

Eve Teasing and Adolescent's Depression

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Abstract

Introduction: Depression in urban female adolescents is now a growing public health problem in Bangladesh. In recent time eve-teasing (sexual harassment) has become a burning issue. Adolescent girls face both psychological and social problems due to eve-teasing and it is one of the determinants of depression of adolescent girls.

Objective: The study was done to assess the level and determine the factors of depression as well as to estimate the proportion of eve teasing among female adolescent students.

Materials and Methods: This cross sectional study was performed at Shahid Ramijuddin Cantonment High School, Dhaka, situated in Shahid Mannan line during a period of one year starting from January 2013 to December, 2013. The study was carried out among 203 female students of class-IX and X aged 14 to 16 years. Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was used to measure the level of depression. Pattern of eve teasing and factors of depression was identified by a number of questions.

Results: Among 203 female adolescents 122 students from class-IX and 81 students from Class-X (Mean age 15.02±0.786 years), all are unmarried, 90.6% lived in nuclear family and only 9.45% lived in joint family. This study showed 32% respondents had moderate depression, 17.7% had mild mood disturbance, 10.3 % had borderline clinical depression, 4.9% had severe or extreme depression and 35% respondents found normal. The study also revealed that 75.9% school going girls aged 14 to 16 years experienced eve teasing. Poor school performance, friction with family members, lack of friendly relationship with teachers,

no communication with friends are associated with depression but the association of substance abuse, smoking habit, heavy internet use with depression was not found. This study also revealed that, 53.2% depressed adolescent girls and 46.8% adolescent girls with no depression experienced eve teasing and depression is higher among girls who experienced eve teasing. So eve teasing is an important factor for female adolescent depression.

Conclusion: Among the study subjects majority of the respondents are moderately depressed and large number of students have experienced eve teasing. Eve teasing has found significant association with depression. Several factors are responsible for depression but in case of female adolescents eve teasing is one of the important factor that needs urgent attention. So, it is essential to control eve teasing for prevention of depression of adolescent girls.

Key-words: Adolescent depression, Eve teasing, Sexual harassment.

Introduction

Adolescent depression is now a major concern all over the world. The incidence of depression is increasing and estimated that, at any given time, 10 to 15 percent of teenagers suffer with depression¹. At the same time suicide among all teenagers in past fifteen years has grown by almost 25 percent². World Health Organization (WHO) identifies adolescence as the period in human growth and development that occurs after childhood and before adulthood, from ages 10 to 19. It represents one of the critical transitions in the life-span. Adolescent-onset Major Depressive Disorders (MDD) is associated with an

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increased risk of suicide, suicide attempts and suicide ideation. Depression is more likely to affect females than males³. There are several factors of adolescent depression such as academic stress, peer pressure, romantic problems, traumatic events like eve teasing, separating or divorcing parents, family financial struggles⁴. But in case of female adolescents' sexual harassment or eve teasing is one of the important determinants. For the girls and women who are subject to sexual harassment, the experiences are traumatic and can leave deep psychological scars. A recent study by the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) showed that almost 90 percent of girls aged 10-18 have undergone the experience of eve teasing⁵. BNWLA study also noted that in the past two years, at least 12 girls have committed suicide in circumstances stemming from "eve teasing"⁶.

Eve-teasing has a great negative influence in society and country. Many girls are committing suicide to save them from the teasers⁷. Parents and guardians are passing days in great apprehension for the safety of their children. The normal lives of these girls are being hampered due to its rapid increase. So, drop-out rate of female students is increasing day by day. Those who are the victims are also sometimes forced into marriage, before they are mentally or physically matured⁸. This underage marriage problem is also increasing by the eve-teasing problem⁷. In this way eve teasers are hindering the participation of women in economic development⁸. We get most information from media and there is lack of scientific documentation. So from this study adolescent girls will be benefited & the study findings will help policy makers to understand that adolescent depression is a public health problem as well as to adopt new intervention strategies to control eve teasing to prevent depression especially for the teenage girls.

Methods and Materials

This was a cross sectional study conducted at Shahid Ramijuddin Cantonment High School, Dhaka. The study population was adolescent girls of class-IX and X aged 14 to 16 years. Hundred twenty two students were from class-IX and 81 students from class-X. The study was carried out during a period of one year from January 2013 to December,

2013. Purposive Sampling was done with sample size 203 students. A structured self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was pre tested and necessary modification was done and finalized before collection of the data. Data were collected from the respondents with written consent after giving idea about eve teasing and adolescent depression by taking separate classes of different groups of students. The questionnaire was developed by using variables as per objectives. Pattern of eve teasing is determined by number of questions. Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was used to measure the level of depression. According to the inventory, the level of depression as per scoring 0-10 (normal), 11-16 (mild mood disturbance), 17-20 (borderline clinical depression), 21-30 (moderate depression), 31-40 (severe depression), Over 40 (extreme depression). For the convenience of analysis, the level of depression further divided as i) Normal (score 0-16) and ii) Depressed score (17-40 and above). After the leveling, the association of depression was find out with different variables of the respondents. Data were checked and edited manually and verified repeatedly. Data were coded, entered, sometimes recoded and analyzed using the SPSS; version-21 (Statistical package of social science). Chi-square test was used for binominal data analysis.

Results

This cross-sectional study was conducted to assess the level and to determine the factors of depression to estimate the proportion of eve teasing of adolescent girls. Relevant data were collected by self administered structured questionnaire and depression scale. The results of the study were presented through tables and figures. Table-I shows that among 203 respondents, 60(29.6%) were in 14 years of age, 78(38.4%) were 15 years age and 65(32%) were in 16 years age. Age is considered as 14 years and more but less than 15 years, 15 years and more but less than 16 years, 16 years and more but less than 17 years. (Mean age 15.02 ± 0.786) Majority of respondents (57.6%) have family monthly income up to 10,001-20,000 taka, and only 22(10.8%) respondents have family monthly income more than 30,000 taka. Hundred and eighty four (90.6%) lived in nuclear family and 19(9.4%) lived in joint family.

Table-I: Socio-Demographic characteristics (n=203).

| Characteristics | Frequency | Percent | |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------------------------------|
| Age | | | |
| 14 | 60 | 29.6 | Mean±SD 15.02 ± 0.786 |
| 15 | 78 | 38.4 | |
| 16 | 65 | 32.0 | |
| Educational status | | | |
| Class-IX | 122 | 60.1 | |
| Class-X | 81 | 39.9 | |
| Family Income | | | |
| Up to 10000 | 13 | 6.4 | Mean±SD 23,558.13±13,463.65 |
| 10001-20000 | 117 | 57.6 | |
| 20001-30000 | 51 | 25.1 | |
| >30000 | 22 | 10.8 | |
| Family Type | | | |
| Nuclear family | 184 | 90.6 | |
| Joint family | 19 | 9.4 | |

Table-II shows that among 203 respondents, hundred twenty respondents (59.1%) used internet /face book less than 2 hours, 11(5.4%) respondents used 2 to 3 hours, only 5(2.5%) respondents used internet more than 3 hours and 67(33%) did not use internet/face book. Hundred fifty eight(77.8%) respondents stayed outside home after school less than 2 hours, 39(19.2%) respondents 2 to 4 hours, only 6(3%) respondents stayed outside home after school more than 4 hours. Out of 203, 99% had no history of addiction, 95.6% respondents never smoked, 2.5% had occasional and 2% had irregular smoking habit. Among 203 respondents, only 15.76% used mobile phone and 84.24% respondents did not use mobile phone.

Table-II: Distribution of respondents by life style (n=203).

| Characteristics | Frequency | Percent |
|--|-----------|---------|
| Use of internet/face book | | |
| Less than 2 hours | 120 | 59.1 |
| 2 to 3 hours | 11 | 5.4 |
| More than 3 hours | 5 | 2.5 |
| Not applicable | 67 | 33.0 |
| Stay outside of home after school | | |
| Less than 2 hours | 158 | 77.8 |
| 2 to 4 hours | 39 | 19.9 |
| More than 4 hours | 6 | 3 |
| Smoking habit | | |
| Irregular | 4 | 2.0 |
| Occasional | 5 | 2.5 |
| Never | 194 | 95.6 |
| Any addiction | | |
| Yes | 2 | 1.0 |
| No | 201 | 99.0 |
| Use of mobile phone | | |
| Yes | 32 | 15.74 |
| No | 171 | 84.24 |

Figure-1 shows that among 203 respondents, 68.47% respondents regularly communicate with their friends and 31.53% do not communicate.

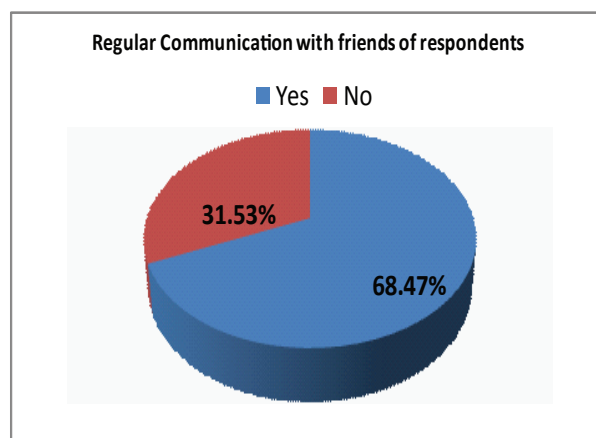


Fig-1: Distribution of respondents by life style: Communication with friends (n=203).

Table-III shows that, among 203 respondents, 71(35%) respondents are normal, 65(32%) respondents are suffering from moderate depression, 10.3% are suffering from borderline clinical depression, 17.7% are suffering from mild mood disturbance and 4.9% respondents are suffering from severe or extreme depression.

Table-III: Distribution of respondents according to level of depression (n=203).

| Score of depression | Depression level | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| 0-10 | Normal | 71 | 35.0 |
| 11-16 | Mild mood disturbance | 36 | 17.7 |
| 17-20 | Borderline clinical depression | 21 | 10.3 |
| 21-30 | Moderate depression | 65 | 32.0 |
| 31-40 and above | Severe or extreme depression | 10 | 4.9 |
| Total | | 203 | 100.0 |

Table-IV shows that out of 203 respondents, 96(47.3%) respondents have depression and 107(52.7%) respondents have no depression.

Table-IV: Distribution of respondents according to presence of depression (n=203).

| Presence of depression | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| No (score: 0-16) | 107 | 52.7 |
| Yes (score: 17-40 and above) | 96 | 47.3 |
| Total | 203 | 100.0 |

Table-V shows that among 203 respondents, 154(75.9%) respondents have experienced eve teasing, majority, 136(88.31%) have experienced eve teasing on the way, 55(35.71%) respondents have experienced verbal eve teasing, 21(13.60%) experienced visual type, 5(3.24%) experienced physical type and only 2(1.30%) experienced eve teasing through mobile phone and 71(46.1%) experienced combination of above types, 144 (93.50%) respondents have experienced eve teasing by unknown persons, 5(3.25%) respondents by friends and 5 respondents by relatives and neighbors and 24% respondents do not have any experience of eve teasing.

Table-V: Eve teasing related Information.

| Information | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Experience of eve teasing | | |
| Yes | 154 | 75.9 |
| No | 49 | 24.1 |
| Total | 203 | 100 |
| Type of eve teasing | | |
| Verbal | 55 | 35.71 |
| Visual | 21 | 13.60 |
| Physical | 5 | 3.24 |
| Through Mobile phone | 2 | 1.30 |
| Combination of above | 71 | 46.10 |
| Total | 154 | 100 |
| Place of eve teasing | | |
| On the way | 136 | 88.31 |
| School | 8 | 5.19 |
| Market place | 5 | 3.24 |
| Cinema hall+Others places | 5 | 3.24 |
| Total | 154 | 100 |
| Person involved in eve teasing | | |
| Unknown person | 144 | 93.50 |
| Friends | 5 | 3.25 |
| Others(relatives, neighbors) | 5 | 3.25 |
| Total | 154 | 100 |

Figure-2 shows that out of 154 respondents, 55.84% have experienced eve teasing for more than 3 times, 29.22% respondents 2 to 3 times and 14.94% have experienced eve teasing once only.

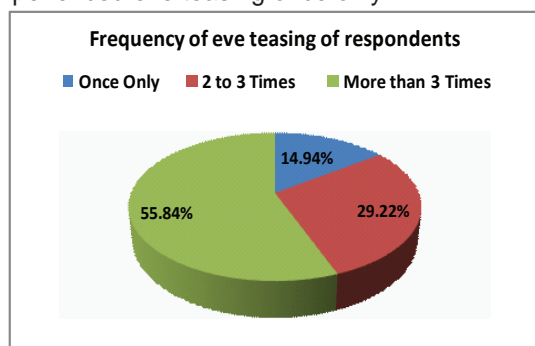


Fig-2: Distribution of respondents by frequency of eve teasing.

Table-VI shows that respondents of more than 15(78.5%) years age are more depressed than respondents below and 15(32.6%) years age. Higher age has significant association with depression ($p < 0.001$). Among 96 depressed respondents, 79.3% have found no friendly relationship with teachers and there is significant association ($p < 0.001$). Again out of 203 respondents, 145 respondents were not happy and only 58 respondents were happy with their school performance, 29 respondents have complained about friction with their family members, 53.2% depressed respondents have experienced eve teasing. Poor school performance ($p < 0.001$), friction with family members ($p = 0.002$), lack of regular communication with friends ($p < 0.001$), eve teasing ($p = 0.002$) are associated with depression. Among 203 respondents only 24 respondents (11.8%) had long standing illness or disability, whereas the rest 179 respondents (88.2%) did not have so. However the association between long standing physical illness and use of internet with depression was not found.

Table-VI: Factors associated with depression.

| Factors | Categories | N | Depression% | | Chi-Square (p-Value) |
|--|-------------|-----|-------------|-----------|----------------------|
| | | | Normal | Depressed | |
| Age | 14 & 15 yrs | 138 | 67.4 | 32.6 | 37.271 (<0.001) |
| | 16yrs | 65 | 21.5 | 78.5 | |
| Long Standing Physical Illness | Yes | 24 | 54.2 | 45.8 | 0.023 (0.879) |
| Self-perceived happiness in school performance | No | 179 | 52.5 | 47.5 | 20.160 (<0.001) |
| | Yes | 58 | 42.1 | 13.5 | |
| Use of internet /Face book | No | 145 | 57.9 | 86.5 | 0.254 (0.614) |
| | Yes | 136 | 65.4 | 68.8 | |
| Friendly relationship with teachers | No | 67 | 34.6 | 31.3 | 33.399 (<0.001) |
| | Yes | 145 | 65.5 | 34.5 | |
| Friction with family members | No | 58 | 20.7 | 79.3 | 9.578 (0.002) |
| | Yes | 29 | 24.1 | 75.9 | |
| Regular communication with friends | No | 174 | 55.2 | 44.8 | 12.605 (<0.001) |
| | Yes | 139 | 61.2 | 38.8 | |
| Experience of eve teasing | No | 64 | 34.4 | 65.6 | 9.080 (0.003) |
| | Yes | 154 | 46.8 | 53.2 | |

Discussion

This study was based on urban adolescent female students. In this study, mean age of respondents was 15.02 ± 0.786 (age range 14 to 16 years) that means class-IX and class-X students. Students of more than 15(78.5%) years are more depressed ($p < 0.001$). A study by UNICEF in 2011, on early and late adolescence showed that girls in late adolescence tend to be at greater risk than boys of

negative health outcomes, including depression⁹. Adolescent school going girls are more experienced eve teasing. This study found that 75.9% school going girls aged 14 to 16 years experienced eve teasing. A recent study by the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) showed that almost 90 percent of girls aged 10-18 has undergone the experience of eve teasing⁵. Recent surveys of 512 educational institutions of 64 districts of Bangladesh show 62% school girls are victims of eve-teasing¹⁰. So, these studies findings are similar to the present study.

Again, this study shows that among 203 respondents, 27.1% faced verbal teasing, 10.3% faced visual, 2.5% physical and 35% were combination of these types. A study by India in 2010 also found that 42% women faced verbal teasing, 39% faced visual teasing¹¹. So the rate of various types of eve teasing in India is higher than present study. In this study, among 203 female students of class-IX and class-X, 32% are moderately depressed, 10.3% are borderline clinically depressed and 4.9% are severely or extremely depressed. A study in Jamaica, department of sociology, psychology and social work, 2009 showed that among 744 students of 13 to 19 years, mean age 15.5 ± 0.8 years, 70% female students reported some level of depressive symptoms. Additionally, 34% of females were in the moderate to severe range of depressive symptoms¹².

Another study in America by American psychologist found that on the basis of adolescents' self-reports, 25%-40% of girl's experienced depressed mood¹³. According to this study, 17.7% girls experienced mild mood disturbance. This study also shows that 65.5% depressed adolescent girls have friction with their family members. The association is significant ($p=0.002$). In other study, family factors such as the quality of the parents' marriage, parenting style, role modeling and the emotional status of the parents are related to depression in girls. Research shows that daughters whose parents are supportive, receptive to emotions, rather than punishing and restricting, show lower levels of depression¹⁴. In this study only 13.5% depressed girls have self-perceived happiness in their school performance and 86.5% depressed girls are not happy with their school performance. This association is highly significant ($p<0.001$). Similar-

study showed that depression in adolescence is common in school environment¹⁵. A large number of research findings reported that major depression affected school children due to failure in school performance¹⁶. Poor interpersonal relationships between teachers and the students result in low self-esteem in the adolescent boys and girls which causes depression¹⁷. The study also found that adolescent depression is related to lack of friendly relationship with teachers. In this study, 79.3% depressed adolescent girls have no friendly relationship with their teachers. The association is significant ($p<0.001$). Various studies revealed that substance abuse, smoking, heavy internet use, use of mobile phone are related factors of adolescent depression¹⁸. But this study could not find the association of these factors. In this study, depression is lower in respondents who regular communicate with their friends (38.8%) than the respondents who do not regular communicate with their friends (65.6%). The association is statistically significant ($p<0.001$). Another study shows that teens with depression do not communicate with their friends regularly and may socialize less than before; pull away from their parents or may start hanging out with a different crowd¹⁹. The present study shows that 53.2% depressed adolescent girls have experience of eve teasing ($p=0.003$). Depression was higher among girls who faced eve teasing. A study by UNICEF in Bangladesh in July, 2010 showed that 'Eve teasing' is becoming an often brutal form of sexual harassment that can result in permanent physical and psychological damage and profoundly alter the course of a girl's life²⁰.

Conclusion

The study revealed that a number of female students are suffering from depression. There were several factors like poor school performance, lack of friendly relationship with teachers, friction with family members, no communication with friends and eve teasing were associated with depression. This study also addressed that various forms of eve teasing were faced by adolescent girls and most of them experienced on the street or any public transports. Depression is higher among the girls who have experienced eve teasing. The study has identified depression is a significant problem among teenage students. So depression in adolescents should be detected as early as possible. Eve teasing is a social

curse. Though government is making new laws to punish the eve-teasers; necessary steps should be taken for proper implementation of laws for prevention and control of eve teasing to minimize adolescent's depression.

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