is limited (Urbanski, 2007) and varies based on different patterns with regard to different school connectedness patterns.

Taking cue from the above mentioned idea in 2015, CBSE along with the Directorate of Education, Government of Sikkim issued a list of guidelines related to the incidence and preventive measures to be adopted by the principals of schools at various levels with regard to peer harassment or bullying. This was mainly adopted as an essential measure to improve school environment, promote connectedness among students towards their schools and ensure positive and favourable learning environment. An instance of the implementation of these guidelines was first seen in 2015 in Government Secondary School, Bongten, West Sikkim where surveillance cameras were installed in all classrooms and premises to monitor and curb bullying which ultimately improved learning environment. However, such measures are yet to be adopted in other government and private schools in various districts of Sikkim. Several cases of bullying among students in Sikkim still goes unnoticed as a result of which learning gets hampered which in the long run lead to other severe consequences. However very few studies related to harassment by peers and its influence on various educational factors such as school connectedness and academic achievement have been conducted in India generally and in North Eastern Region particularly. Moreover, no worthwhile endeavor has been made so far to investigate the relationship among peer harassment, school connectedness and academic achievement, especially in context of Sikkim. To fulfill this purpose and to add more knowledge to existing one the investigator selected the following problem for the study:

Impact of Peer Harassment on School Connectedness and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Sikkim

1-7 Research Questions

The present study was attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between School Connectedness and Peer Harassment of Secondary School Students?
2. What is the relationship between Academic Achievement and Peer Harassment of Secondary School Students?

1-8 Operational Definition of Key Terms

The different key terms used in the title of the study and to be used in the body of study are operationally defined as follows;

1. Peer Harassment: It refers to bullying or harassment faced by students in schools and it was based upon the scores obtained by the students from the self-made tool on Peer Harassment constructed by the researcher.

2. School Connectedness: In the present study the term school connectedness refers to the positive connectedness of the students to their school and was obtained from the self-made tool on School Connectedness developed by the researcher.

3. Academic Achievement: It refers to the marks obtained by the students in class 8th summative examination.

4. Secondary School Students- It connotes the students studying in class 9th in government and private secondary schools of East district of Sikkim.

1-9 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives are laid down for the present study:

1. To study the nature of distribution of scores for secondary school boys, girls and total sample on the following variables:
 - a. School Connectedness
 - b. Academic Achievement; and

c. Peer Harassment

2. To compare the level of School Connectedness of secondary school students with respect to:

a. Gender

b. Type of School; and

c. Locality

3. To compare the level of Academic Achievement of secondary school students with respect to:

a. Gender

b. Type of School; and

c. Locality

4. To compare the level of Peer Harassment of secondary school students with respect to:

a. Gender

b. Type of School; and

c. Locality

5. To study the relationship if any, between the scores on the following variables for secondary school students:

a. Peer Harassment and School Connectedness

b. Peer Harassment and Academic Achievement

1-10 Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses are framed for testing in the present study:

H₀₁ Secondary school boys, girls and total sample of students do not differ on the following variables:

a. School Connectedness

- b. Academic Achievement; and
 - c. Peer Harassment
- H₀₂ There is no significant difference among the level of School Connectedness of secondary school students with respect to:
- a. Gender
 - b. Type of School; and
 - c. Locality
- H₀₃ There is no significant difference among the level of Academic Achievement of secondary school students with respect to:
- a. Gender
 - b. Type of School; and
 - c. Locality
- H₀₄ There is no significant difference among the level of Peer Harassment of secondary school students with respect to:
- a. Gender
 - b. Type of School; and
 - c. Locality
- H₀₅ There is no significant relationship between Peer Harassment and School Connectedness for boys, girls and total sample of secondary school students.
- H₀₆ There is no significant relationship between Peer Harassment and Academic Achievement for boys, girls and total sample of secondary school students.

1-11 Delimitations of the Study

The present study was delimited in the following aspects:

1. The state of Sikkim has four districts. The study was restricted to only one district i.e. East of the state.
2. The study was delimited to the secondary school students only.
3. The study was confined to class IX students only.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The objective of the present investigation was to study the impact of peer harassment on school connectedness and academic achievement of secondary school students. To serve this purpose, it was required to draw an adequate sample of secondary school students; construct suitable tools for measuring the characteristics under study; and collect the relevant data with the help of these tools. The details regarding these aspects of the study are given as under.

2-1 Method

The aim of present investigation is to study the impact of peer harassment on school connectedness and academic achievement of secondary school students. In other words, the present study seeks to describe and interpret what conditions or relationships exist at present in case of secondary school students with respect to the variables peer harassment, school connectedness and academic achievement of secondary school students. The further purpose of the study is to collect detailed description of existing phenomena with the intent of employing the same to justify current conditions and to make intelligent plans for improving them.

Hence, it is decided to use Descriptive Survey Method of research in the present case which is relevant and justified in view of the objectives of the study.

2-2 The Sample

Sampling is the basis of any scientific investigation. Since in educational research it is

neither practically expedient nor scientifically desirable to approach to the total population, therefore, technique of sampling is employed in which instead every unit of population being tapped only a part of population is drawn and studied.

In the present study the sample was drawn from the secondary school students studying in class IX of government and private schools situated in East district of Sikkim. The sample for the present investigation was drawn by employing the following sampling techniques described below:

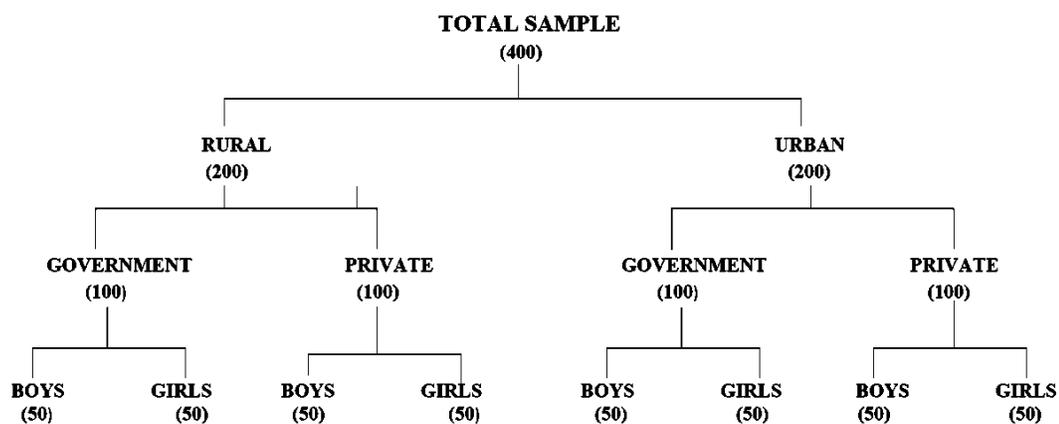
Firstly, a district of Sikkim was selected conveniently. From the selected District, 20 (10 government and 10 private) schools were taken on the basis of convenience. However, while choosing the schools it was observed that they are well distributed in the district and are situated at a considerable distance from each other. Further, a sample of 400 (20 from each school) secondary school students were selected randomly keeping in mind the objectives of the study. The detail distribution of the selected sample is given below in

Table: 2.1:

Table 2.1: The distribution of the sample on the basis of Gender, Locality and Type of School

S. No.	Name of the School	Type of School	Locale	Gender		Number of Students
				Boys	Girls	
1	Dikchu Government Senior Secondary School	Government	Rural	10	10	20
2	Makha Government Senior Secondary School			10	10	20
3	Lingee Government Senior Secondary School			10	10	20
4	Tumin Government Secondary School			10	10	20
5	Lower Samdong Government Secondary School			10	10	20

6	Lower Syari Government Secondary School	Urban	10	10	20
7	West Point Senior Secondary School		10	10	20
8	Biraspati Parsai Government Senior Secondary School		10	10	20
9	Tadong Government Senior Secondary School		10	10	20
10	Rumtek Government Senior Secondary School		10	10	20
11	Baha'i School Saramsa	Private	10	10	20
12	Sai Gurukul Academy School, Nmacheybong		10	10	20
13	St. Xavier's School, Pakyong		10	10	20
14	Pushpanjali Vidyalaya, Pakyong		10	10	20
15	Little Angel Senior Secondary School, Nandok		10	10	20
16	Sri Satya Sai Prashanti Vidhya Mandir Senior Secondary School		10	10	20
17	Greendale Senior Secondary School		10	10	20
18	Sai Gurukul Academy School, Lumsey		10	10	20
19	Daffodils Home Secondary School		10	10	20
20	Baha'i Secondary School Tadong, Gangtok		10	10	20
Total			200	200	400



2-3 Tools Used

The objective of the present investigation was to study the impact of peer harassment on school connectedness and academic achievement of secondary school students. To serve this purpose, it was required to construct suitable tools for measuring the characteristics under study; and collect the relevant data with the help of these tools. The details regarding development of the tools are given as under.

A. Peer Harassment Scale

After the exhaustive review, it was found that no appropriate tool was available for measuring the peer harassment of students as per the present objectives of the study and Indian circumstances. Therefore, researcher decided to develop an appropriate tool according to the requirement of present study.

First of all, peer harassment was defined and its dimensions were explored. There are a total number of 40 items in the scale based on the following dimensions: physical harassment, verbal harassment (direct & indirect), social harassment and cyber harassment.

- **Physical Harassment:** Items in this dimension deal on any unwanted physical contact between the bully and victim seen most commonly in schools such as being hit, kicked, pushed forth, involve in fights, headlocks, being shoved etc.
- **Verbal Harassment:** Items in this dimension include all such negative statements which are either told directly to the victim or spread indirectly as rumors against the victim.

- Social harassment: Items in this dimension deal with those issues of harassment that involve emotionally aggressive behavior patterns which ultimately undermines the social status of the student.
- Cyber harassment: Items in this dimension include harassment seen on students through the use of various use of electronic or digital media especially across various social networking sites.

Collection and Writing of Items

The first step in constructing scale was to collect a number of statements about the peer harassment of students. For this purpose the researcher surveyed the relevant information available in the electronic and print media, textbooks, existing psychometric scales and research articles. The investigator also added the statements on the basis of discussions with researchers, and teachers. Initial investigation generated a long list of statements pertaining to the peer harassment of students. The list was then categorised in terms of the several aspects of peer harassment of students as given below:

Physical harassment

Verbal harassment (direct & indirect)

Social harassment; and

Cyber harassment.

A preliminary draft of 60 items was prepared to explore all the possible dimensions of peer harassment. These items were prepared in English language in order to improve their usefulness by bringing better understanding among the individuals for whom it is mainly intended for.

Scrutiny and Critique

After preparing initial draft of the scale, the items were reviewed by seeking the experts' opinion. The initial list of 60 items were given to 10 experts for rating each item on a scale i.e. '0' for item 'not acceptable', '1' for 'doubtful' item and '2' for 'acceptable' item. The experts were researchers and teachers. On the basis of criticisms and comments offered by experts, only those items which received at least 80% approval of the experts were retained. In the light of this, 20 items were rejected from the initial draft. Thus, after getting the expert's approval, the revised version of the scale consisting of 40 items were used for data collection. In addition to this, the help of language experts were also sought in order to remove any sort of linguistic ambiguity contained in the items. Their suggestions were taken into consideration and necessary changes were made.

After seeking the experts' opinion and selecting the statements for final draft, the distribution of statements was carried out in four aspects of student's peer harassment which is provided in Table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2: Distribution of items over four dimensions of Peer Harassment of Students

Sr. No.	Dimensions	Items No.	Total
1	Physical Harassment	01-09	9
2	Verbal Harassment	10-21	12
3	Social Harassment	22-31	10
4	Cyber Harassment	32-40	9
Total			40

Scoring Procedure

The scale is a self-administering and self-reporting five-point scale. Items of the scale are in statement form requiring response for each item on any of the five options on a continuum as follows; Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often and Always.

The items are scored in such a manner that if the answer to an item is ‘Never’, a score of 0 is given; for ‘Seldom’ option, a score of 1, for ‘Sometimes’ option, a score of 2, for ‘Often’ option, a score of 3 and for ‘Always’ option, a score of 4 is awarded.

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
0	1	2	3	4

The sum of scores on all statements of the scale is considered as respondent’s total peer harassment score. The score on the scale can range from 0 to 160. The higher total score on the scale will reflect highest level of peer harassment among students.

B. School Connectedness Scale

After the exhaustive review, it was found that no appropriate tool was available for measuring the school connectedness of students as per the present objectives of the study and Indian circumstances. Therefore, researcher decided to develop an appropriate tool according to the requirement of present study.

First of all, school connectedness was defined and its dimensions were explored. There are a total number of 50 items in the scale based on the following dimensions: Peers, Teachers, Self, School Atmosphere, Administration, and Parental Support.

- Peers: Items in this dimension include the level of connectedness that students feel towards their school on the basis of the relation that they share with their peer group inside and outside the classroom

- Teachers: This dimension includes items that reflect the connectedness that students feel towards their school according to the relation with their teachers and various means which the teachers adopt in motivating the students both in curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Self: All items in this dimension reflect the students' connectedness to their school according to their personal interests.
- School Atmosphere: This dimension includes items which focus on students' school connectedness on the basis of their school atmosphere pertaining to teaching learning situation.
- Administration: This dimension includes items dealing especially with the physical facilities provided by the school administration.
- Parental Support: This dimension includes items related to the role played by the students' parents in ensuring proper educational facilities to their children.

Collection and Writing of Items

The first step in constructing scale was to collect a number of statements about the school connectedness of students. For this purpose the researcher surveyed the relevant information available in the electronic and print media, textbooks, existing scales and research articles. The investigator also added the statements on the basis of discussions with researchers, and teachers. Initial investigation generated a long list of statements pertaining to the school connectedness of students. The list was then categorised in terms of the several aspects of school connectedness of students as given below:

Peers
Teachers
Self

School Atmosphere
Administration and
Parental Support.

A preliminary draft of 70 items was prepared to explore all the possible dimensions of school connectedness. These items were prepared in English language in order to improve their usefulness by bringing better understanding among the individuals for whom it is mainly intended for.

Scrutiny and Critique

After preparing initial draft of the scale, the items were reviewed by seeking the experts' opinion. The initial list of 70 items was given to 10 experts for rating each item on a scale i.e. '0' for item 'not acceptable', '1' for 'doubtful' item and '2' for 'acceptable' item. The experts were researchers and teachers. On the basis of criticisms and comments offered by experts, only those items which received at least 80% approval of the experts were retained. In the light of this, 20 items were rejected from the initial draft. Thus, after getting the expert's approval, the revised version of the scale consisting of 50 items was used for data collection. In addition to this, the help of language experts were also sought in order to remove any sort of linguistic ambiguity contained in the items. Their suggestions were taken into consideration and necessary changes were made.

After seeking the experts' opinion and selecting the statements for final draft, the distribution of statements was carried out in six aspects of student's school connectedness which is provided in Table 2.2.

TABLE 2.2: Distribution of Statements (both Positive and Negative) over Six Dimensions of School Connectedness of Students

Sr. No.	Dimension	Nature of Item	Items No.	Items	Total
1	Peers	Positive	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	7	11
		Negative	8,9,10,11	4	
2	Teachers	Positive	12,13,14,16,19,21,22,23	8	12
		Negative	15,17,18,20	4	
3	Self	Positive	24,25,26,30	4	7
		Negative	27, 28,29	3	
4	School Atmosphere	Positive	31,32,33,34,38	5	8
		Negative	35,36,37	3	
5	Administration	Positive	39,40,42	3	4
		Negative	41	1	
6	Parental Support	Positive	43,44,45,46,47,48,49,50	8	8
		Negative	0		
Total Positive Items= 7+8+4+5+3+8				35	50
Total Negative Items= 4+4+3+3+1+0				15	

Scoring Procedure

The tool was scored in a 3 point continuum having the options *Agree, Undecided and Disagree*. The scale contained 15 negative items and 35 positive items. All positive items were scored according to the following sequence: 3 (Agree), 2 (Undecided) and 1 (Disagree) and vice versa scoring for negative items.

Items	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
Positive	3	2	1
Negative	1	2	3

The sum of scores on all statements of the scale is considered as respondent's total school connectedness score. The score on the scale can range from 1 to 150. The higher total score on the scale will reflect highest level of school connectedness among students.

C. Academic Achievement

For ascertaining the academic achievement of the students the investigator has taken the marks scored by the each respondent in the class VIII school examination 2016. The rationale behind opting for class VIII examination marks as achievement performance is that, the students has been examined and their performance has been evaluated after completion of syllabus. The justification of including achievement marks is therefore appropriate and error free.

2-4 Procedure for Data Collection

Keeping in view the objectives of the present study the investigator had collected the data with the prior permission of the headmasters/principals of the concerned institutions as mentioned in the tables 2.1. Before administering the tools, the students were given all the necessary instructions. After ensuring that the students have responded to all the items, the sheets were collected back. After completing the administration of the tools, the investigator thanked the headmasters/principals, class teacher and the students for their whole hearted cooperation. The collected booklets were scored and the data thus obtained were tabulated for further analysis.

CHAPTER 3

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The present study aimed at studying the impact of peer harassment on school connectedness and academic achievement of secondary school students. In order to achieve this objective, a sample of 400 students studying in class IX comprising 200 boys and 200 girls belonging to government and private schools were drawn from twenty government and private secondary schools situated in East district of Sikkim. The School Connectedness Scale and Peer Harassment Scale developed by the investigator were administered to the selected sample in order to collect the requisite data as discussed in Chapter 2. Further, for analyzing academic achievement the marks secured by the students in their previous final examination were considered. The data available on the selected variables was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted in the following manner.

3-1 Statistical Techniques Used

In view of the objectives of the study, the following statistical techniques were used to analyze the data.

1. The objective number 1 aimed at studying the nature of distribution of scores of selected samples of secondary school boys and girls as well as total sample on the variables of School Connectedness, Academic Achievement and Peer Harassment. Hence, the technique of frequency distribution followed by bar and line diagram was used in all these case.

2. Objective numbers 2 to 4 aimed to compare the level of School Connectedness, Academic Achievement and Peer Harassment of secondary school students with respect to Gender, Type of School and Locality. In view of this, the technique of t-test was used in all these cases.
3. Objective number 5 aimed to study the significant relationship between Peer Harassment & School Connectedness and Peer Harassment & Academic Achievement for selected sample of secondary school boys and girls as well as total sample. In view of this, the technique of product moment correlation was used in all these cases.

3-2 Analysis of Data

The data gathered from the sampled students was analyzed objective-wise using the relevant statistical techniques specified above. The details of the analyses of data collected from the selected sample on the variables of Peer Harassment, School Connectedness and Academic Achievement are presented as under.

3-2.1 Studying the Nature of Distribution of Scores

H₀₁: Secondary school boys, girls and total sample of students do not differ on the following variables:

- a. School Connectedness
- b. Academic Achievement; and
- c. Peer Harassment

3-2.1.1 School Connectedness among Secondary School Students

A. Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Boys on the Variable ‘School Connectedness’

The distribution of scores for secondary school boys on the variable ‘School Connectedness’ is given in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Boys on the variable ‘School Connectedness’

Class Interval	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
140-149	9	4.50	100.00
130-139	38	19.00	95.50
120-129	73	36.50	76.50
110-119	49	24.50	40.00
100-109	17	8.50	15.50
90-99	11	5.50	7.00
80-89	2	1.00	1.50
70-79	1	0.50	0.50
Total	200	100	100

Highest Score = 149

Lowest Score = 76

Range = 73

B. Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Girls on the Variable ‘School Connectedness’

The distribution of scores for secondary school girls on the variable ‘School Connectedness’ is given in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Distribution of Scores for Secondary School girls on the Variable ‘School Connectedness’

Class Interval	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
140-149	21	10.50	100.00
130-139	72	36.00	89.50
120-129	64	32.00	53.50

110-119	31	15.50	21.75
100-109	9	4.50	6.00
90-99	2	1.00	1.50
80-89	1	0.50	0.50
70-79	0	0.00	0.00
Total	200	100	100

Highest Score= 145

Lowest Score = 89

Range = 56

C. Distribution of Scores for Total Sample of Secondary School Students on the Variable School Connectedness:

The distribution of scores for total sample of secondary school students on the variable 'School Connectedness' is given in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Distribution of Scores for Total Sample of Secondary School Students on the Variable 'School Connectedness'

Class Interval	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
140-149	30	7.50	100.00
130-139	110	27.50	92.50
120-129	137	34.25	65.00
110-119	80	20.00	30.75
100-109	26	6.50	10.75
90-99	13	3.25	4.25
80-89	3	0.75	1.00
70-79	1	0.25	0.25
Total	400	100	100

Highest Score= 149
Lowest Score = 76
Range = 73

Figure 3.1: Bar Diagrams Based upon Frequency Distributions for Boys, Girls and Total Sample of Secondary School Students for the Scores on School Connectedness

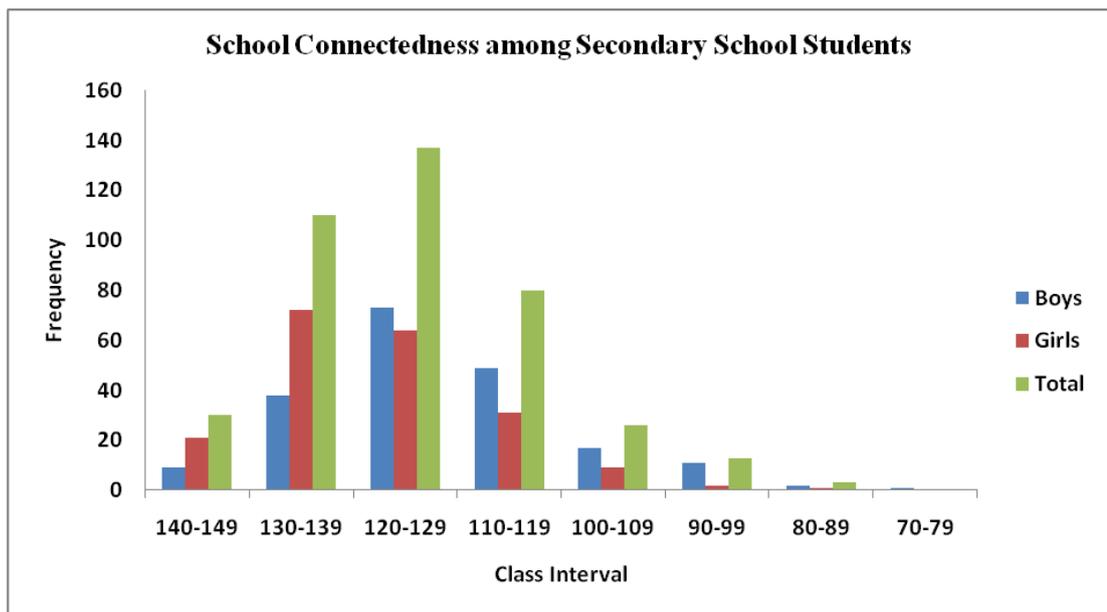
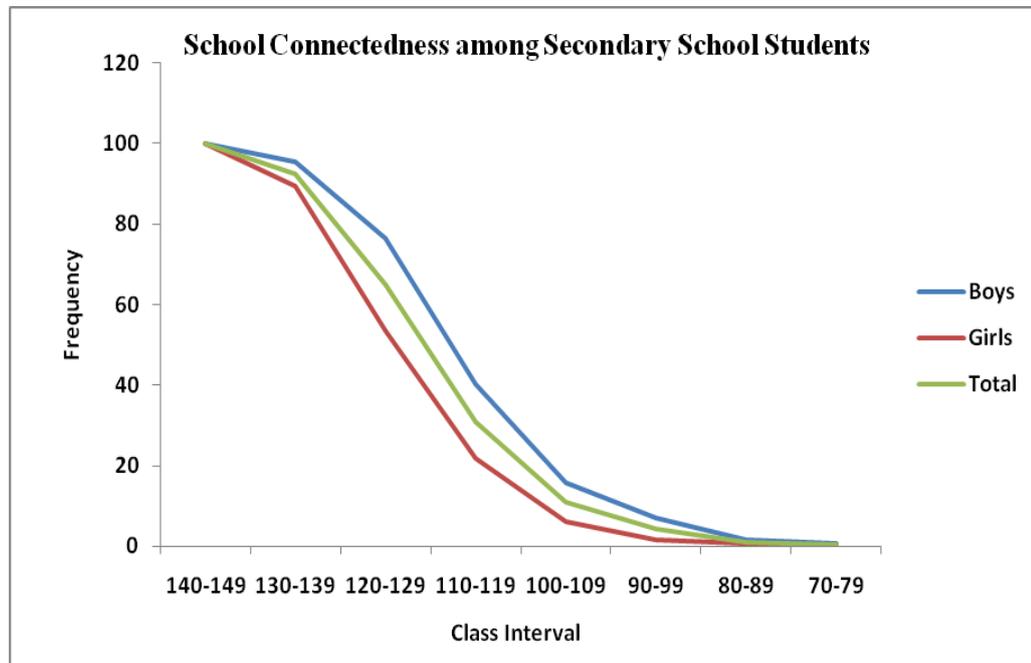


Figure 3.2: Line Diagrams Based upon Frequency Distributions for Boys, Girls and Total Sample of Secondary School Students for the Scores on School Connectedness



Interpretation

It is revealed from frequency distributions for boys, girls and total sample given in Table 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 and corresponding bar and line diagrams given in Figures 3.1 and 3.2 that the scores on the variable of School Connectedness are distributed over a range of 73 for boys, 56 for girls and 73 for the total sample. Thus, it may be said that the secondary school students differ in their level of school connectedness. Hence, the hypotheses that “*Secondary school boys do not differ in their level of school connectedness*”; “*Secondary school girls do not differ in their level of school connectedness*” and “*Total sample of secondary school students do not differ in their level of school connectedness*” are rejected.

It is further revealed from the Tables and Figures that the nature of distribution of scores on the variable of School Connectedness is more or less

similar for secondary school boys, girls and total sample. This is evident from the fact that 80.00, 83.50 and 81.75 per cent subjects fall between the scores 119 to 139 for the boys, girls and total sample respectively indicating almost similar concentration of scores in a limited range.

3-2.1.2 Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students

A. Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Boys on the Variable Academic Achievement

The distribution of scores for secondary school boys on the variable ‘Academic Achievement’ is given in Table 3.4.

A. Table 3.4: Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Boys on the Variable ‘Academic Achievement’

Class Interval	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
550-599	1	0.50	100.00
500-549	26	13.00	99.50
450-499	48	24.00	86.50
400-449	40	20.00	62.50
350-399	29	14.50	42.50
300-349	37	18.50	28.00
250-299	16	8.00	9.50
200-249	3	1.50	1.50
Total	200	100	100

Highest Score = 550

Lowest Score = 220

Range = 330

B. Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Girls on the Variable Academic Achievement

The distribution of scores for secondary school girls on the variable ‘Academic Achievement’ is given in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Girls on the Variable ‘Academic Achievement’

Class Interval	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
550-599	2	1.00	100.00
500-549	31	15.50	99.00
450-499	46	23.00	83.50
400-449	67	33.50	60.50
350-399	27	13.50	27.50
300-349	18	9.00	13.50
250-299	4	2.00	4.50
200-249	5	2.50	2.50
Total	200	100	100

Highest Score = 564

Lowest Score = 200

Range = 364

C. Distribution of Scores for Total Sample of Secondary School Students on the Variable Academic Achievement

The distribution of scores for total sample of secondary school students on the variable ‘Academic Achievement’ is given in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Distribution of Scores for Total Sample of Secondary School Students on the Variable ‘Academic Achievement’

Class Interval	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
550-599	3	0.75	100.00
500-549	57	14.25	99.25
450-499	94	23.50	85.00
400-449	107	26.75	61.50
350-399	56	14.00	34.75
300-349	55	13.75	20.75
250-299	20	5.00	7.00
200-249	8	2.00	2.00
Total	400	100	100

Highest Score= 564

Lowest Score = 200

Range = 364

Figure 3.3: Bar Diagrams Based upon Frequency Distributions for Boys, Girls and Total Sample of Secondary School Students for the Scores on Academic Achievement

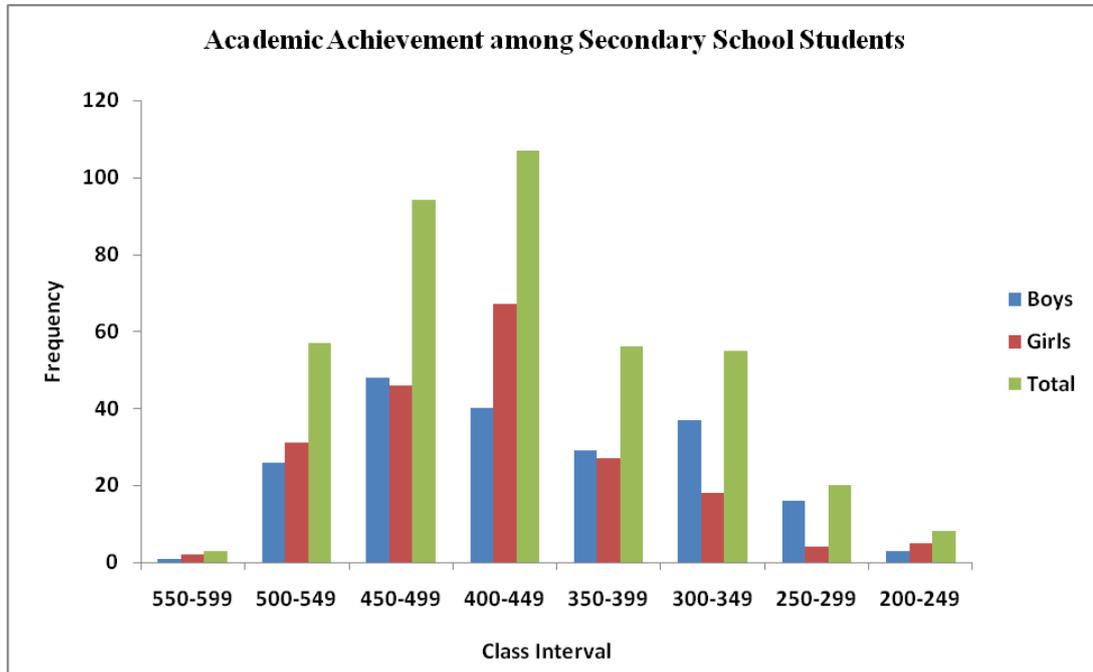
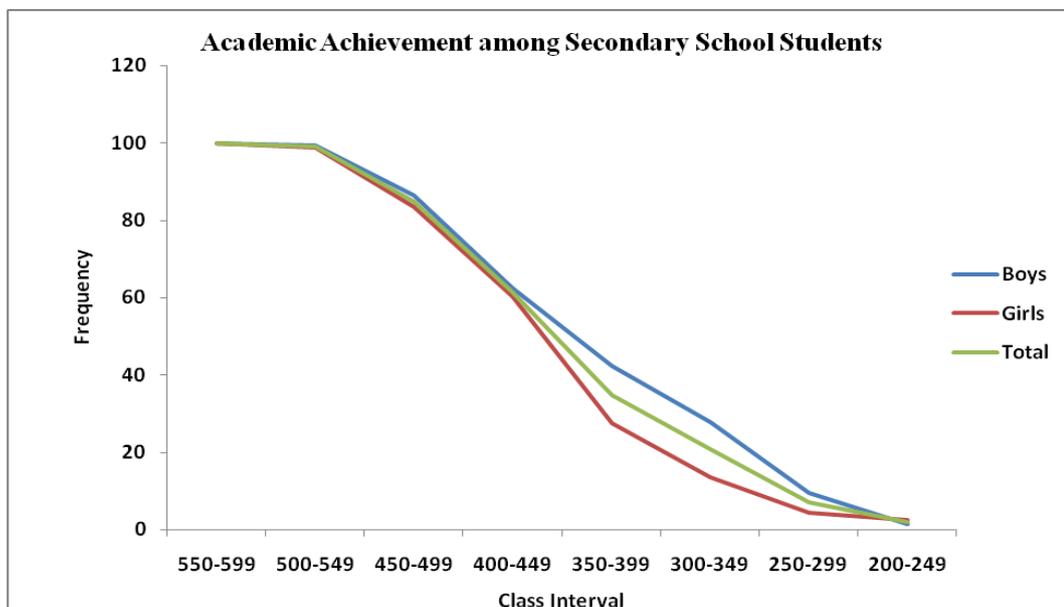


Figure 3.4: Line Diagrams Based upon Frequency Distributions for Boys, Girls and Total Sample of Secondary School Students for the Scores on Academic Achievement



Interpretation

It is revealed from frequency distributions for boys, girls and total sample given in Table 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 and corresponding bar and line diagrams given in Figures 3.3 and 3.4 that the scores on the variable of Academic Achievement are distributed over a range of 330 for boys, 364 for girls and 364 for the total sample. Thus, it may be said that the secondary school students differ in their level of academic achievement. Hence, the hypotheses that “*Secondary school boys do not differ in their level of academic achievement*”; “*Secondary school girls do not differ in their level of academic achievement*” and “*Total sample of secondary school students do not differ in their level of academic achievement*” are rejected.

It is further revealed from the Tables and Figures that the nature of distribution of scores on the variable of Academic Achievement is more or less similar for secondary school boys, girls and total sample. This is evident from the fact that 77.00, 79.00 and 78.00 per cent subjects fall between the scores 300 to 499 for the boys, girls and total sample respectively indicating almost similar concentration of scores in a limited range.

3-2.1.3 Peer Harassment among Secondary School Students

A. Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Boys on the Variable Peer Harassment

The distribution of scores for secondary school boys on the variable ‘Peer Harassment’ is given in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7: Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Boys on the Variable ‘Peer Harassment’

Class Interval	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
85-94	1	0.50	100.00
75-84	4	2.00	99.50
65-74	4	2.00	97.50
55-64	11	5.50	95.50
45-54	26	13.00	90.00
35-44	30	15.00	77.00
25-34	59	29.50	62.00
15-24	49	24.50	32.50
5-14	16	8.00	8.00
Total	200	100	100

Highest Score = 86

Lowest Score = 10

Range = 76

B. Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Girls on the Variable Peer Harassment

The distribution of scores for secondary school girls on the variable ‘Peer Harassment’ is given in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8: Distribution of Scores for Secondary School Girls on the Variable ‘Peer Harassment’

Class Interval	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
85-94	2	1.00	100.00
75-84	2	1.00	99.00
65-74	8	4.00	98.00

55-64	7	3.50	94.00
45-54	17	8.50	90.50
35-44	30	15.00	82.00
25-34	60	30.00	67.00
15-24	63	31.50	37.00
5-14	11	5.50	5.50
Total	200	100	100

Highest Score= 92

Lowest Score = 10

Range = 82

C. Distribution of Scores for Total Sample of Secondary School Students on the Variable Peer Harassment

The distribution of scores for total sample of secondary school students on the variable 'Peer Harassment' is given in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Distribution of Scores for Total Sample of Secondary School Students on the Variable 'Peer Harassment'

Class Interval	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency
85-94	3	0.75	100.00
75-84	6	1.50	99.25
65-74	12	3.00	97.75
55-64	18	4.50	94.75
45-54	43	10.75	90.25
35-44	60	15.00	79.50
25-34	119	29.75	64.50
15-24	112	28.00	34.75

5-14	27	6.75	6.75
Total	400	100	100

Highest Score = 92
Lowest Score = 10
Range = 82

Figure 3.5: Bar Diagrams Based upon Frequency Distributions for Boys, Girls and Total Sample of Secondary School Students for the Scores on Peer Harassment

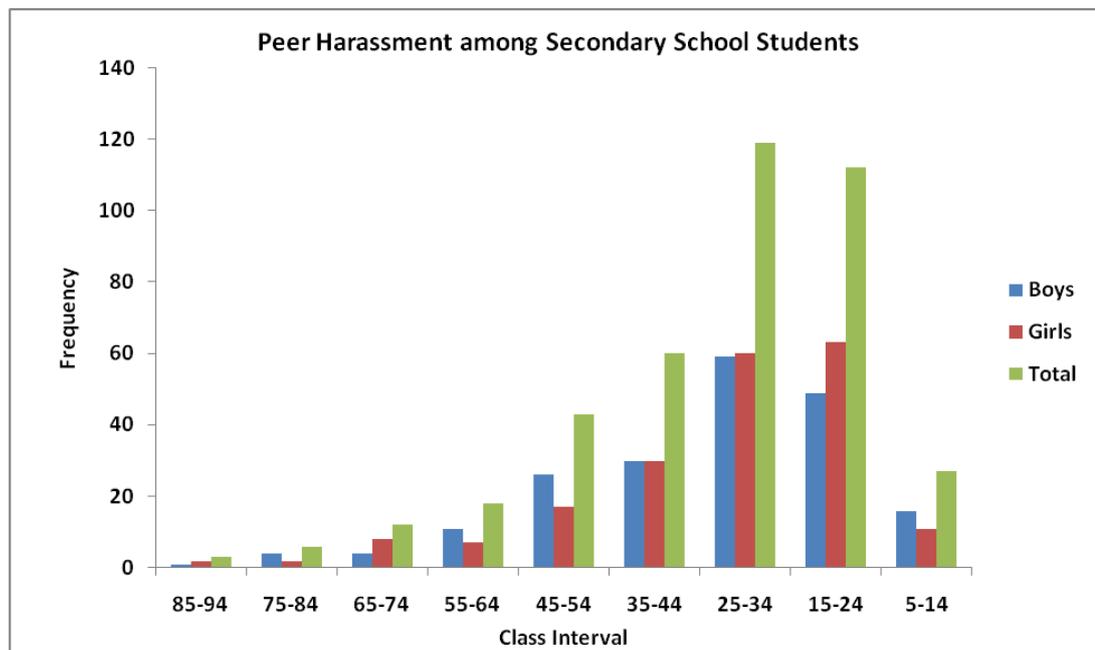
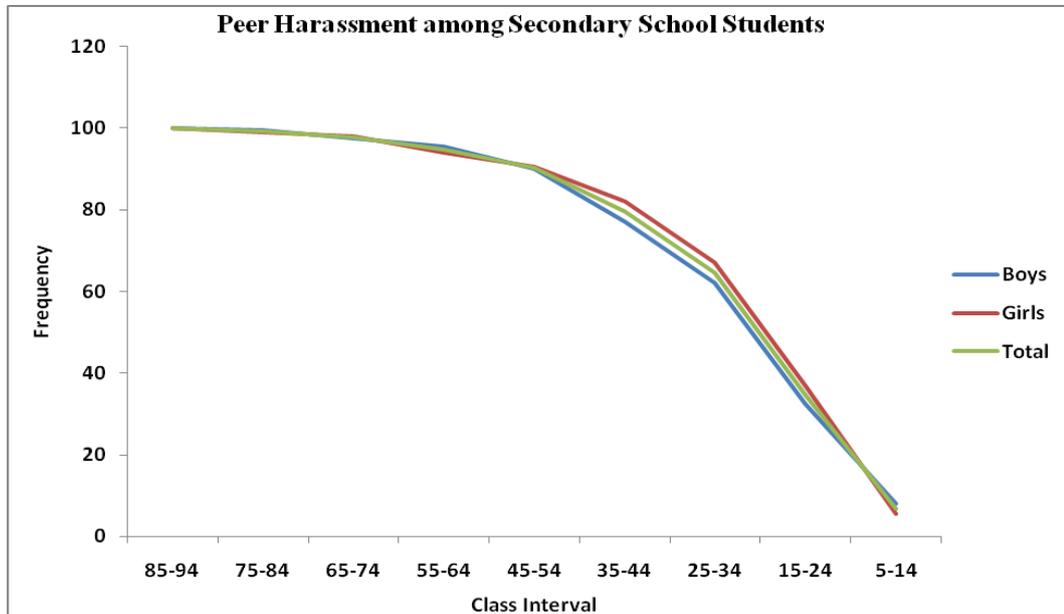


Figure 3.6: Line Diagrams Based upon Frequency Distributions for Boys, Girls and Total Sample of Secondary School Students for the Scores on Peer Harassment



Interpretation

It is revealed from frequency distributions for boys, girls and total sample given in Table 3.7, 3.8 and 3.9 and corresponding bar and line diagrams given in Figures 3.5 and 3.6 that the scores on the variable of Peer Harassment are distributed over a range of 76 for boys, 82 for girls and 82 for the total sample. Thus, it may be said that the secondary school students differ in their level of peer harassment. Hence, the hypotheses that “*Secondary school boys do not differ in their level of peer harassment*”; “*Secondary school girls do not differ in their level of peer harassment*” and “*Total sample of secondary school students do not differ in their level of peer harassment*” are rejected.

It is further revealed from the Tables and Figures that the nature of distribution of scores on the variable of Peer Harassment is more or less similar for secondary school boys, girls and total sample. This is evident from the fact that

82.00, 85.00 and 83.50 per cent subjects fall between the scores 15 to 54 for the boys, girls and total sample respectively indicating almost similar concentration of scores in a limited range.

3-3 Studying the Gender, Type of School and Locality Differences on the Variable of School Connectedness

H₀₂: There is no significant difference among the level of School Connectedness of secondary school students with respect to:

- a. Gender
- b. Type of School; and
- c. Locality

3-3.1 Boy and Girl Secondary School Students

Table 3.10 presents the t-value for secondary school boy and girl students in respect of the variable of school connectedness along with Ns, Means, SDs and Standard Error of Means for the two groups.

Table 3.10: t-value for secondary school boy and girl students in respect of the variable of school connectedness

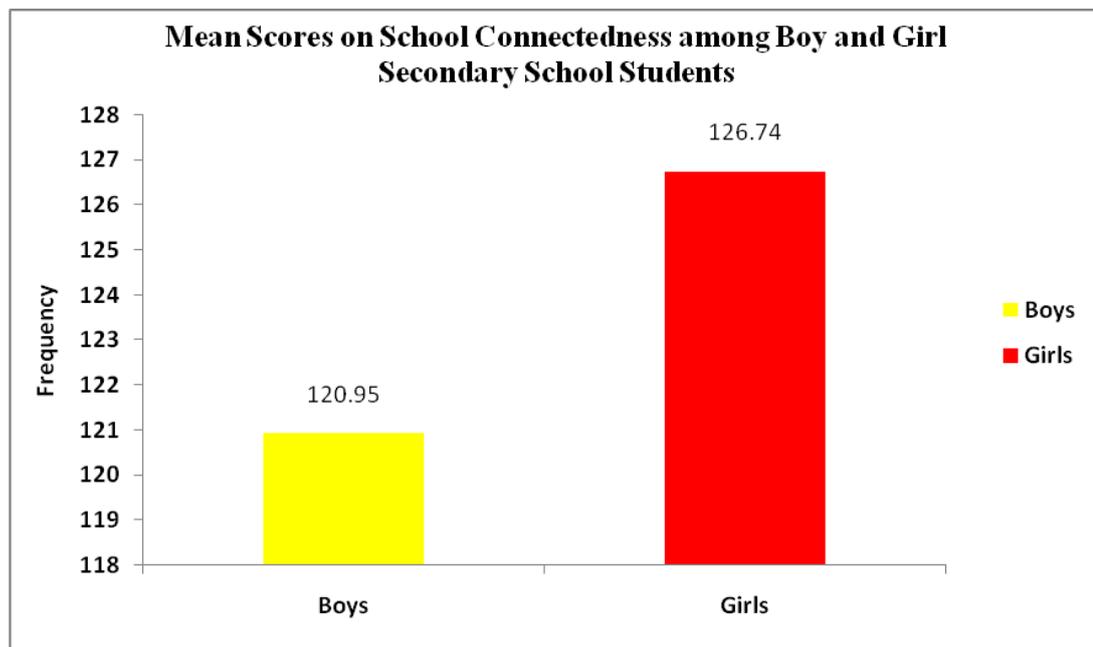
Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE_M	df	t-value
School Connectedness	Boys	200	120.95	12.52	0.89	398	5.03**
	Girls	200	126.74	10.42	0.74		

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

It is revealed from Table 3.10 that t-value came out to be 5.03, which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This indicates that secondary school boy and girl students differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on school connectedness. Hence, t-value is significant and null hypothesis is rejected.

Since, the mean score on School Connectedness is higher for girls (126.74) as compared to boys (120.95), it may be inferred that secondary school girl students exhibit significantly higher level of school connectedness in comparison to the boys. This finding of the present study supported previous study conducted by Franson (2014) and Chung-Do, Goebert, Hamagani, Chang & Hishinuma (2015). However it is contradictory with the findings of studies conducted by McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum (2002) and Kamau (2011). Finally it may be concluded that girl students exhibit significantly higher level of school connectedness in comparison to the boys. Such data for its better understanding have been presented in figure 3.7 in the form of bar diagram.

Figure 3.7: Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on school connectedness among boy and girl secondary school students



3-3.2 Government and Private Secondary School Students

Table 3.11 presents the t-value for government and private secondary school students in respect of the variable of school connectedness along with Ns, Means, SDs and Standard Error of Means for the two groups.

Table 3.11: t-value for government and private secondary school students in respect of the variable of school connectedness

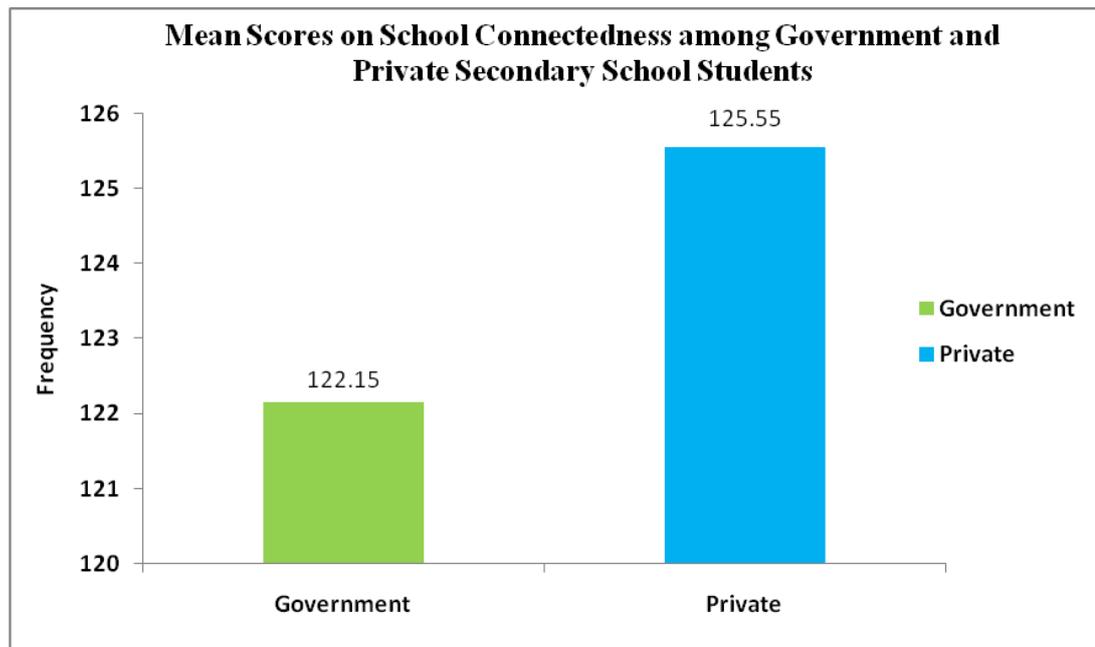
Variable	Type of School	N	Mean	SD	SE _M	df	t-value
School Connectedness	Government	200	122.15	12.68	0.90	398	2.89**
	Private	200	125.55	10.76	0.76		

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

It is revealed from Table 3.11 that t-value came out to be 2.89, which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This indicates that government and private secondary school students differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on school connectedness. Hence, t-value is significant and null hypothesis is rejected.

Since, the mean score on School Connectedness is higher for private secondary school students (125.55) as compared to government secondary school students (122.15), it may be inferred that private secondary school students exhibit significantly higher level of school connectedness in comparison to government secondary school students. This finding is contradictory with the finding of the study conducted by Adeyemi, Akin & Oluwafemi (2016) and finally it may be concluded that private secondary school students exhibit significantly higher level of school connectedness in comparison to government secondary school students. Such data for its better understanding have been presented in figure 3.8 in the form of bar diagram.

Figure 3.8: Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on school connectedness among government and private secondary school students



3-3.3 Rural and Urban Secondary School Students

Table 3.12 presents the t-value for rural and urban secondary school students in respect of the variable of school connectedness along with Ns, Means, SDs and Standard Error of Means for the two groups.

Table 3.12: t-value for rural and urban secondary school students in respect of the variable of school connectedness

Variable	Locality	N	Mean	SD	SEM	df	t-value
School Connectedness	Rural	200	122.49	11.59	0.82	398	1.74
	Urban	200	124.59	12.50	0.89		N.S.

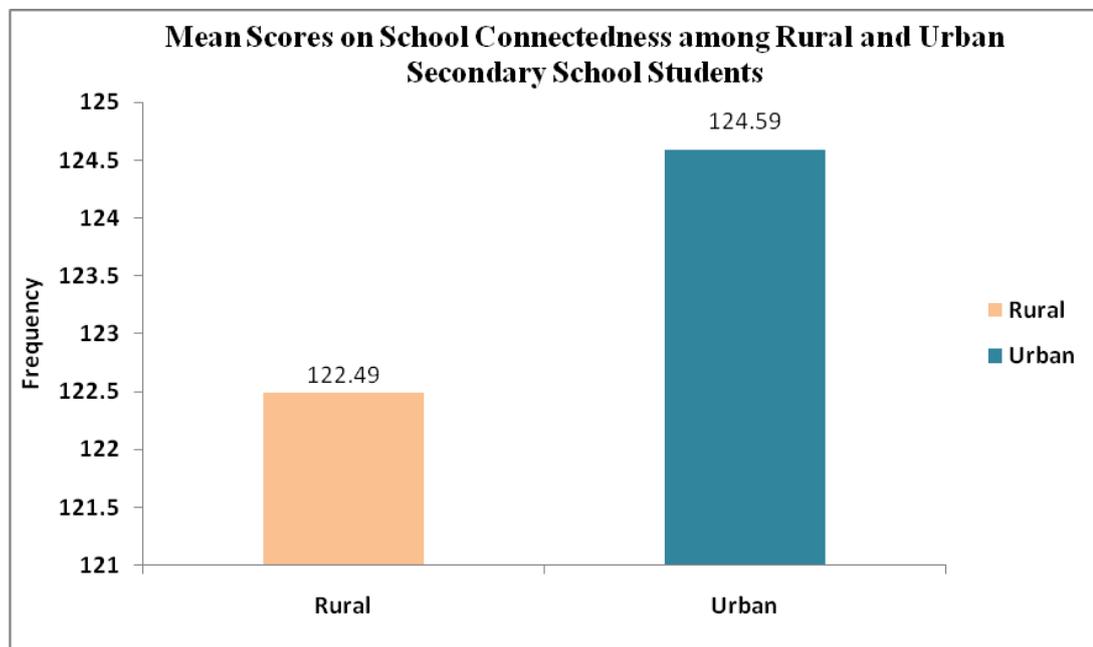
N.S.--Not Significant

It is revealed from Table 3.12 that t-value came out to be 1.74, which is not significant. This indicates that rural and urban secondary school students do not differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on school connectedness.

Hence, t-value is not significant and null hypothesis is accepted.

Since, the mean score on School Connectedness is higher for urban secondary school students (124.59) as compared to rural secondary school students (122.49), it may be inferred that urban secondary school students exhibit higher level of school connectedness in comparison to rural secondary school students. This finding of the present study is contradictory with the finding of the study conducted by McNeely, Nonnemaker & Blum (2002) and Klem & Connell (2004). Finally it may be concluded that urban secondary school students exhibit higher level of school connectedness in comparison to rural secondary school students. Such data for its better understanding have been presented in figure 3.9 in the form of bar diagram.

Figure 3.9: Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on school connectedness among rural and urban secondary school students



3-4 Studying the Gender, Type of School and Locality Differences on the Variable of Academic Achievement

H₀₃ There is no significant difference among the level of Academic Achievement of secondary school students with respect to:

- a. Gender
- b. Type of School; and
- c. Locality

3-4.1 Boy and Girl Secondary School Students

Table 3.13 presents the t-value for secondary school boy and girl students in respect of the variable of academic achievement along with Ns, Means, SDs and Standard Error of Means for the two groups.

Table 3.13: t-value for secondary school boy and girl students in respect of the variable of academic achievement

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE _M	df	t-value
Academic Achievement	Boys	200	405.42	79.31	5.61	398	2.53**
	Girls	200	424.25	69.12	4.89		

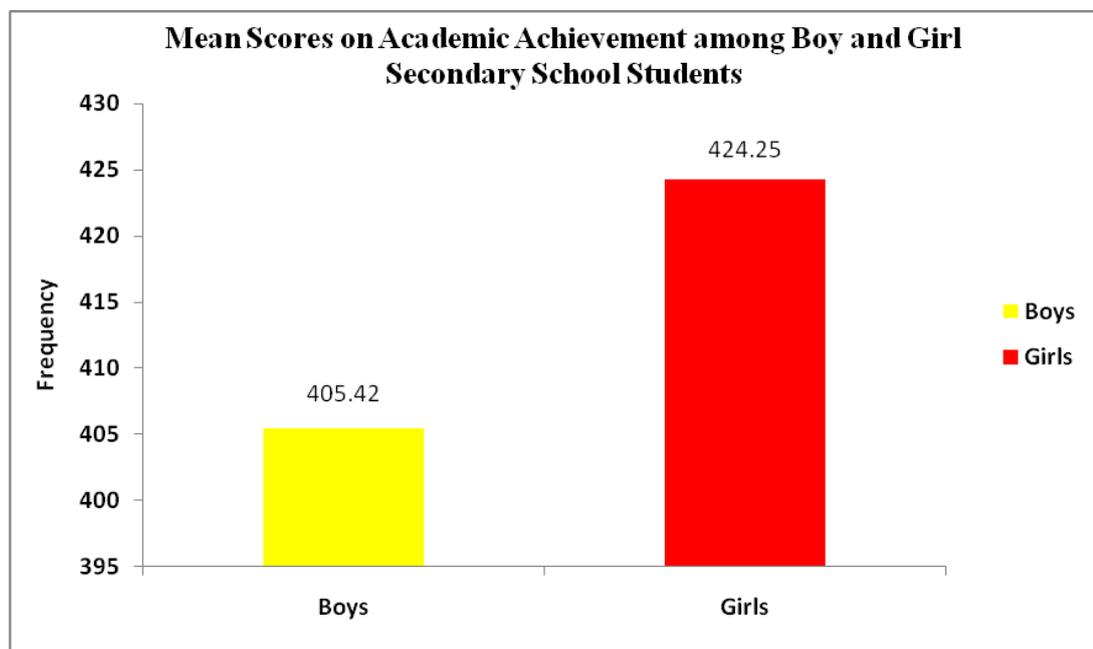
** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

It is revealed from Table 3.13 that t-value came out to be 2.53, which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. This indicates that secondary school boy and girl students differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on academic achievement. Hence, t-value is significant and null hypothesis is rejected.

Since, the mean score on Academic Achievement is higher for girls (424.25) as compared to boys (405.42), it may be inferred that secondary school girl students exhibit significantly higher level of academic achievement in comparison to the boys. This finding of the present study supported previous study conducted by Joshi

& Srivastava (2009) and Foen, Zakaria, Lai & Confessore (2016). However it is contradictory with the findings of the studies conducted by Nuthana(2007); Simmons (2010); Chandra and Azimmudin (2013); Eshetu (2015), Nadeem & Ahmad (2016) and Uzezi & Deya (2017). Finally it may be concluded that secondary school girl students exhibit significantly higher level of academic achievement in comparison to the boys. Such data for its better understanding have been presented in figure 3.10 in the form of bar diagram.

Figure 3.10: Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on academic achievement among boy and girl secondary school students



3-4.2 Government and Private Secondary School Students

Table 3.14 presents the t-value for government and private secondary school students in respect of the variable of academic achievement along with Ns, Means, SDs and Standard Error of Means for the two groups.

Table 3.14: t-value for government and private secondary school students in respect of the variable of academic achievement

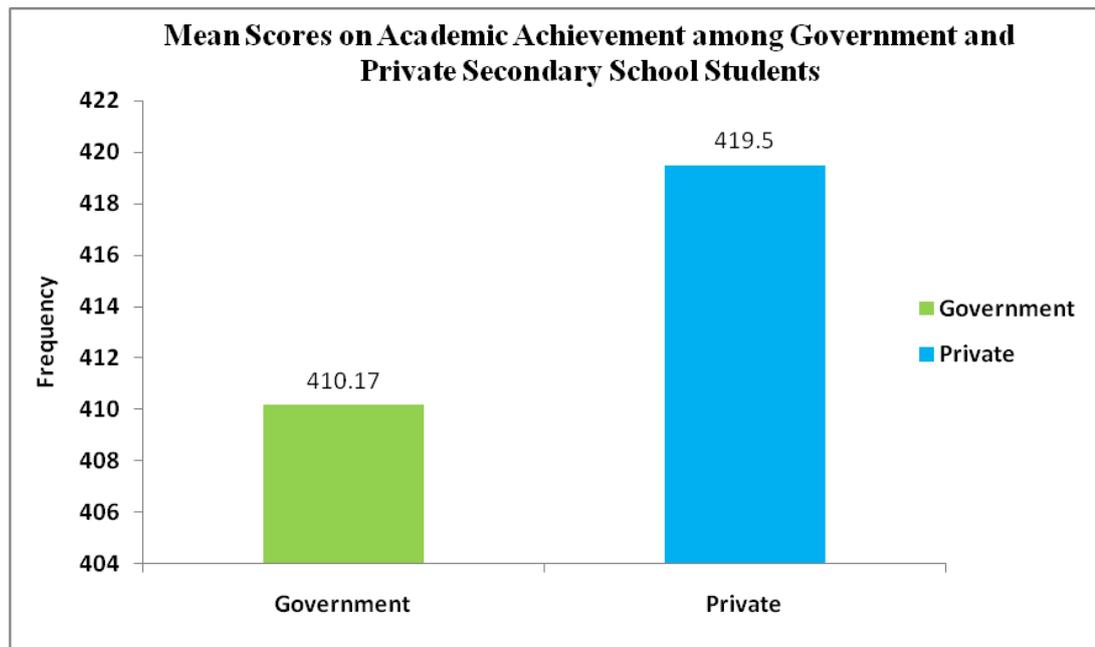
Variable	Type of School	N	Mean	SD	SE_M	df	t-value
Academic Achievement	Government	200	410.17	76.41	5.40	398	1.25
	Private	200	419.50	73.24	5.18		N.S.

N.S.--Not Significant

It is revealed from Table 3.14 that t-value came out to be 1.25, which is not significant. This indicates that government and private secondary school students do not differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on academic achievement. Hence, t-value is not significant and null hypothesis is accepted.

Since, the mean score on Academic Achievement is higher for private secondary school students (419.50) as compared to government secondary school students (410.25), it may be inferred that private secondary school students exhibit significantly higher level of academic achievement in comparison to government secondary school students. This finding of the study is contradictory with the findings of the studies conducted by Mili (2016). Finally it may be concluded that private secondary school students exhibit significantly higher level of academic achievement in comparison to government secondary school students. Such data for its better understanding have been presented in figure 3.11 in the form of bar diagram.

Figure 3.11: Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on academic achievement among government and private secondary school students



3-4.3 Rural and Urban Secondary School Students

Table 3.15 presents the t-value for rural and urban secondary school students in respect of the variable of academic achievement along with Ns, Means, SDs and Standard Error of Means for the two groups.

Table 3.15: t-value for rural and urban secondary school students in respect of the variable of academic achievement

Variable	Locality	N	Mean	SD	SE _M	df	t-value
Academic Achievement	Rural	200	434.67	68.76	4.80	398	3.41**
	Urban	200	410.02	75.84	5.36		

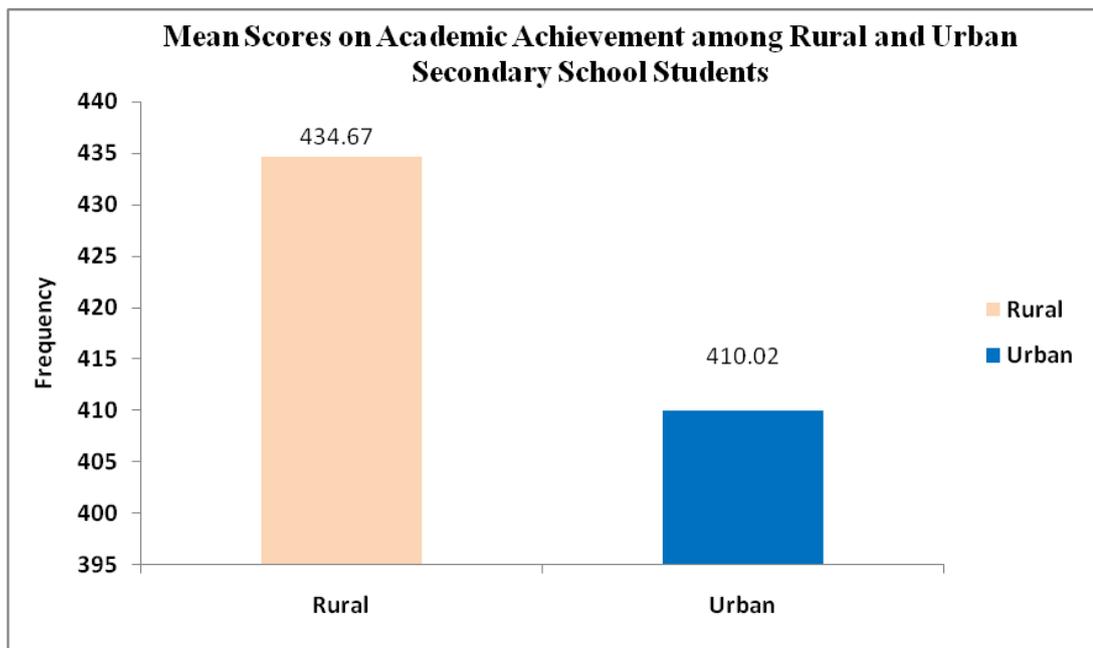
** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

It is revealed from Table 3.15 that t-value came out to be 3.41, which is significant. This indicates that rural and urban secondary school students differ significantly

with respect to their mean scores on academic achievement. Hence, t-value is significant and null hypothesis is rejected.

Since, the mean score on Academic Achievement is higher for rural secondary school students (434.67) as compared to urban secondary school students (410.02), it may be inferred that rural secondary school students exhibit significantly higher level of academic achievement in comparison to rural secondary school students. This finding of the study is contradictory with the findings of the studies conducted by Joshi & Srivastava (2009), Mlay (2010), Owoeye and Yara (2010), Alokun, & Arijesuyo (2013) and Aslam (2016). Finally it may be concluded that rural secondary school students exhibit significantly higher level of academic achievement in comparison to rural secondary school students. Such data for its better understanding have been presented in figure 3.12 in the form of bar diagram.

Figure 3.12: Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on academic achievement among rural and urban secondary school students



3-5 Studying the Gender, Type of School and Locality Differences on the Variable of Peer Harassment

H₀₄: There is no significant difference among the level of Peer Harassment of secondary school students with respect to:

- a. Gender
- b. Type of School; and
- c. Locality

3-5.1 Boys and Girls Secondary School Students

Table 3.16 presents the t-value for secondary school boy and girl students in respect of the variable of peer harassment along with Ns, Means, SDs and Standard Error of Means for the two groups.

Table 3.16: t-value for secondary school boy and girl students in respect of the variable of peer harassment

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE _M	df	t-value
Peer Harassment	Boys	200	33.29	15.78	1.12	398	0.48
	Girls	200	32.52	15.87	1.12		N.S.

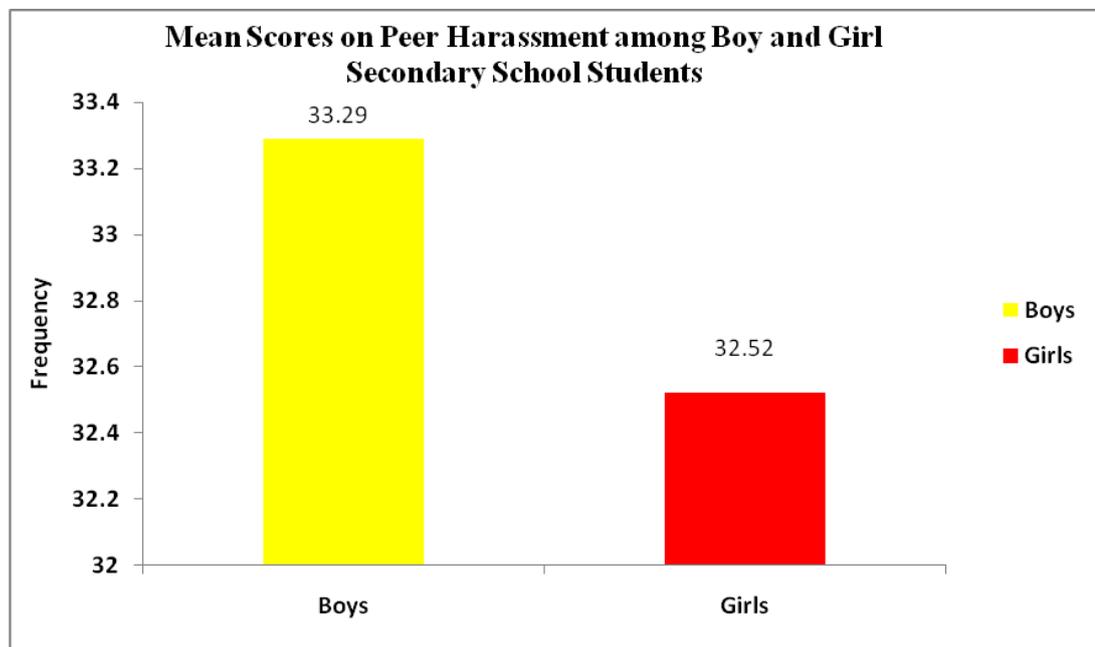
N.S. --Not Significant

It is revealed from Table 3.16 that t-value came out to be 0.48, which is not significant. This indicates that secondary school boy and girl students do not differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on peer harassment. Hence, t-value is not significant and null hypothesis is accepted.

Since, the mean score on Peer Harassment is higher for girls (33.29) as compared to boys (32.52), it may be inferred that secondary school boy students exhibit significantly higher level of peer harassment in comparison to the girls. This finding of the present study supported previous studies conducted by Kim, Koh & Leventhal

(2004), Eros & Ribeiro (2005), Li (2006), Scheithauerz, Hayer, Petermann & Jugert (2006), Skues, Cunnigham & Pokharel (2012), Silva, Pereira & Oliveira (2013), Smokowski, Cotter, Robertson & Guo (2013); Neupane (2014), Gea, Ruiz & Sanchez (2016) and Malik and Mehta (2016). But contradictory with the findings of the studies conducted by Hand and Sanchez (2000), Eisenberg, Neumark and Perryl (2003) and Popoola, (2005);. Finally it may be concluded that secondary school boy students exhibit significantly higher level of peer harassment in comparison to the girls. Such data for its better understanding have been presented in figure 3.13 in the form of bar diagram.

Figure 3.13: Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on peer harassment among boy and girl secondary school students



3-5.2 Government and Private Secondary School Students

Table 3.17 presents the t-value for government and private secondary school students in respect of the variable of peer harassment along with Ns, Means, SDs and Standard Error of Means for the two groups.

Table 3.17: t-value for government and private secondary school students in respect of the variable of peer harassment

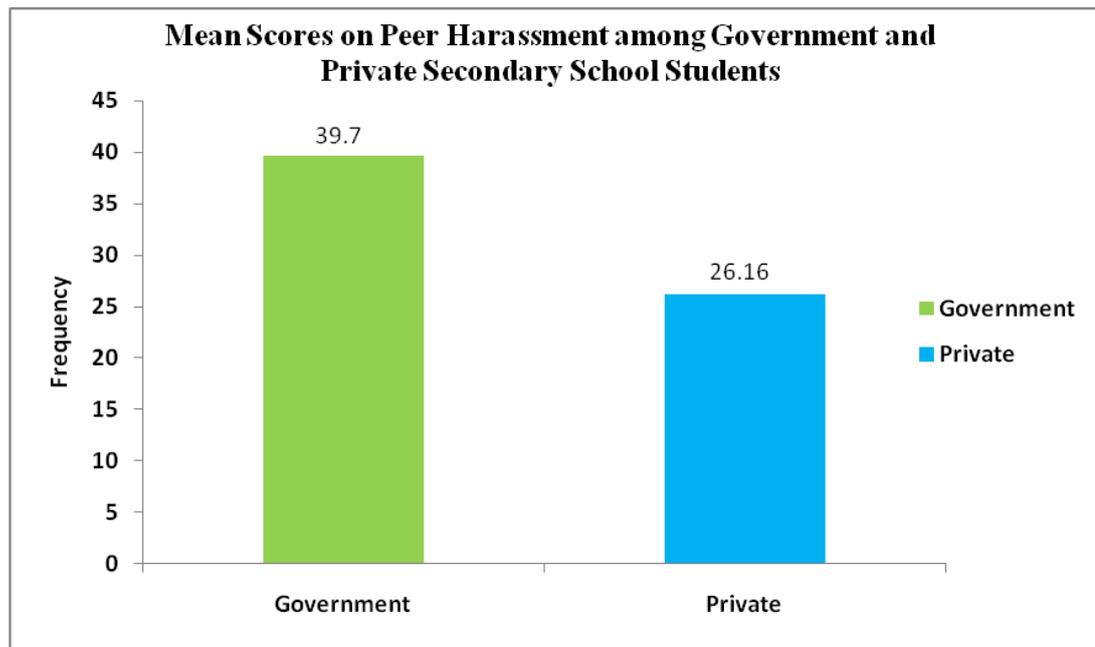
Variable	Type of School	N	Mean	SD	SE_M	df	t-value
Peer Harassment	Government	200	39.70	16.57	1.17	398	9.50**
	Private	200	26.16	11.57	0.82		

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

It is revealed from Table 3.17 that t-value came out to be 9.50, which is significant. This indicates that government and private secondary school students differ significantly with respect to their mean scores on peer harassment. Hence, t-value is significant and null hypothesis is rejected.

Since, the mean score on Peer Harassment is higher for government secondary school students (39.70) as compared to private secondary school students (26.16), it may be inferred that government secondary school students exhibit significantly higher level of peer harassment in comparison to private secondary school students. This finding of the present study supported previous study conducted by Egbochuku (2007). Finally it may be concluded that government secondary school students exhibit significantly higher level of peer harassment in comparison to private secondary school students. Such data for its better understanding have been presented in figure 3.14 in the form of bar diagram.

Figure 3.14: Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on peer harassment among government and private secondary school students



3-5.3 Rural and Urban Secondary School Students

Table 3.18 presents the t-value for rural and urban secondary school students in respect of the variable of peer harassment along with Ns, Means, SDs and Standard Error of Means for the two groups.

Table 3.18: t-value for rural and urban secondary school students in respect of the variable of peer harassment

Variable	Locality	N	Mean	SD	SE _M	df	t-value
Peer Harassment	Rural	200	42.35	18.08	1.28	398	7.02**
	Urban	200	31.10	13.70	0.97		

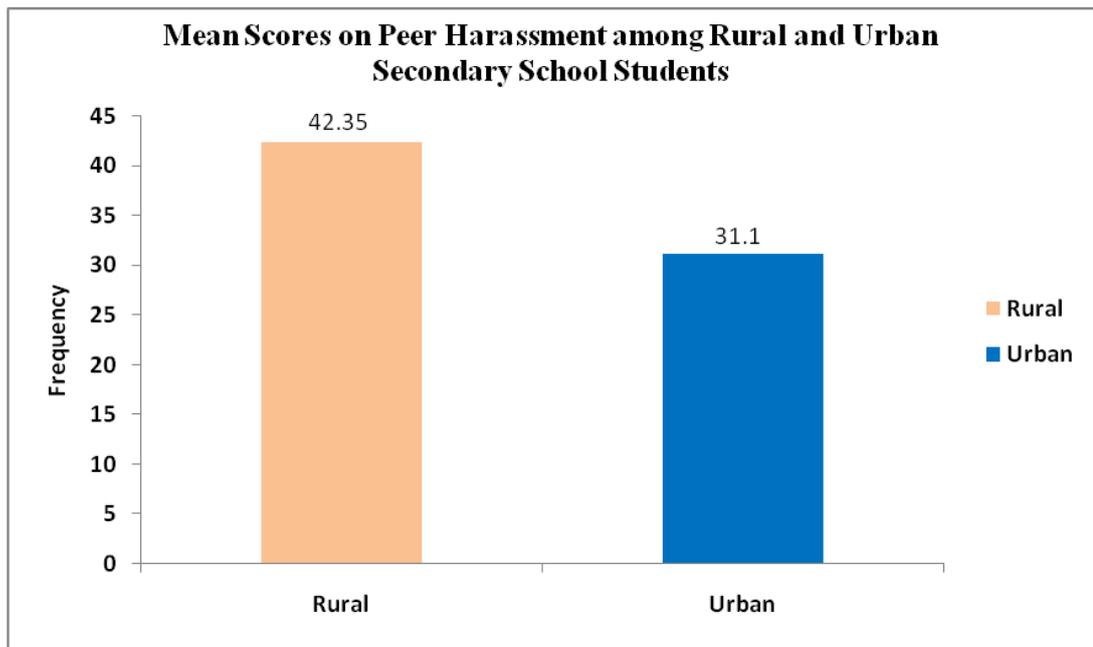
** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

It is revealed from Table 3.18 that t-value came out to be 7.02, which is significant. This indicates that rural and urban secondary school students differ significantly

with respect to their mean scores on peer harassment. Hence, t-value is significant and null hypothesis is rejected.

Since, the mean score on Peer Harassment is higher for rural secondary school students (42.35) as compared to urban secondary school students (31.10), it may be inferred that rural secondary school students exhibit significantly higher level of peer harassment in comparison to urban secondary school students. The finding of the present study were supported by previous studies conducted by Zaborskis, Cirtautiene & Zemaitiene (2005), Rezapour, Hamid & Khodakarim (2014) and Uduma, Samuel & Agbaje (2015). But contradictory with the findings of the studies conducted by Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simmons-Morton & Schmidt (2001), McCaskill (2013) and Ahir, Singhal, Dhaked & Sharma (2015). Finally it may be concluded that rural secondary school students exhibit significantly higher level of peer harassment in comparison to urban secondary school students. Such data for its better understanding have been presented in figure 3.15 in the form of bar diagram.

Figure 3.15: Bar Diagram depicting mean scores on peer harassment among rural and urban secondary school students



3-6 Studying the Relationship between Peer Harassment and School Connectedness

H₀₅ There is no significant relationship between Peer Harassment and School Connectedness for boys, girls and total sample of secondary school students.

The data have been analyzed by Product Moment Correlation 'r'. The Table 3.19 presents the relationship in terms of Product Moment Correlation between the variables of Peer Harassment and School Connectedness for boys, girls and total sample of secondary school students.

Table 3.19: The values of Product Moment Correlation between Peer Harassment and School Connectedness

The Group	Coefficient of Correlation
Boys	-0.41**
Girls	-0.47**
Total Sample	-0.43**

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

Interpretation

It is revealed from table 3.19 that the relationship between Peer Harassment and School Connectedness in terms of Product Moment Correlation between boys, girls and total sample came out to be significant at 0.01 level of confidence indicating that change in School Connectedness in these groups is negatively associated with a change in their level of Peer Harassment. Hence, the hypothesis that “*There is no significant relationship between Peer Harassment and School Connectedness for boys, girls and total sample of secondary school students*” is rejected. The finding of the present study were supported by previous studies conducted by Eisenberg, Neumark and Perryl (2003) and; Skues, Cunnigham and Pokharel (2012).

3-7 Studying the Relationship between Peer Harassment and Academic Achievement

H₀₆: There is no significant relationship between Peer Harassment and Academic Achievement for boys, girls and total sample of secondary school students.

The data have been analyzed by Product Moment Correlation ‘r’. The Table 3.20 presents the relationship in terms of Product Moment Correlation between the

variables of Peer Harassment and Academic Achievement for boys, girls and total sample.

Table 3.20: The values of Product Moment Correlation between Peer Harassment and Academic Achievement

The Group	Coefficient of Correlation
Boys	-0.21**
Girls	-0.27**
Total Sample	-0.24**

** Significant at 0.01 level of confidence

Interpretation

It is revealed from table 3.20 that the relationship between Peer Harassment and Academic Achievement in terms of Product Moment Correlation between boys, girls and total sample came out to be significant at 0.01 level of confidence indicating that change in Academic Achievement in these groups is negatively associated with a change in their level of Peer Harassment. Hence, the hypothesis that *“There is no significant relationship between Peer Harassment and Academic Achievement for boys, girls and total sample of secondary school students”* is rejected. The finding of the present study were supported by previous studies conducted by Eisenberg, Neumark and Perryl (2003); Urbanski (2007); Beran and Lupart (2009); Skues, Cunningham and Pokharel (2012); Wang *et.al.* (2014).

CHAPTER 4

REVIEW, CONCLUSIONS, EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Peer harassment in India is by far one of the serious issues that are being faced by students going to school every day. A survey conducted by Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB) a top Indian marketing research company and Parent Circle (2015) indicated that ‘every third child’ was harassed in Indian schools. A news report indicated that peer harassment in Indian schools is quite high and is more prevalent in northern parts of India and reports suggest that most of the harassment happens within the classroom. (Kshirsagar, Agarwal and Badhekar, 2007). A baseline study that was carried out by Nielsen for UNICEF’s Meena Radio Programme (2012) in rural government schools in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh showed that among children aged 11- 14 years, more than 60% of students were aware of peer harassment. It was seen that adolescents who were harassed typically got involved in fights and quarrels. This caused them to suffer from various academic related problems, one of the most prominent being school connectedness. High degree of connectedness in school was always found to reveal consistent positive developmental pattern such as improved academic achievement (Wilson, 2004), but the relationships between the impact on peer harassment and school connectedness and academic achievement is limited (Urbanski, 2007) and varies based on different patterns with regard to different school connectedness patterns.

Taking cue from the above mentioned idea in 2015, CBSE along with the Directorate of Education, Government of Sikkim issued a list of guidelines related to the

incidence and preventive measures to be adopted by the principals of schools at various levels with regard to peer harassment or bullying. This was mainly adopted as an essential measure to improve school environment, promote connectedness among students towards their schools and ensure positive and favourable learning environment. An instance of the implementation of these guidelines was first seen in 2015 in Government Secondary School, Bongten, West Sikkim where surveillance cameras were installed in all classrooms and premises to monitor and curb bullying which ultimately improved learning environment. However, such measures are yet to be adopted in other government and private schools in various districts of Sikkim. Several cases of bullying among students in Sikkim still goes unnoticed as a result of which learning gets hampered which in the long run lead to other severe consequences. However very few studies related to harassment by peers and its influence on various educational factors such as school connectedness and academic achievement have been conducted in India generally and in North Eastern Region particularly. Moreover, no worthwhile endeavor has been made so far to investigate the relationship among peer harassment, school connectedness and academic achievement, especially in context of Sikkim. To fulfill this purpose and to add more knowledge to existing one the investigator selected the following problem for the study:

Impact of Peer Harassment on School Connectedness and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Sikkim

4-1 Research Questions

The present study was attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between School Connectedness and Peer Harassment of Secondary School Students?

2. What is the relationship between Academic Achievement and Peer Harassment of Secondary School Students?

4-2 Operational Definition of Key Terms

The different key terms used in the title of the study and to be used in the body of study are operationally defined as follows;

1. Peer Harassment: It refers to bullying or harassment faced by students in schools and it was based upon the scores obtained by the students from the self-made tool on Peer Harassment constructed by the researcher.

2. School Connectedness: In the present study the term school connectedness refers to the positive connectedness of the students to their school and was obtained from the self-made tool on School Connectedness developed by the researcher.

3. Academic Achievement: It refers to the marks obtained by the students in class 8th summative examination.

4. Secondary School Students- It connotes the students studying in class 9th in government and private secondary schools of East district of Sikkim.

4-3 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives are laid down for the present study:

1. To study the nature of distribution of scores for secondary school boys, girls and total sample on the following variables:

- a. School Connectedness
- b. Academic Achievement; and
- c. Peer Harassment

2. To compare the level of School Connectedness of secondary school students with respect to:

- a. Gender

- b. Type of School; and
 - c. Locality
- 3. To compare the level of Academic Achievement of secondary school students with respect to:
 - a. Gender
 - b. Type of School; and
 - c. Locality
- 4. To compare the level of Peer Harassment of secondary school students with respect to:
 - a. Gender
 - b. Type of School; and
 - c. Locality
- 5. To study the relationship if any, between the scores on the following variables for secondary school students:
 - a. Peer Harassment and School Connectedness
 - b. Peer Harassment and Academic Achievement

4-4 Hypotheses of the Study

The following hypotheses are framed for testing in the present study:

- H₀₁ Secondary school boys, girls and total sample of students do not differ on the following variables:
 - a. School Connectedness
 - b. Academic Achievement; and
 - c. Peer Harassment
- H₀₂ There is no significant difference among the level of School Connectedness of secondary school students with respect to:

- a. Gender
 - b. Type of School; and
 - c. Locality
- H₀₃ There is no significant difference among the level of Academic Achievement of secondary school students with respect to:
- a. Gender
 - b. Type of School; and
 - c. Locality
- H₀₄ There is no significant difference among the level of Peer Harassment of secondary school students with respect to:
- a. Gender
 - b. Type of School; and
 - c. Locality
- H₀₅ There is no significant relationship between Peer Harassment and School Connectedness for boys, girls and total sample of secondary school students.
- H₀₆ There is no significant relationship between Peer Harassment and Academic Achievement for boys, girls and total sample of secondary school students.

4-5 Delimitations of the Study

The present study was delimited in the following aspects:

1. The state of Sikkim has four districts. The study was restricted to only one district i.e. East of the state.
2. The study was delimited to the secondary school students only.
3. The study was confined to class IX students only.

4-6 Method

It is decided to use Descriptive Survey Method of research in the present case which is relevant and justified in view of the objectives of the study.

4-7 The Sample

In the present study the sample was drawn from the secondary school students studying in class IX of government and primary schools situated in East district of Sikkim. A sample of 400 secondary school students were selected randomly keeping in mind the objectives of the study.

4-8 Tools Used

To collect the requisite data for present study the investigator used the Peer Harassment Scale and School Connectedness Scale developed by the investigator.

4-9 Statistical Techniques Used

In view of the objectives of the study, the following statistical techniques were used to analyze the data.

1. The objective number 1 aimed at studying the nature of distribution of scores of selected samples of secondary school boys and girls as well as total sample on the variables of School Connectedness, Academic Achievement and Peer Harassment. Hence, the technique of frequency distribution followed by bar and line diagram was used in all these case.
2. Objective numbers 2 to 4 seeked to compare the level of School Connectedness, Academic Achievement and Peer Harassment of secondary school students with respect to Gender, Type of School and Locality. In view of this, the technique of t-test was used in all these cases.
3. Objective number 5 aimed to study the significant relationship between Peer Harassment & School Connectedness and Peer Harassment & Academic

Achievement for selected sample of secondary school boys and girls as well as total sample. In view of this, the technique of product moment correlation was used in all these cases.

4-10 Conclusions

On the basis of the item analysis the investigator of the present study arrived at the following findings which have been presented below;

1. Secondary school boys, girls and total sample of students differ on their level of School Connectedness, Academic Achievement and Peer Harassment.
2. There was a significant difference among the level of school connectedness of secondary school students with respect to gender. Secondary school girl students exhibited significantly higher level of school connectedness in comparison to the boys.
3. There was a significant difference among the level of school connectedness of secondary school students with respect to type of school. Private secondary school students exhibited significantly higher level of school connectedness in comparison to government secondary school students.
4. There was a significant difference among the level of school connectedness of secondary school students with respect to locality. Urban secondary school students exhibited significantly higher level of school connectedness in comparison to rural secondary school students.
5. There was a significant difference among the level of academic achievement of secondary school students with respect to gender. Secondary school girl students exhibited significantly higher level of academic achievement in comparison to the boys.
6. There was a significant difference among the level of academic achievement of secondary school students with respect to type of school. Private secondary school students exhibited significantly higher level of academic achievement in comparison to government secondary school students.
7. There was a significant difference among the level of academic achievement of secondary school students with respect to locality. Rural secondary school students exhibited significantly higher level of academic achievement in comparison to urban secondary school students.
8. There was no significant difference among the level of peer harassment of secondary school students with respect to gender. However based on the mean scores obtained on the Peer Harassment Scale it was observed that secondary school boy students exhibited slightly higher level of peer harassment in comparison to the girls.

9. There was a significant difference among the level of peer harassment of secondary school students with respect to type of school. Government secondary school students exhibited significantly higher level of peer harassment in comparison to private secondary school students.
10. There was a significant difference among the level of peer harassment of secondary school students with respect to locality. Rural secondary school students exhibited significantly higher level of peer harassment in comparison to urban secondary school students.
11. There was a negative relationship between peer harassment and school connectedness among the secondary school students. Higher the rate of peer harassment observed lower is the level of school connectedness among the students.
12. There was a negative relationship between peer harassment and academic achievement among the secondary school students. Higher the rate of peer harassment observed lower is the level of academic achievement among the students.

4-11 Educational Implications

The findings of the study have some important implications for educational practices:-

1. Peer harassment has become a pertinent issue faced by students nowadays and as such all school authorities should have their own anti- bullying committee as per the guidelines laid down by Central Board of Secondary Education. Stern disciplinary actions are to be taken by against the offenders.
2. All schools should have necessary physical infrastructure especially CCTV surveillance system to curb the instances of harassment.
3. Various awareness programmes should be conducted in schools to aware students on bullying and its implications. They can also be trained to raise their voice against any form of harassment happening around them in school.
4. Properly trained teachers are to be recruited in schools so that they are able to cater to the overall development of the students.
5. Teachers should be able to motivate their students in studies through the use of innovative techniques such that the students enjoy their studies.
6. Every school should have a working school management committee to ensure that the school has proper physical and educational facilities.
7. Parents should involve themselves in various school related activities and maintain a regular check on their child's progress.

8. As bullying was found to create an impact on school connectedness and academic achievement, any abnormality seen in students in these regard should be taken care of by both parents and teachers. Constant feedback is to be taken from the students regarding their problems and accordingly follow up programmes can be devised to the school authorities.
9. All schools should have well trained counsellors who can have help victims overcome the trauma faced.
10. Active involvement of community should also be there in order to punish the offender so that peer harassment acquires significance as an issue.

4-12 Suggestions for Further Research

On the basis of above findings, the investigator is inclined to have following suggestions for further research:-

1. Research can be conducted on more samples on state wise or district wise basis.
2. Research can also be extended among students studying in different levels of education.
3. Studies can also be conducted on peer harassment based on the perceptions of teachers and principals.
4. Further studies can be undertaken on the relationship between peer harassment and self-esteem of students.
5. Research can also be conducted on the impact of peer harassment on absenteeism and drop out among students.
6. A study can be performed on teacher to student harassment and its impact on school connectedness and academic achievement.
7. A comparative study can be undertaken between different states or district wise with regard to the variables of peer harassment, school connectedness and academic achievement.
8. Research can be further conducted to find out the role of teachers and school authorities in order to promote school connectedness among bullied students.

PEER HARASSMENT SCALE

Please fill in the following information:

Your Name.....

School Name.....

Age.....*Gender: Male/Female*..... *Class*.....

Locality: Rural/Urban.....

Category: SC/ST/OBC/General.....

Father's Occupation.....

Mother's Occupation.....

INSTRUCTIONS

A list of 40 items is presented before you which shows your peer harassment in school. Please read each item carefully and record your reaction to it on any one of five (*Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, Always*) alternatives provided against it. One by one, please react on all the items like this.

Yes, tick () mark against each item in the appropriate place. You are free to pick up only one of the five choices given for each item.

This scale enlists your frank thinking, so as such there is no question of wrong answers. Please feel free to respond without any hesitation.

What is wanted is first spontaneous reaction of yours for each of the 40 items. So, please record your responses as rapidly you can. There is no time limit but you may take 25-30 minutes to work over this scale.

**NOW MOVE TO THE NEXT PAGE AND START GIVING RESPONSES FROM
ITEM NO. 1**

S. No.	ITEMS	RESPONSE				
		<i>Never</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>

1	I am hit/kicked/pushed by other students purposefully.					
2	I tend to fight back when someone hit me first.					
3	I get into physical fights when other students irritate me.					
4	I am constantly afraid as some students threaten to hurt me physically.					
5	I am forced to do undesirable things by my seniors.					
6	I derive pleasure in encouraging other students to fight.					
7	I throw objects on other students intentionally to harm them.					
8	I threaten to hit other students.					
9	I am scared of going out alone after school.					
10	I am called mean names (nerds/jerk/ugly/fat/skinny etc.) by my friends.					
11	Some students make fun of my name.					
12	Some students tell lies & spread false rumours about me because they are jealous of me.					
13	I am threatened to do things by other students that I do not want to do.					
14	I am bullied by other students with sexually laden comments.					
15	Some students use abusive words as they dislike me.					
16	I am threatened by other students as I refuse to obey their orders.					
17	Some students shout at me without any reason.					
18	Some students make fun of me by repeating my statements since they feel I speak nonsense					

S. No.	ITEMS	RESPONSE				
		<i>Never</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>

19	I and my family are labelled with mean and hurtful comments by other students purposefully.					
20	Some students pass rude comments that force me to start a fight.					
21	I hate going to school because of the rumours spread against me.					
22	I am excluded purposefully from my group of friends.					
23	Money/other valuables are stolen from my bag during school hours.					
24	Some students force my friends to not talk with me.					
25	Some students spoil my work deliberately.					
26	I am shown unwanted pictures, photographs, illustrations, messages/notes.					
27	I am left out of games and other activities on purpose.					
28	I am forced to obey the orders of other students and fulfil their favours.					
29	I am forced by some students to misbehave with innocent students in school.					
30	I am forced to become an addict in order to fit in my friends' circle.					
31	I am forced by some students to complete their homework/classwork.					
32	Some students deliberately take my lunch box away.					
33	I am forced to steal money from my parents in order to meet the demands of my friends and be a part of their group					
34	I receive insulting messages in my social networking account.					
35	I receive insulting calls in my cell phones.					

S. No.	ITEMS	RESPONSE				
		<i>Never</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>

36	I receive anonymous calls intending to frighten me.					
37	I have been threatened/ blackmailed by calls/messages from unknown numbers.					
38	Some students spread rumours against me through illegal access in my social networking account.					
39	I am made fun of since I do not have a personal account in any social networking sites.					
40	My classmates make fun of me as I do not have personal mobile phone.					

Thank You.

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SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS SCALE

Please fill in the following information:

Your Name.....

School Name.....

Age..... *Gender: Male/Female*..... *Class*.....

Locality: Rural/Urban.....

Category: SC/ST/OBC/General.....

Father's Occupation.....

Mother's Occupation.....

INSTRUCTIONS

A list of 50 items is presented before you which shows your connectedness towards school. Please read each item carefully and record your reaction to it on any one of three (A, U, D) alternatives provided against it. One by one, please react on all the items like this.

Yes, tick (√) mark against the A when you agree to the item respectively. However, if you remain uncertain or undecided, please tick (√) mark against the U placed against that item. Similarly you have the choice to tick (√) mark against the D if you are disagree to this item. You are free to pick up only one of the three choices given for each item.

This scale enlists your frank thinking, so as such there is no question of wrong answers. Please feel free to respond without any hesitation.

What is wanted is first spontaneous reaction of yours for each of the 50 items. So, please record your responses as rapidly you can. There is no time limit but you may take 25-30 minutes to work over this scale.

**NOW MOVE TO THE NEXT PAGE AND START GIVING RESPONSES FROM
STATEMENT NO. 1**

S. No.	ITEMS	RESPONSE		
		Agree	Undecided	Disagree

1	I like to spend time with my classmates.			
2	I have friends in my school who are trustworthy.			
3	I love going to school because of my friends.			
4	I help my classmates at school with their problems.			
5	I rarely fight/argue with other students in school.			
6	My classmates help me with class notes when I am absent.			
7	My classmates cheer for me when I participate in any event.			
8	My classmates disturb me in class.			
9	I feel unsafe in school because of some students.			
10	My classmates do not allow me to be a part of any of their games.			
11	I am ignored by other students in my class.			
12	I am treated nicely by my teachers.			
13	My teachers help me whenever I face any problem in my studies.			
14	I often seek advice from my teachers regarding my personal problems.			
15	I do not like some of my teachers.			
16	My teachers are not partial towards any student in class.			
17	Some teachers behave rudely with me without any reason.			
18	My teachers punish me when I do not do my homework.			
19	I am interested in my studies because of my teachers.			

S. No.	ITEMS	RESPONSE		
		Agree	Undecided	Disagree

20	I take tuitions because my teachers do not teach us properly in school.			
21	I am given class work and homework on regular basis.			
22	My teachers encourage me to participate in various activities.			
23	Teachers in my school conduct tests on regular basis to know our strengths and weaknesses in each subject.			
24	I feel physically safe in school.			
25	I feel very happy going to school every day.			
26	I love participating in all school related competitions.			
27	I feel upset when somebody speaks badly about my school.			
28	I bunk my classes along with other students.			
29	I hate going to school as some students harass me in school.			
30	I feel lonely in school.			
31	In my school strict discipline is followed.			
32	In my school I can express my views freely.			
33	My teachers always encourage me to do hard work.			
34	My teachers listen to my problem patiently.			
35	In my school teacher-student relationship is not friendly.			
36	In my school study environment is not good.			
37	Physical punishment is prevalent in my school.			
38	Teacher motivates me to participate in different curricular and co-curricular activities.			

S. No.	ITEMS	RESPONSE		
		Agree	Undecided	Disagree

39	I feel free to share my problems with principal.			
40	I feel the administrators of my school treat me well.			
41	Each class in my school is overcrowded with students.			
42	Parent-Teacher Meets (PTMs) are organized at regular intervals in my school.			
43	My parents are worried about my performance in school.			
44	My parents make sure that I have well stocked school supplies so that I do not face problem in school.			
45	My parents regularly check my diary and keep track of all notices sent from school.			
46	My parents never miss any of the Parent Teacher Meets (PTMs) organized by school.			
47	My parents visit school to cheer me when I participate in competitions.			
48	My parents make sure that I do not bunk classes unnecessarily.			
49	I feel free to share all school related issues with my parents.			
50	My parents help me in managing time for my studies.			

Thank You.