

Students Suicide in Bangladesh due to Lockdown and Economics Factors related to COVID-19: Analysis of Media Reports

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ABSTRACT

Suicidal cases during the COVID-19 may have several causes regarding the impact of pandemic, but suicidal incidences among students occurred in Bangladesh required a scientific concern. This study aims to evaluate the 5 suicide cases occurred in Bangladesh. For this, we have searched all the online news portals (both Bangla and English newspapers) by the defined keywords from April to September. Relevant newspaper articles were sorted by the inclusion criteria and transcribed into for content analysis. All the cases were tertiary level of students, young (age < 30 years), homicide taken place at their residence either by hanging or cutting nerves. Reported news articles demonstrated the stressful life events due to conflicted relationships, grief and rejection of life as the reasons of these cases. Though enhanced isolation and physical distance due to lockdown and movement restrictions indicated an increase in level of SLEs as it impacts on social communications and in love life but there is no evidence of direct effect of implication of COVID-19 pandemic of those incidences. Therefore, further investigation incorporated with psychosocial evaluation is suggested and concern at the family level is required for reducing suicidal behaviors.



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1. INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization, suicide is third leading cause of death among the adolescents and young ages [1] and globally 8 million people are died by suicide and 10-12 times of people attempted to suicide due psycho-social attributes [2]. Comparatively, Southeast Asian countries have a lower prevalence of suicidal ideation, planning and attempts among the school going adolescents [3] but the recent scenario is changing aftermath of COVID-19 pandemic. For example, stressful life events (SLEs) [4], the relative inclination of psychological disorders such as- symptomatic depression, anxiety, stress and post-traumatic disorders are reported worldwide [5] which can be associated with suicidal tension [6]. Most of the suicides attempt basically for ideation that generated from a complex environment that does not match with the nature and characteristics of the person intend to suicide [7]. These environmental factors can be related to

physical, internal, social and digital. In this twenty-first century, cyber bullying [8], physical abuse, sexual harassment or affairs [9] are mostly related to suicide among the school going adults through hampering their psychological symmetry [10], [11]. Past studies on young adult's suicide in Bangladesh also portrays such factors associated to their mental stress (or perceived stress) for suicide attempt [12]. Most of the suicide executed by hanging followed by poisoning, injured by cutting wrist among the Bangladeshi adults [13].

Previous studies have reported reasons and factors behind suicide attempts for couples [14], older people [15] and parents [16] during emergence of the pandemic. Psychological disorder and mental instability was the consequences of the impact of COVID-19 in their economic hardship due to lockdown [17], disease acquisition, isolation from family and food constraints [14, 18, 19, 20, 21]. COVID-19 related first suicide case reported due to xenophobia [14], but the suicide of students in Bangladesh regarding the impact of the recent pandemic period is another concern that needs to explore. Therefore, five cases of student's suicides and attempted suicide reported in the Bangladeshi online daily news portal have been presented and evaluated. All the cases are reported during the COVID-19 from January 2020 to March 2021 when educational institutions are announced induced vacation due to the impact of the pandemic.

2. Methodology

In this study, 5 suicide cases of students have considered who committed the incidence during COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. We have reported collective intrinsic cases that are reported here as descriptive in nature [22]. Two authors (MMH and MAB) have conduct the online search in the Bangladeshi online news portal and sort out the newspaper articles based on the inclusion criteria of 'student', 'suicide' and 'Bangladesh' of last 6 months. The information was the coded and analyzed by the content analysis.

3. Case studies

Case 1: On 4th September, a postgraduate student of Statistics department in University of Khulna, committed suicide by hanging himself with a ceiling fan at his home in Dakshin Seota, Manikganj. He left a suicide note indicating his grief before committing suicide in which he quoted "Ammu- Abbu. I couldn't make your dream come true. Forgive me. I don't like this world anymore, so I'm leaving. Let people I know about my death. Tell everyone to forgive me. I really don't deserve this world. La-ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasulullah (sa.)". His classmates and family members have confirmed his handwriting.

Case 2: On 17th August, a student of the department of Institute of Education and Research (IER) of University of Dhaka has committed suicide by hanging out with a fan at Gazirpur, Barishal, with "Al Bida" status on social media Facebook. The earlier post was about the expressive frustration "I have found one hundred and eight blue lotuses in the world. Yet no one spoke." This talented student suffering from mental problems (depressed) for a long time due to breakup of his recent love relationship with a female student at Eden College, confirmed by his friends. He posted various suicides of his Facebook timeline, even changes his cover photo ('I postpone the date of suicide because I want to get you.') and profile ('The entity hanging on the ceiling, his suicide if he gave his name.') related to suicide.

Case 3: On 17th July, a class XI student (age 20) of Baburhat College seriously injured himself by cutting his throat in his own house at Baburhat South Ashikati in Chandpur Sadar Upazila. The incidence had been taken place for a dispute with the boys in the area about playing football in the morning, suspected by his sister. But the reason of death still is the fog.

Case 4: On 12th August, a college student (age 23) attempt suicide by cutting his throat after writing a note

in Bhunapur of Tangail and later died in the Hospital. In the note, he wrote, “Satan will not let me live.” He had symptoms of mental imbalance and often felt spiritual domination inside of him, confirmed by the locales.

Case 5: On 18th August, another student (age 28) of University of Dhaka has committed suicide by hanging himself with a blackberry tree beside his house Kisamat Duhuli village of Chalbala union in Lalmonirhat. The reason behind the incidence was the rejection in the love affair. He had a love affair with a girl to whom he demanded to marry her. But both of his family and his girlfriend’s family refute to the marriage after his girlfriend’s family refused to marry his girlfriend.

4. Discussion

Table 01. Summary of the 5 suicide cases of students in Bangladesh during COVID-19

Attributes	Case I	Case II	Case III	Case IV	Case V
Age	NA	NA	20	23	28
Institute	Statistics, KU	IER, DU	Baburhat College	Unknown college	DU
Place of incidence	Home	Home	Home	Home	Home
Suicide type	Hanging ceiling fan	Hanging ceiling fan	Cutting throat	Cutting throat	Hanging in blackberry tree
Reasons	Grief	Mental breakdown due to rejection in love affairs	Dispute and conflict with friends	Mental imbalance	Rejection in love affairs
Suicide note	Yes	Expressed in his Facebook	No	Yes	No

We described 5 cases during July to September while the COVID-19 situation concentrated in Bangladesh; are talented students at college or university (age range 20-28), adopted hanging themselves or cutting throat at their residence. Love failure, grief and rejection of life, conflict with friends and abnormal mental conditions as a result of such SLEs are the reasons behind all the cases. A qualitative study with 33 adolescent with negative behaviour indicated psychological factors of causality such as sadness, desperation, mental suffering, internal pain, emptiness and rejections; the meaning of suicide as the escaping from present hectic situation and personal characteristics of feeling exclusive, humiliated introvert adolescents found to be more prone to suicide [23]. Two of the cases have no self-reported clue or notes and the rest of three cases left suicide notes before the incidence took place. Among these three, one (Case II) expressed himself in the social network (Facebook) that expressed suicidal ideation for a longer time [24]. Suicide notes are representing their thoughts, apologies, mental conditions, interpersonal problems and love to others [25]. Some notes are addressing gods or spirit of the afterlife with a positive approach [26] which is manifested in Case I. Literature also support the nature of harshness thysself that expressed in the suicide notes [27]. Studies also supported the reasons as the failure in the love affairs, bullying and mental imbalance [28], [29] of suicide among the students. Prevalence of suicide cases is recorded among the

young aged student by profession, female and unmarried in the online newspaper [13]. Therefore, the pivotal role of interpersonal relationships with the neighbours, friends and relatives are associated with the SLEs and these complications predict the suicidal ideation and attempted suicide at the end [4]. One study indicated three (marriage/love, family/home and health/hospital) out of six negative life event for young adults in China (i.e., marriage/love, family/home, work/business, health/hospital, law/legal, friendship/relationship) that mostly related to the suicide cases [30]. Besides, the government of Bangladesh implemented the temporary closing of all the educational institutions for halting the spread of pandemic [31]. One study based on Japanese school-going children found no significant difference in suicidal rate with school closure [32]. But for physical distance for a long time with the loved one can be the possible reason for suppressing the harmony of the relationship. So, forth the attachment of student lovers relied on the virtual network and in the meanwhile marital consequences have also taken place. Physical distance in this regard causes the emotional distance between the lovers that resulted in severe depressive symptoms and attempt to the suicide taken place at the end. Thus, rejection in the love affair becomes the root cause of these cases. On the other hand, temporary lockdown and movement restrictions cause stress in regular life, impacting social communications. Mental imbalance, grief on their life is likely to the implemented interventions during COVID-19.

5. Conclusion

There is no direct impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic concerning these five student suicide cases in Bangladesh rather than the implementation of the interventions. Institutional lockdown resulted in the physical distance and long-term isolation associated with the fear of COVID-19 infection stressed on the mental condition which resulted in those suicides. More depth studies should be conducted based on the adolescent's and student's suicide due to such COVID-19 intervention related psychological and mental impact.

6. Abbreviations

COVID-19 Coronavirus Disease 2019 SLEs Stressful Life Events

IER Institute of Education and Research

WHO World Health Organization

Ethical consideration: As the data includes only the printed and published information, no formal ethical clearance was needed.

Fund: There is no fund available for this research.

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7. References

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