

Male suicide incidences in Bangladesh: what could be the reasons?

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Abstract:

This study seeks to figure out the emerging cases of males committing suicide in a one-year time frame from July 2019 to June 2020 as well as evaluates the suicide cases based on location, age, profession, and the reasons for suicides. This paper depends on secondary data from different sources. The study reveals that students are copious to committing suicide in comparison to other occupations. It also includes that the primary reasons behind committing suicides are mental health issues, financial crisis, and family issues.



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Case report

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Introduction

People in Bangladesh hold a stigma about suicides. There is negligence about someone's frustration, anxiety, fear, depression, stress, family problem, or financial problem. Families most often try to hide the fact that their children have depression or have attempted to commit suicide because they think it is something to be ashamed of (Arafat, 2019; Mamun and Griffiths, 2020a, b; Mamun et al., 2020b). 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. Researchers agree that by putting academic and mental pressure on students to do well in their academic tests increases their mental sufferings and sometimes end up in suicides (Arafat and Mamun, 2019; Jahan et al., 2020; Mamun and Griffiths, 2020a, b; Mamun et al., 2020a, b).

Research has proven that even though women are twice as likely to face mental health issues like depression, but they are one-fourth as likely to be committing suicide (Murphy, 1998). According to them, men value strength and freedom comparatively more than women and they hesitate to ask for help as it makes them feel weak. As a result, the percentage of men committing suicide is much higher compared to women. Women, in turn, ask for help from close friends or relatives and share their problems. They rely on interdependence and relationships, which ultimately favors them and stops them from making such harsh decisions. The study of (Möller-Leimkühler, 2003) blames the concept of 'masculinity' for the vulnerability of men in case of suicide. According to the study of Pitman et al. (2012), suicide has been ranked as the second highest cause of mortality in men all over the world. Their study also mentioned some of the reasons that can be the factor behind these men committing suicide such as mental disorder, financial crisis, and unsuccessful love life.

This study has been done to reach out to the cases reported of males committing suicide in Bangladesh from July 2019 to June 2020. It widely depends on secondary data. All the information has been obtained from secondary sources. After obtaining 20 cases in one year, the cases were categorized in terms of location, age, profession, and the reasons for suicides.

Cases

No.	Location	Age	Gender	Profession	Reason for suicide	Press Media	Date
1	Hariharnagar, Jashore	14	Male	Student	Family issues	Prothom Alo	27-Jun-20
2	Pabna	45	Male	Teacher	Frustration	Dhaka Tribune	25-Jun-20
3	Adabor, Dhaka	NR	Male	Building caretaker	Fear and frustration	The Business Standard	20-Jun-20
4	Khilgaon, Dhaka	40	Male	Police constable	Much worrying about coronavirus	The Daily Star	04-May-20
5	Keshapur	30	Male	NR	Financial crisis	Manab Zamin	24-Apr-20
6	Chattogram	30	Male	Rickshaw puller	Financial crisis due to pandemic	The Daily Star	16-Apr-20
7	Noldangga, Natore	27	Male	Day laborer	Financial crisis and loneliness	Kaler Kantho	13-Apr-20
8	Dalbhanga, Maheshpur	30	Male	Van-puller	Financial crisis	The Business Standard	08-Apr-20
9	Laksam, Comilla	24	Male	Student	Having a miserable life	Dhaka Tribune	15-Feb-20
10	Dhaka	31	Male	Police	NR	The Daily Star	23-Jan-20
11	Khulna	NR	Male	Panel Chairman, District Council	NR	Dhaka Tribune	22-Jan-20
12	Sarkarpara, Thakurgaon	14	Male	Student	NR	Prothom Alo	21-Dec-19
13	Shyamoli, Dhaka	23	Male	Student	Financial crisis and frustration	Dhaka Tribune	04-Dec-19
14	Satkania, Chattogram	NR	Male	Student	NR	Dhaka Tribune	28-Nov-19

No.	Location	Age	Gender	Profession	Reason for suicide	Press Media	Date
15	Munshibazar, Faridpur	NR	Male	Student	Suffering from depression	Dhaka Tribune	16-Nov-19
16	Gaibandha	NR	Male	Student	NR	Dhaka Tribune	28-Oct-19
17	Chhaygharia, Brahmanbaria	16	Male	Student	Family issues	Dhaka Tribune	25-Oct-19
18	Sonagao, Habiganj	NR	Male	Student	Mental depression	Prothom Alo	03-Oct-19
19	Azimpur, Dhaka	18	Male	Student	Depression and dissatisfaction	The Daily Star	30-Sep-19
20	Savar	42	Male	Construction worker	Suspected as thief	The Daily Star	14-Jul-19

NR- Not Reported

Discussion

From our findings, if we start analyzing the data based on age, we can see that 4 out of 20 cases were of men below the age of 20. 3 people out of 20 were from the age group of 20-30, 4 were from the age group of 30-40, and 3 of them were from the age group above 40. This gives us a hit that age does not influence the cases of men committing suicide as the number of people belonging to each group is pretty close.

The study finds that at least 50% of the male suicide cases are done by the students. The main reasons behind this have been found as the financial crisis, family issues, frustration, loneliness, depression, or having a miserable life. All these reasons are interrelated. Academic dissatisfaction, excess study pressure, or sometimes financial crisis makes their mental health poor. This is a serious concern to look forward to for the policymakers, authorities of the institutions, parents, other family members, guardians, teachers, and other stakeholders. Out of the ten student-suicide cases, age has been reported in six places. In the remaining four cases, they all are below twenty years old. This is a tragic fact. Methodological academic materials, policies, and cooperation should be introduced as soon as possible. Even this study has found a teacher to commit suicide due to his frustration. Teachers suffer from depression and mental health issues too. This gives us an idea about the pressure the education system puts on the students. The whole education system of Bangladesh as well as the society is very grade-centric, rather than learning-centric. This makes students think that if they cannot achieve their desired grades, their lives become worthless. This insight gives us a reality check that we should not be putting such pressure on our youngsters. The study has also found a few cases of day laborers, rickshaw- and van-pullers committing suicides due to financial crises. Five out of the twenty cases listed here happened out of Dhaka. Suicides happen more in rural places in the country. Poverty is still an existing problem and with the recent outbreak of Coronavirus, it is getting worse. Many people have lost their jobs, especially the ones relying on daily wages. As a result, it has become increasingly difficult for them to bear the expenses of their family. The pain and suffering they go through by seeing their loved ones starve because they weren't able to manage food for them are unimaginable. The government and other sectors with a higher authority should ensure that these people can earn a decent amount to feed their families at the very least.

There are two cases to be found where family members avoided or abandoned the persons that make them or influence them to commit the self-destructions. This gives us an insight into how important family support is to prevent such tragedies. If their families were supportive enough, maybe the persons would not have taken such a drastic step. Shockingly, in cases 1-3, 5-9, 12-17, and 20, they all had committed suicide by hanging themselves in a ceiling fan, tree, etc. We have found out five exceptional cases. In case no 4, the person was a forty years old police constable from Khilgaon, Dhaka and he jumped off from the roof of his

own house. The second one is the case 10, where the person was a thirty-one years old police from Dhaka and he committed suicide by shooting himself in the chest with his gun. The third one is case 11, where he was a panel chairman of a district council and swallowed *harpic*. Forth one is case 18, where he was from Habiganj and took poison for self-destruction. The last one is case 19, where he was an eighteen years old student from Azimpur staff quarter, Dhaka. His father was a deputy commissioner of police and he was suspected to take his own life with his father's licensed gun out of depression. A tragic incident has been found in case 4. The person was working as a Constable at the special branch of Police. His stomach was upset for the last few days and he got feared about having coronavirus. Based on his symptoms, he did the required tests for Covid-19 and the test report came as negative for Covid-19. But he was anxious about his health, got frustrated, and could not trust the report. He worried too much about coronavirus that influenced him for the self-destruction. (*Policeman 'Dies by Suicide' in Dhaka, 2020*). The reason why this is a matter of concern is that our people have no trust in the medical system of Bangladesh, as well as society. The man felt like if he had been infected by COVID-19, his whole family would be isolated and there is no guarantee that they will get proper treatment if they get infected as well. Thus, he decided to end his life rather than letting his family suffer. In the shocking case 17, a sixteen years old, nine-grade student left behind a suicide note wishing wellbeing for his parents and siblings. According to him, his parents used to quarrel among themselves and beat his siblings, which made him emotionally disturbed and frustrated (*Schoolboy Kills Himself Wishing Parents a Quarrel Free Happy Life, 2019*). Again, this tragic incident makes us understand how the relationship between parents can affect the children. In many cases, as couples grow older, they start getting crankier and fight a lot. However, couples must refrain from doing so in front of children as it can harm the child's mental health. This case is proof of that.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, mental health should be taken as an important and serious matter, which is not a common case now around us. People, especially students, should be taken care of in scientific and proven ways so that they stay well in all means. The physical and emotional wellbeing of everyone is all that we should desire to prevent self-destruction. It is very unfortunate that even in 2020, the mental health of men is not considered a serious issue in our country. People always push men to be strong and swallow their emotions. Phrases like "stop acting like a girl" or "men don't cry" are very common, not only in Bangladesh but also in the whole south Asian region. As a result, we end up with these tragic cases where men have been forced to take their own lives instead of getting some help. However, this study is done based on newspaper reports only, which were not verified by the authors. Further investigation can be done based on verified data or based on a specific group of data or in other magnitudes. Future research can also look into the major reasons that we have found to be working behind these incidences individually and more in-depth. For example, future research can be narrowed down into student suicides and whether or not there is any discrepancy between the genders. Future research can also focus on how poverty or financial crisis is causing suicide. Similar research can be conducted on family support or family environment and its relation to suicide.

This paper stands unique. The fact that the paper's focus is so narrow and specific gives an idea that it is quite in-depth. On top of that, all of the cases have been discussed and analyzed to find proper interpretations and implications, making it unique and insightful.

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