Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: UNESCO

Across India, students are bullied because of their **sexual orientation and gender identity** (SOGI), forcing many to drop out from schools.

- UNESCO's New Delhi office has teamed up with **Sahodaran**, a male sexual health initiative in Chennai, to conduct a community-based study on SOGI-based bullying in Tamilnadu.

HARASSMENT STARTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

60% face bullying in middle/high school

43% sexually harassed in primary school

18% report instances to school authorities

70% of those bullied suffer from anxiety and depression, lose focus in studies

33% drop out because of bullying

TN survey covered 371 individuals aged 18 to 22 and belonging to transgender and MSM communities

Findings //

- **60% and 50%** were found to be a victim of physical bullying when they were in middle/high school and higher secondary school respectively.
- **40%** were sexually harassed when they were in **primary school**.
- **18%** of participants reported incidents of SOGI-based bullying to **school authorities**.
- **53%** of those who reported being bullied said that **authorities took some action** against the person who bullied them.

Consequences of SOGI based violence

- 73% had **reduced social interactions** with their peers.
- 70% suffered from **anxiety and depression**.
- 63% reported **lower academic performance**.
- 53% reported **skipped classes**.
- About a third (33.2%) said bullying played a key role in discontinuing school i.e increase in the **school dropout rate**.

Initiatives for reducing SOGI based violence:

- **UGC** (University Grant Commission) recognized gender identity and sexual orientation as **grounds for ragging** in 2016.
- **Bilingual manual, 'A Teacher's Guide To Gender Non-conforming Students',** (that gives some insight about what is sexual orientation, gender identity, why some children are different from others, how to identify a gender non conforming child) was distributed free of cost in Tamilnadu schools.
- **NGO SAATHII** has been studying violence against SOGI in partnership with **LGBT community** groups such as AMANA and ETA in Manipur, VIKALP in Gujarat, Queerala in Kerala and Nirangal in Tamilnadu.
- In **section 377 judgment,** the supreme court had made it clear that **Article 14** of the Constitution guarantees equality before the law and this applies to all classes of citizens thereby restoring 'inclusiveness' of **LGBTQ Community**.

PDF Refernece URL: https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-unseco