



Student suicide incidences in Bangladesh: what do the data say?

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to find out the recent cases of students committing suicide in the last one year as well as analyzing the cases based on age, gender, educational level, and the reason behind the incidents. The research focuses on the suicide cases committed by students in Bangladesh in the last one year, from July 2019 to June 2020. The paper heavily relies on secondary research from different journals and newspapers. The study shows that female students are more prone to committing suicide compared to men. It also shows that younger school-going students are more likely to commit suicide. The suicide incidents are mostly caused by academic stress, depression, financial crisis, family issues, being raped and blackmailed to release intimate pictures. Further research can be conducted based on primary research. Future research can also focus on specific age groups like very young children as we found out that younger children are more prone to danger.

INTRODUCTION

Suicide is such an issue that everyone pays attention to after it has been done. In recent years, the number of students committing suicide has surged immensely.

In our current education system, students are put under huge pressure to do well in their examinations. This kind of pressure has caused mental health issues for youngsters. As a result, the number of students committing suicide is rising exponentially. On top of that, the people of our country still hold a stigma against suicide and mental health issues. Families try to hide the fact that their child has depression or has tried to commit suicide because they think it is something to be ashamed of (Arafat 2019; Mamun and Griffiths 2020a, b; Mamun et al. 2020b).

Additionally, Bangladesh appears to have fewer suicide prevention measures in place compared to

other countries, even though it is a major public health issue in the country. The country still lacks any kind of suicide surveillance system, national suicide database, and national suicide prevention strategies for both general and specific cohorts (Mamun and Griffiths 2019; Shah et al. 2017).

However, evidence-based suicide data is needed for the implementation of targeted prevention strategies. Therefore, this study investigated student suicide-related factors (e.g., type of academic institutes, year of study, month in which the suicide occurred, specific suicide reasons, method of suicide, etc.) that could be helpful to the public health policymakers in Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

This research relies greatly on secondary data. All of the information has been collected from newspapers and articles from other authors. Newspapers for the past one year have been gone

through by searching keywords like student suicide in Bangladesh. After collecting all 30 cases from the last one year, the cases were individually reviewed and analyzed based on age, gender, education level, and reason for committing suicide.

This study has been conducted to find out the cases of students committing suicide in Bangladesh from July 2019 to June 2020. As the data were from secondary sources, so no formal ethical clearance was required.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study observed 30 suicidal cases from July 2019 to June 2020 (one fiscal year). The present study investigated risk factors of Bangladeshi students' suicide (i.e., gender, study year, place, onset time, and specific suicide reasons) because they are among the most prone to suicide compared to other students worldwide (Arafat and Mamun, 2019).

Table 1: Student suicide incidences in Bangladesh

Cases	Location	Gender	Age	School/ College/ University	Reason for suicide	Press Media	Date
1	Manirampur, Jashore	Male	14	Madrassa	Family issues	Prothom Alo	27-Jun-20
2	Jurain, Dhaka	Male	NR	College	NR	Daily Bangladesh	26-Jun-20
3	Chittagong	Female	19	University	After being blackmailed to spread her intimate photographs	Dhaka Tribune	14-Jun-20
4	Mohammadpur, Magura	Female	16	Madrassa	Due to result (S.S.C.)	Prothom Alo	1-Jun-20
5	Haripur, Thakurgaon	Female	16	School	Due to result (S.S.C.)	Prothom Alo	1-Jun-20
6	Ullapara, Sirajganj	Female	16	School	Due to result (S.S.C.)	United News of Bangladesh	1-Jun-20
7	Khetlal, Joypurhat	Female	NR	School	Family issues	The daily Observer	25-Apr-20
8	Belkuchi, Sirajgonj	Female	10	NR	Financial crisis	Kaler Kantho	11-Apr-20
9	Charghat, Rajshahi	Female	15	School	Being raped	The Daily Star	20-Feb-20
10	Laksam, Comilla	Male	24	University	Depression	Dhaka Tribune	15-Feb-20
11	Domar, Nilphamari	Female	NR	School	Due to the wrong information on S.S.C. admit card	Prothom Alo	3-Feb-20
12	Hajiganj, Chandpur	Female	15	School	NR	Prothom Alo	28-Jan-20
13	Sadar, Panchagarh	Female	13	School	Being raped	The Daily Star	6-Jan-20
14	Magura	Female	21	University	NR	Prothom Alo	03-Jan-20

15	Kaunia, Barishal	Female	14	School	Due to result (J.S.C.)	Prothom Alo	31-Dec-19
16	Gosairhat, Shariatpur	Female	14	School	Due to result (J.S.C.)	Dhaka Tribune	31-Dec-19
17	Sarkarpara, Thakurgaon	Male	14	School	NR	Prothom Alo	21-Dec-19
18	Harinarayanpur, Kushtia	Female	17	College	Due to fail on test examination	Prothom Alo	11-Dec-19
19	Shyamoli, Dhaka	Male	23	University	Financial crisis and frustration	Dhaka Tribune	4-Dec-19
20	Satkania, Chattogram	Male	NR	University	NR	Dhaka Tribune	28-Nov-19
21	Faridganj, Chandpur	Female	14	School	Family issues	Prothom Alo	22-Nov-19
22	Munshibazar, Faridpur	Male	NR	University	Mental depression	Dhaka Tribune	16-Nov-19
23	Khanka Sharif area, Rajshahi	Male	NR	University	NR	Dhaka Tribune	28-Oct-19
24	Chhaygharia, Brahmanbaria	Male	16	School	Family issues and abandonment by family	Dhaka Tribune	25-Oct-19
25	Chilmari, Kurigram	Female	13	School	NR	Prothom Alo	13-Oct-19
26	Bishwanath, Sylhet	Female	NR	NR	Being raped	Prothom Alo	10-Oct-19
27	Lakhai, Habiganj	Male	NR	University	Mental depression	Prothom Alo	3-Oct-19
28	Azimpur, Dhaka	Male	18	College	Depression and dissatisfaction	The Daily Star	30-Sep-19
29	Bhandaria, Pirojpur	Female	19	School	After being blackmailed to spread her intimate photographs	Dhaka Tribune	31-Aug-19
30	Jaintiapur, Sylhet	Female	17	School	NR	Dhaka Tribune	5-Jul-19

NR - Not reported.

Rate and gender of suicidal cases

From our findings, it was discovered some important factors regarding student suicide in Bangladesh. First and foremost, it looks like gender has an impact on such tendencies to commit suicide. Out of the 30 cases we have covered, 19 were female and 11 were male. So,

almost 63% of the students committing suicide are female. This could be because of some of the incidences that women are more prone to like rape or blackmail regarding leaking photos. Such results have been backed up by the research of Kumar et al. (2017) and Tsrigotis et al. (2011), where they have stated then females have a higher tendency to commit suicide compared to men.

Age distribution

Another observation we have here is that 50% of the students committing suicide are school-going children, followed by university students in the second position (27%).

The number of students committing suicide from college or madrasa is comparatively low. It is highly alarming that such young children are taking such a big decision to end their lives. Even if we consider age, 33% (10 out of 30 students) belong to the age group of 10-15, 30% belong to the age group of 15-20 and only 3 students out of 30 belong to the age group of 20-25. The study of Kessler et al. (2007) supports this fact by stating that adolescence is a time where people are most vulnerable to a mental disorder as emotional reactions are heightened at this age.

Further research should be conducted to figure out the reason behind such actions taken by children as well as figure out a solution. This is not only for research but also for the sake of the children.

Reasons for suicide

Now, if we focus on the reasons behind these suicides, 6 reasons have been found out from these 30 cases. However, the reason behind 8 of the cases has not been reported.

Academic results

23% of students (7 out of 30) have committed suicide because of their academic results. This gives us some idea about the pressure children are put under for their studies. This result has been supported by other studies as well.

Researchers agree that putting pressure on students to do well in their examinations increases their mental suffering and sometimes end up in suicides (Arafat and Mamun 2019; Jahan et al. 2020; Mamun and Griffiths 2020a, b; Mamun et al. 2020a, b).

Family issues

13% of students have been found out to be committing suicide because of family issues. This

gives us a clear idea of the fact that domestic peace has a huge impact on the mental health of children. So, if there is some sort of hostility in the family where parents are always fighting, it has a very bad impact on the child.

Depression

It is sad but true that till now, many families do not believe that depression is a real disease. As a result, they don't give much attention if their child is behaving weirdly. Rather, sometimes they scold the child for that. From our study, 13% of the students have committed suicide because of depression and frustration.

Being raped

3 female students have committed suicide after being raped, two of them being 13 and 15 years old. Having to go through such a bad experience at such a young age is so traumatic that they decided not to live anymore.

Blackmailed to leak photographs

There are 2 cases where the female students have been blackmailed by saying that their intimate pictures will be leaked. The victims could not bear the emotional torture and decided to end it. However, this also sheds light on our family and society's mindset.

If the girls felt like nothing would happen even if the pictures were leaked or if they could have gathered enough courage to ask for help, this tragic incident wouldn't have taken place.

Financial crisis

It is so heartbreaking to see that a 10-year-old child committed suicide as she was scolded when she asked for food. Her family had been starving for days as they were going through the extreme financial crisis because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another 23-year-old LLB student committed suicide as he felt like he couldn't fulfill his family's wishes by earning enough money or being successful in his career.

Limitation of study

Since the data were secondary and relies on online search of the newspaper there might have a chance of not reported cases in the newspaper.

CONCLUSION

In a study conducted by Shah et al. (2017), it had been stated that almost 61% of suicides in Bangladesh are committed by people under the age of 30, who are mostly students. In the study that we conducted, we figured out a total of 30 cases of student suicide and figured out 6 major reasons causing the tragedy.

The fact that other authors have had similar results in their studies proves the fact that our analysis and interpretation are correct. According to Yozwiak et al (2012), the critical cause of students committing suicide can be academic stress, personal and family-related trouble, financial crisis, drug usage, traumatic events, and other mental health issues.

The only limitation of this study is that it is only based on secondary research. Further research can be conducted based on primary research. Future research can also focus on specific age groups like very young children as we found out that younger children are more prone to danger.

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