

Rapid Communication

Escalated Suicidal Rate of the Undergraduate Students of Bangladesh - Social Impact and Recommendations to Overcome

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Abstract

Suicide has become one of the leading causes of deaths all over the world. It is considered as a global public health problem and a deviant behavior. People of different ages are committing suicide every day around the world for different reasons. University students, who are supposed to be the future of a country, are also accepting this path of deaths. Bangladeshi undergraduate students are also becoming the victims of suicide every day. In recent times, suicide ideation among the university undergraduate students is increasing. This article reveals the prevalence of suicide among the university undergraduate students and the factors associated with suicide ideation among the university undergraduate students of Bangladesh. It also focuses on the impact of these suicides on the family and society. To overcome this grave situation, some precautionary steps have been recommended at the end of this article.

Keywords: Behavioral health; Mental disorder; Psychology; Public health; Suicide

Introduction

Suicide is a ninth leading cause of the death in America leading approximately 1.4% of the total deaths [1]. Several studies over the world have observed that university students face multiple problems ranging from psychological to academic and financial to career and social concerns [2]. It is also observed that these problems become harder with time and cannot be easily resolved resulting they need to seek some professional help. However, in developing countries like Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, this scenario is more often due to lack of social awareness. Accordingly, around 6 to 8% of students suffer through emotional issues during the course of their university studies [3]. Though the exact number of students who suffer from emotional problems cannot be easily established, especially in developing countries. Researches have provided evidences that these students are at greater risk for academic and social challenges in a university environment and later in their practical adult life [4]. Mental and behavioral disorders are estimated to account for 12% of the global burden of any disease. More than 40% of countries have no mental health policy and over 30% have no mental health programme [5]. A number of factors are associated with suicidal ideation, which includes depression, hopelessness, bullying, family divorce, parental psychopathology, parental death, low family income, interpersonal violence, psychiatric disorders, problematic technology use like smartphone addiction, Facebook or Internet addiction etc. [6-9]. In Bangladesh, the rate suicide among university students are increasing day by day. It has become a serious issue that is needed to be addressed. But there is lack of awareness regarding this suicide ideation among university students. Some proper steps may decline this rate significantly.

A study conducted among 665 students of a university in

Bangladesh by a classroom based convenience-sampling method. The study of the result showed that the prevalence of suicidal ideation was 2.3% in the past 24 h, 4.8% in the past 15 days, 6.9% in the past month, 14.7% in the past year, and 61.1% in the lifetime. The results also stated that being separated from partner, Facebook addiction, depression, anxiety and stress were the risk factors of past-year Suicidal ideation [10]. In a retrospective study from Bangladeshi press report found that, most of the suicide victims are from public university students (30.4%). It found that 17 students were from public university in a total of 56 Bangladeshi students suicide cases reported from January 2018 to June 2019 in the Bangladeshi print media [11]. A study in Jahangirnagar University among 407 university students aged between 18 and 27 years stated that the 13.8% of the students have suicidal ideation during the past 12 months. A number of reasons were found to be responsible behind this scenario. The prevalence of suicidal ideation was found more in the female than the male in the study [12]. Several studies show that the female suicidal ideation is more in percentage than the male. In a study of suicidal ideation among rural elderly in Shandong, China shows that the suicidal ideation varies genderwise. It is infact found more in female than the male. The reason of finding more suicidal ideation in female was stated because of having lower life satisfaction and negative life events, which are more correlated with female than the male [13]. Other reasons that were found behind the suicidal ideation in the study conducted in Jahangirnagar University were being fifth year student, having a lower socioeconomic status, exposure to traumatic events, family suicide history and depression. Lower socioeconomic status of individual is more often influencing the university students to suicidal attempts. Most of the university students of Bangladesh belong to a lower or middle class family. They often struggle to manage their education costs. Besides, they have to look after their families as well

at a very early age. It often puts them under huge amount of pressure. A cross-sectional study from a rural community of Bangladesh stated that the parental lower socio-economic position enhances the suicidal ideation rate among the adolescents. Low monthly income and expenditure of the parents are associated with suicidal ideation of the adolescents and those who do not live with their parents are also found to have suicidal ideation [14]. A cross-sectional study from the Korean Community Health Survey 2013 confirmed that the suicide rate is higher among the people associated with lower socioeconomic status [15]. On the other hand, Parental high expectations often puts the university students under tremendous pressure. Parents always seems to expect more from their children's. They want their children to have great academic results. Besides, they often put their children's under pressure through expecting their bright and luxury future. The teachers also put a high load of academic pressure on them. Sometimes the university students do not find their teachers enough cooperative and helpful to share anything. This high expectation from their parents often puts so much stress and anxiety on them. That is how the depression takes place into them and results in suicidal ideation. However, the impact of these suicides on family and society is very shocking. It enhances the breakdown of family causing mental conflicts and depression among the family members. It creates a traumatic stress that induces other family members to commit suicide. Suicide is a social disorder and alarming situation for the society. It creates anarchy in the society and decreases the social status. That is why it is considered as a defame of the society [16].

Some of the suicide prevention steps includes raising awareness among university students regarding suicide, prevention programmes are needed to arrange besides raising awareness, prevention programmes should include student support centers, gatekeeper training towards mental health problems and suicide, screening, peer leadership training [17-19]. Besides, curriculum based interventions and internet based interventions may be beneficial in the prevention of university students suicide [20]. Finally, the university administration should look after the mental conditions of each and every students alongside their financial crisis.

Conclusions: Students' suicide is really a tremendous shock for both the family and society. This study will help to find out the exact causes of the suicide of University students. This study finding will help to address the relation between suicide and student teacher's relationship and other factors. It is believed that the suicidal ideations of university students can be declined by taking meaningful steps. Some of them are also suggested in this study.

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