

# Hidden Sexual Harassment on Teenage Girls by Relatives: A Study on a Sub-urban City of Bangladesh

Mamunor Rashid\* and Tandra Mondol

Department of Mass Communication and Journalism Discipline, Khulna University, Khulna, Bangladesh, South Asia

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out the effect of sexual harassments, which is, happened by confidentially on teenage girls by their relatives. The nature of this study conducts the quantitative and qualitative method in nature. The population of this study is all teenage girls (aged 14-17 years) of two number Raghunathpur union in Dumuria. About 180 questionnaires and 3 expert respondents are helped by the researcher to complete the study perfectly. A greater number of respondents (85%) are harassed by relatives secretly and they hide this information from their parents and the greedy eyes of male or relatives are the main reason of it. The expert participants of in-depth interview explained the mental and physical situation of harassed teenage girls. They share their experience in these problems and they provide some recommendations and advices to remove it from the society.

**Keywords:** Hidden • Sexual harassment • Teenage girls • Relatives • Mental depression

## Introduction

Sexual harassment is a type of harassment that is involving the use of explicit or implicit sexual overtones, including the unwelcome or inappropriate promise of rewards in exchange for sexual favors. The uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature is especially occurring by a person in authority toward a subordinate [1]. Sexual harassment is also a behavior and defined as unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The word "teenager" is often associated with adolescence and this research is defined teenager whose age is within 14-17 years.

Out of school teenage, sexual harassment is a problem for both boys and girls in our society today, and the effects of this experience can affect their lives negatively in later adult life. The findings indicate that sexual harassment is common out there in the streets, to the extent that it was viewed as the norm in the society by the youths. For example, 296 (83%) of all females and 152 (62%) of all males had experienced one or more forms of sexual harassment [2]. In California, approximately 23% of teens report being threatened by a peer and cyber bullying appears similar in prevalence to offline bullying [3]. There are differences in the experience of sexual harassment by gender, work relationship, and emotional reaction. Students experienced harassment from supervisors (19%), coworkers (61%), and unidentified others at work (18%). Girls reported being significantly more upset and threatened by the sexual harassment they experienced at work than boys reported [4]. Most of the time, the teenagers effects on sexual harassment broadly and

they don't know how to talk parents about sexual harassment. It is important to provide information on sexual harassment and conduct workshops on the topic for teenagers, teen workers, and educators to increase awareness and action.

Sexual harassment has become so frequent and ubiquitous in schools that these behaviors have become normalized and expected. In order to prevent the re-enactment and perpetuation of this problem, it is important to explore processes that contribute to its existence. A high school sexual harassment lawsuit in Sweden is used as a case study to illustrate ways that might explain how sexual harassment is normalized at the organizational level [5]. Sexual harassment is an epidemic throughout global higher education systems and impact individuals, groups and entire organizations in profound ways. Precarious working conditions, hierarchical organizations, a normalization of gender based violence, toxic academic masculinities, a culture of silence and a lack of active leadership are all key features enabling sexual harassment [6]. The NASEM report defines sexual harassment (a form of discrimination) in three categories of behavior:

- Gender harassment (verbal and nonverbal behaviors that convey hostility, objectification, exclusion, or second-class status about members of one gender).
- Unwanted sexual attention (verbal or physical unwelcome sexual advances, which can include assault).
- Sexual coercion (when favorable professional or educational treatment is conditioned on sexual activity).

\*Address for Correspondence: Mamunor Rashid, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism Discipline, Khulna University, Khulna, Bangladesh, South Asia, Tel: 1745144648; E-mail: mrashid@mcj.ku.ac.bd

Copyright: © 2024 Rashid M, et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the creative commons attribution license which permits unrestricted use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

Received: 01 October, 2024, Manuscript No. JMCJ-22-68181; Editor assigned: 03 October, 2024, PreQC No. JMCJ-22-68181 (PQ); Reviewed: 15 October, 2024 QC No. JMCJ-22-68181; Revised: 21 October, 2024, Manuscript No. JMCJ-22-68181 (R); Published: 28 October, 2024, DOI: 10.37421/2165-7912.2022.14.584

Besides, sexual harassment is the activities which activates sexist and heterosexist stereotypes, erodes school engagement, alienates students from teachers, and adversely affects academic achievement, to a greater degree than bullying does [7,8].

Teenage sexual culture refers to the constellation of practices, including behavioral patterns, attitudes and 'moral codes', which inform and govern interpretations and interactions in the realm of sexuality in young people's lives [9]. In this changing patterns and behavior of teenage girls attract the male person in normally. But it is not to right to do bad activities with them and it's a crime. Most of the time, the male relatives of teenage girls can close them in any occasion or program. They see and notice the changing behaviors of teenage girls. Sometimes or most of the time, they attract it and they want to abuse them.

At present, teenage girls are victim to sexual harassment by relatives in confidentially. The main goal of this thesis is to find out teenage girls mental and physical condition after that hidden harassment by relatives and how to recover and reduce it. Some male relatives harassed teenage girls by using unwanted touch or unwanted words especially distant relatives and sometimes close relatives. They are used in social media or phone calling by unwanted comments, unwanted text, actions, gestures, sent in sexual picture and sexual mail repeatedly for harassment on teenage girls. Mainly, they usually access for that because they are relatives and they know that information normally. Teenage girls normally don't disclose that harassment because of their stress. Teenagers are much stressed. A survey by the American Psychological Association in 2014 revealed that teenagers are more stressed than adult. It is common situation in every teenager [10].

This research finds out that sexual harassment which is occurred hidden by relatives on teenage girls. How many teenage girls are harassed by relatives, why teenage girls harassed by relatives, why society don't prevent them? These are questions which will be answered this research.

## Literature Review

Sexual harassment is the common issue in the present time. So, much work should be done in this topic so that it is removed from society. A lot of works of this topic of sexual harassment was done in our country and worldwide. But in these studies, the researchers could not go to the specific area such as sexual harassment occurred by only relatives on teenage girls. Nevertheless, these previous researches help me to complete my study to collect and analyze data and find out actual result.

Ehsan Qaane, this study found that Afghan women and girls often quietly endure harassment, including sexual harassment. There is very poor official record of the cases of harassment against women in Afghanistan which is occurred. Harassment, whether it occurs within the family or educational institutions, in the workplace or the public sphere, is a little talked about phenomenon. Latifa Sultani, the Coordinator of the AIHRC's Women's rights unit told AAN, "all the registered cases of harassment against women were committed by husbands or close relatives of the female victims. This study also found that percent of woman harassment in public spaces, workplace and educational institutions that was 90 percent of the women interviewed said that they had faced harassment at least once in

public spaces, 87 percent had experienced it in their workplaces and 91 percent in educational institution. The researcher discusses that harassment which is occurred by husband or close relatives but researcher are not survey this topic.

Nahar et al., this article focuses on how adolescent girls in Bangladesh (12-18 years) experience "eve teasing" and what meanings they attach to it, and adolescent boys' views on and explanations for "eve teasing" girls. In 2010, 28 girls/women committed suicide in Bangladesh, and another seven attempted suicide, in order to escape frequent sexual harassment that was found by this study. This study also found that there was no sexuality education in the school curriculum in Bangladesh. More recently, BRAC has introduced sex education in their rural adolescents' schools, and FPAB and four other NGOs are developing and introducing a comprehensive sexuality education programme in schools in some districts. The researcher of this research focuses on teenage girls' harassment by overall public but research don't search that harassment which occurred by relatives specifically.

Melissa K. Holt et al., this study identify that Bullies, victims, and bully-victims endorsed more victimization in other domains than students not involved in bullying in one of these capacities; bully-victims had the highest victimization rates overall. This study explored child maltreatment, sexual victimization, and witnessing or indirect victimization which is occurred by confidentially crimes is occurred continuously but it is not revealed because of some reasons. So it is occurred by confidentially.

ISil ISIK and Ozen KULAKAÇ, the researcher of this study found that adolescent girls were victims of verbal sexual harassment were negatively affected both emotionally and behaviorally due to such experiences and verbal sexual abuse has been a widespread and common problem among adolescent female high school students in the Turkish context. Women veil themselves because their faces, bodies, hair and voice attract men. Women's chastity is the most important control mechanism over female freedom and sexuality. Sexually free women are a danger to the social order under Islam, but male sexuality is not controlled, but is even encouraged. So harassing of girls is learnt by boys from older brothers or uncles in the family and companions in wider society, as a means of affirming their masculinity. In this cultural context, women simultaneously learn that it is normal for men to harass them and they have to accept and submit to it. Majority of high school students-up to 93 percent girls and 83 percent boys have experienced unwelcome behavior or sexual violence, and the most frequent type reported by high school students was sexual comments, jokes, gestures or being stared at. But the researcher doesn't find out non-verbal sexual harassment.

Tora and Zaye et al., the researcher mainly found that 23.4% attempted rape, 8.7% completed rape, 24.2% committed physical harassment, 18.7% committed verbal harassment, and 11.3% forced sexual initiation. There are a number of existing frameworks in the literature, which indicate that verbal sexual harassment commonly targets adolescent girl students and the key perpetrators of sexual violence against women are boyfriends, close friends, family members and relatives, school and university teachers, other employees, and strangers.

Hyman et al., this study explored that early education and growing awareness is critical to reduce the prevalence of violence towards

women in any society. The main aim of school educational programs should be to change attitudes and thoughts toward love, sex, and violence in young generation; thereby providing students with alternative skills to resolve conflicts.

Crooks et al., Crooks and other researchers of this study found that adolescences are very poor decision makers and sometimes they are very stressed in any reason. They are always influenced by society's culture, trends and influenced by people's attitudes and thoughts. Understanding the dynamics of gender development and identity during adolescence is critical for parents in trying to help their adolescents to develop healthy and egalitarian thoughts regarding male-female relationships. Given that father figures play a large role in helping both male and female adolescent children to develop their understanding of masculinity, they are very significant in the perpetration of gender based violence in any culture. Therefore, engaging fathers and boys would represent a major contribution to the prevention of violence.

Heather McLaughlin et al., this empirical study examined that power distribution is the main cause of sexual harassment of women. Power is at the core of feminist theories of sexual harassment, although it has rarely been measured directly in terms of workplace authority. Sexual harassment can serve as an equalizer against women in power, motivated more by control and domination than by sexual desire. Interviews point to social isolation as a mechanism linking harassment to gender nonconformity and women's authority, particularly in male dominated work settings. Our statistical control for whether respondents experienced sexual harassment in the previous year is a strong and significant predictor in all models, which likely captures stable individual differences in legal consciousness as well as stability in targeting. This research finds out clearly differentiate between sex and gender and co-relation between sex, gender and power.

BBC News, the report provided the information of some 31% of teenage girls targeted with unwanted sexual attention, One in 10 threats of sexual violence, including rape, 26% of teenagers victims of online sexual behavior, 12% of teenagers claimed that they pressured by partners to share naked images. The report is not a survey about sexual harassment on teenage girls by confidentially.

Susan Fineran and James E. Gruber, this study was identified sexually harassed working teenagers. Work attitudes, assessments of physical health and mental health, and school related outcomes were measured using standardized scales. It found that the percentage of teenage harassed girls was significantly higher than the figures of working women. Teenage students, stressed by sexual harassment experienced at work may find their career development or career potential impeded or threatened due to school absence and poor academic performance.

Johnson, P. A, the study finds out women in the fields of science, engineering, and medicine are victimized by sexual harassment which sexual harassment in academia negatively impacts the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women pursuing scientific, engineering, technical, and medical careers. It also identifies and analyzes the policies, strategies and practices that are the most successful way in preventing and addressing sexual harassment in these settings.

## Methodology

This study is conducted on teenage girls of Dumuria Upzila, Khulna, Bangladesh. This study picked up by its aims and objectives which have a major influence on the research methodology. It aims to collect the data about sexual harassment on teenage girls by relatives in happening secretly.

The research methodology refers to all the methods or techniques used by researchers in performing research methods. This study is perfectly adopted 'survey method' and is used by survey based questionnaire method and individual teenage girls interview are used to collect data about sexual harassment by relatives which is occurred confidentially without cease. This study is also conducted qualitative approach as the research method. This qualitative approach was considered to be more significant in order to gain more deep knowledge on the effect of teenage girls when they confess to being secretly harassed by relatives based on depression, mental condition, suicidal attempts, frustration, future condition and social status of the harassed teenagers. Mainly, the study will be used both quantitative and qualitative methods for collecting accurate and purposive data to remove this problem in our society. Firstly, the sample of this study consists of 180 teenage girls of 2 no Raghunathpur Union in Dumuria Upzila, Khulna. Secondly, interview is carried out with a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a sociologist.

## Sampling

When the researchers conduct research about a group of people, it's rarely possible to collect data from every person in that group. Instead, they select a sample. The sample is the group of individuals who will actually participate in the research. So, the sample of this study has been selected by the random sampling method. The sample is 180 teenage girls of 2 no Raghunathpur Union in Dumuria Upzila, Khulna.

Population is all teenage girls of 2 no Raghunathpur Union in Dumuria Upzila, Khulna and the sample is selected by 180 teenage girls randomly among research population. According to ICT sell of 2 no Raghunathpur Union Parishad in Dumuria Upzila, the number of teenage girls (14-17 years aged) are 2000 probably.

Allowing margin of error of 0.071 with 93% level of confidence and 7% standard error, the required sample size is  $n=180$ . This sample is gathered in convenience sampling and random sampling method. The sample is selected by using the formula of Yemane. According to the formula of Yemane in 1967, the sample is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N.e^2}$$

Here,

$N$ =Total Population

$n$ =Sample Size

$e$ =Confidence interval (Marginal of Error)

$$n = \frac{2000}{1 + 2000(0.071)^2}$$

$$= 180.47$$

$$n = 180 \text{ (for study purpose only)}$$

This study primarily uses quantitative approach which is different from qualitative approach. This approach finds out the question in this study who, how much, what, where, when, how many, and how. To answer these questions all research papers, articles and interviews given by analyzing related articles, collecting and analyzing data. This study is conducted on simple random sampling firstly which way is easy to collect reliable data about sexual harassment on teenage girls by relatives in confidentially and secondly is conducted on interview with a psychiatrist, a psychologist and a sociologist to gain in-depth related data of this topic.

## Theoretical framework

The theoretical frame works are used as a guide to the inquiry and to the interpretations of the findings of the study. The nature and function of a theoretical framework can be understood through the answer of two basic questions: What is the problem or question; why is your approach to solving the problem or answering the question feasible? [11]. Theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists. Different theoretical perspectives are related to this study.

**Interpersonal communication theory:** Interpersonal communication theory refers to the reciprocity of behaviors between two people who are in the process of developing a relationship. These behaviors can include verbal/nonverbal exchange, interpersonal perceptions, and interactions with the environment. Though there are a number of interpersonal communication theories that provide different lenses through which to view communication in relationships, these theories fall into four categories: theories about meaning in relationships, theories about motives in relationships, theories about messages in relationships, and theories about movement in relationships [12].

This study describes sexual harassment which is appeared by relatives on teenage girls. If interpersonal communication had not been established, the teenagers would have not admitted to being harassed by their relatives. Relatives create bad meaning in relationships, bad motives in relationships, bad messages in relationships through harassing on teenage girls and that is protecting through moving in relationships. These themes of this study related to four theories of interpersonal communication. So, this study work in interpersonal communication theory that is important to describe every social negative and positive relationship.

**Feminist theory on woman's victimization:** Feminist theory is a conflict theory and theoretical perspective which observes gender in its relation to power, both at the level of face to face interaction and

reflexivity within a social structure at large. Focuses include sexual orientation, race, economic status, and nationality.

This theory adapted the study because the study searches the sexual abuse or harassment on teenage girls. Mainly, sexual orientation in our society, race and economic status are caused of sexual harassment on women. The victimization of women became an issue of central interest to feminists both in and outside criminology which was linked to patriarchy. Feminist perspective viewed rape and the threat of rape as a way to keep women in their place under patriarchy. Women are viewed as a natural byproduct of a society that condones pornography, rape and sexual harassment [13]. In this reasons, girls are faced sexual harassment in any place and by any male person even close person. So, the theory is related this study and this study use it to find out the reliable findings through collecting and analyzing data.

**Feminist theory on sexual violence:** Power is one of the important factors of sexual violence. Sexual harassment derived its meaning from the social context of power relations in the work place and in society. This theory and more recent feminist work have suggested that power and masculinity can explain incidences of sexual harassment. It focused on the gendered economy or greater economic power held by men in the labor market to explain sexual intimidation and harassment [14]. This study finds the factors that how to male influenced by power to engage sexual harassment on the basis of this theory. So, this theory helps the researcher to complete the study creatively.

**Social exchange theories and sexuality:** Social exchange theory is one of the social science theories that have been applied to the study of human sexuality. This theoretical perspective is of particular relevance for understanding sexuality as it is negotiated between two people who have a relationship with each other. Human sexuality is the cause of sexual harassment. Human sexuality is influenced of human to engage the pornography, rape and sexual harassment. This study is related the theory because it finds out the sexual harassment on teenage girls. The teenage girls are harassed sexually because of human sexuality. This theory helps the study to find out the relation between human sexuality and sexual harassment and the main factors of this relationship [15].

By using a theory or theoretical perspective analyzing the problem scenario, the research output is been made. These theoretical framework uses for solving research problems to analyze the collected data.

## Data analysis and discussion

Variables	Participants and percentage (n %)
Age of the respondent	
10-15 years	131 (72.7%)
> 17 years	49 (27.3%)
Educational status of the respondent	
Class XI to X	147 (82.22%)
Higher XI to XII	33 (17.78%)

Teenagers secretly harassed by their relatives	
Yes	153 (85%)
No	27 (15%)
The main reason of harassment	
The greedy eyes of men	71 (38.9%)
Patriarchal social system	38 (21.1%)
Women's beauty	1 (1.1%)
No reason	8 (4.4%)
Above all	42 (23.3%)
Non-harassed Teenagers	20 (11.2%)
Hide harassment information	
Yes	165 (91.62%)
No	15 (8.38%)

**Table 1.** Basic information and reasons of harassment.

Age and educational status are the most vital factors related to the topic of the study. The Table 1 shows the age and educational status of respondents, the number of harassed teenagers and the main reasons of harassment. There are largest numbers of respondent

from fourteen to fifteen aged girls and the respondents of higher secondary are lower than secondary. Most of teenagers among the respondents are harassed by their relatives and large numbers of respondents said the greedy eyes of men are the main reason behind it.

Variables	Participants and percentage (n %)
Reluctant of disclose harassment information to their guardian	
Fear of public shame	109 (61.1%)
Fear of harassing relatives	6 (3.3%)
Adolescent inertia	4 (2.2%)
Fear of dislocate from society	46 (25.6%)
Non-harassed Teenagers	15 (7.8%)
Any teenager close to you confessed to this harassment	
Yes	95 (53%)
No	85 (47%)
Kind of harassment intimate teenage girls admit to	
Men's avaricious eyes	50 (27.8%)
Harassed by touching	15 (8.3%)
Harassed by indecent text in messenger	18 (10.1%)
Harassed by social media	8 (4.4%)
Above all	6 (3.3%)
Non-harassed Teenagers	83 (46.1%)
Kind of support to get intimate teenage girls	
The cooperation of parents	27 (15%)
The cooperation of friends	54 (30%)
The cooperation of social organization	3 (1.7%)

Didn't get any help	5 (2.8%)
Above all	8 (4.4%)
Non-harassed Teenagers	83 (46.1%)

**Table 2.** Reasons of hiding harassment information.

In the above Table 2, a greater number of teenage girls hide such harassment and large numbers of respondents say fear of public

shame are the main reasons to hide it. Most of teenage girls harassed by the Men's avaricious eyes and a big number of teenagers are getting to support by their friends.

Variables	Participants and percentage (n %)
Some organizational psychological supports	
Yes	138 (77%)
No	42 (23%)
Any advice from parents, friends or anyone for overcoming	
Yes	125 (69.27%)
No	55 (30.73%)
Governmental public awareness campaigns or ads	
Yes	117 (65%)
No	63 (35%)
Know any immediate legal helps to get	
Yes	95 (52.51%)
No	85 (47.49%)
The mental condition of teenagers	
Yes	148 (82%)
No	32 (18%)
Adolescents fall into the big trap in adolescent inertia	
Yes	131(73%)
No	49 (27%)

**Table 3.** Supports and get it out from society.

Sexual harassment is the most talkative issue in recent time. It is necessary to aware of our girls so that they know how to get rid of such harassment. The Table 3 represents that 77% of respondents know some organizations provide psychological support to

adolescents who admit to such harassment and 23% of them don't know it and 69.27% of respondents receive advice from parents, friends or anyone else on what to do if you admit to being harassed by a relative and 30.73% of them don't receive it.

Variables	Participants and percentage (n %)
Teenage girls have secretly confessed to sexual harassment	
Yes	156 (86.7%)
No	24 (13.30%)
Kind of harassment to confess teenage girls	
Men's avaricious gazes	111 (62.2%)
Harassed by touching	14 (7.8%)
Harassed by indecent text in messenger	26 (14.4%)

Harassed by social media	1 (0.6%)
Above all	4 (1.7%)
Non-harassed Teenagers	24 (13.3%)
Physically and sexually harassed by their relatives	
Yes	58 (32.39%)
No	122 (67.61%)
Impacts among harassed teenage girls	
Mental depression	96 (53.85%)
Physical exhaustion	6 (3.21%)
Mental and physical depression	73 (40.38%)
No impact	5 (2.56%)

**Table 4.** Pattern of harassment and consequences of harassment.

The Table 4 of this study shows that number of harassed girls and consequences of harassment. The largest numbers of respondent harassed by their relatives secretly and they harassed by the Men's avaricious eyes. Another thing is that the largest numbers of respondents are not physically harassed by their relatives secretly and a greater number of harassed girls are mentally depressed.

## Discussion

Sexual harassment on teenage girls still remains a serious issue in Bangladesh. This study conducts the teenage respondents. Among respondents, two-thirds are 14-15 aged girls and one-thirds is 16-17 aged girls. In this study, five-sixths respondents said that teenage girls harassed by relatives secretly and the respondents (38.9%) also said that the main cause of this harassment is the greedy eyes of men. BBC report found that one in 10 of teenage girls face threats of sexual violence including rape, online sexual behavior, pressured of partners and others. So, it is said that a large number of teenage girls face sexual harassment openly or secretly.

American academy pediatrics found that adolescences is a time of sexual and social change, teenagers both girls and boys in this age are more likely to experience sexual violence than any other. The most of respondents (73%) in this study fall into the big trap in adolescent inertia because of sexual harassment. Large numbers of respondents (82%) are very bad mental condition because of sexual harassment in this adolescent time. Crooks et al. provided the same opinion of adolescents' inertia and only fathers and boys can counteract this harassment by providing various contributions to their society. The study reveals that 91.62% teenage girls hide the information when they admit to sexual harassment by relatives and the main cause of it is fear of public shame. But Heather McLaughlin et al. explored that power distribution is the main cause of sexual harassment and patriarchal social system influenced the men to engage physical and mental harassment. The study discloses the similar thing and 32.39% respondents are confessed to physical harassment.

Most of the teenage girls are harassed by relatives through some activities that are the greedy eye and touching. If the respondents are

teenager, they are not sharing information after confessing to such harassment to parents. Only 15% respondents share it to their parents and 30% respondents share it to their friends. Large of numbers of respondents share it to their friends because of the conservatism of family, the fear of the parents and the disbelief of the mother. As a friend, 51.40% teenagers of respondents support mentally and emotionally of their friends when they confessed such harassment. Adolescence is the poor decision maker so they choose their friends to share it [16].

Nahar et al. explored that there is no sexuality education in the school curriculum in Bangladesh and only some organization recently works in this topic. But the study found the opposite thing. Findings of the study revealed that the government creates awareness among citizens through campaigns or ads about it and 65% respondents know it. As a result, they know the immediate legal helps which get immediately if such harassments are occurred.

One of the myths about sexual violence is that women "ask for it" by going outside alone without a man who can protect her from other men and late at night [17]. This study showed the different side of the myths. The teenage girls harassed by that people who are safe them according to myths. On the other side, the respondents of this study harassed by relatives in their house or own zoon and they are not going to outside in late night. So, there is no special time or place for sexual harassment, it will occur anytime, anyplace and by any person.

Studies have showed that sexual harassment creates a hostile social environment [18]. As a result, adolescents have sleeping disturbances, eating disorders, drugs and alcohol use and are particularly at a risk of mental health problems [19]. The data of this study clarifies that 53.85% teenage girls are mentally depressed after confessing sexual harassment by their relatives and the respondents get support from their parents when they reveal it to their parents. The data presented that highly patriarchal Turkish society helps to increase verbal sexual harassment on women [20]. In this study presents the similar result.

There is nothing about the men who harass or rape that distinguishes them from others. Harassers come from all socioeconomic groups [21]. Almost five-sixths teenage girls of this

study are harassed by relatives confidentially. So this study provides the same concept.

Sexual harassment is the talkative issue. So, the greater number of respondents (69.27%) of this study receives advice from parents what to do if they admit to being harassed by a relatives. The data represents that 77% respondents know that some organization support the teenage girls if they confess such harassment. The respondents (69.83%) know that how to get rid of this problem because of modern technology such as social media or media showing some ads to create awareness among them. Mainly, five-sixths respondents harassed by relatives subconsciously and the bad effect of it make them mentally and emotionally disturbed.

### In-depth interview of three Key Informant Interview (KII)

In this part, the researcher of this research conducts three experts to gain deep knowledge about the problem who are persistent to this study. Adolescents are generally accepted as being harassed by the people of the society and they become mentally and physically weakened due to society. The research found that 85% teenage girls harassed by relatives confidentially. Since relatives are part of the family, teenagers and even their parents hide such harassment for social reasons. For this reasons, the researcher of this study conduct the social expert named Prof. Mst. Taslima Khatun, sociology discipline (Head) in Khulna University, Khulna. Teenage girls have changed their brain condition and behaviors after confessing sexual harassment. Since relatives are members of the family, teenagers become mentally and emotionally disturbed and the condition of their brain is getting worse day by day due to keeping it hidden. For this reasons, the researcher of this study conduct a psychiatrist and a psychologist named Prof. Dr. Dhiraj Mohon Biswas. MBBS, DPM (DU), FRSH (UK), Neuropsychiatric in Khulna Medical College and Hospital, Khulna and Md. Abu Sayed, Mental Health Counselor in Shahid Buddhijibi Dr. Alim Chowdhury Chikitsha Kendro.

**The condition of brain:** Amygdala is the part of the brain and this part of a person becomes active during adolescence. For this reason, teenagers show immediate reactions including fear and aggressive behavior. Prof. Dr. Dhiraj Mohon Biswas of the expert respondent stated that:

Amygdala is the main reason to hide sexual harassment of teenage girls especially when they harassed by relatives. They fear to disclose it because of active amygdala in the part of the brain.

There are many part of my brain and each part influences everyone's behaviors. Similarly, adolescents' behavior changes for different parts of the brain. Prof. Dr. Dhiraj Mohon Biswas of the expert respondent said that:

The frontal cortex is the part of the brain and this part is still changing and maturing well into adulthood. It has been implicated in planning complex cognitive behavior, personality expression, decision making, and moderating social behavior. For this reason, teenage girls who confess the sexual harassment to share it to their friends and most of the time their friends are also teenage and they spend the same condition of brain and they also poor decision maker. So, most of parents cannot know what happened of their child primarily. They know it when the child fall in physically and mentally and change their behaviors. I am also mentioned that hormonal change of adolescence. It is the main reason of sexual harassment. Their body

size will increase, with the feet, arms, legs, and hands beginning to grow in advance of the body. This may cause a girl to feel clumsy and attractive. So, male are feeling attract the teenage girls and they sexually harass teenagers.

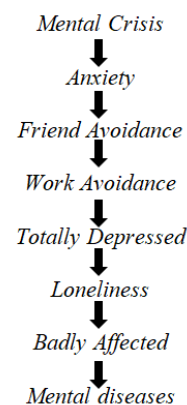
Much more focal activation of the brain in adolescence compared with early childhood and adulthood. So, sexual harassment is affected by adolescents' normal neuron system. A longitudinal Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) study showed that the total white matter volume continues to increase into the early 20's, frontal and parietal grey matter volume peaks at approximately 14 years of age before declining, and the grey matter in the occipital and temporal lobes continues to increase until 20 years of age [22,23]. According to Prof. Dr. Dhiraj Mohon Biswas of an expert respondent in in-depth interview:

The condition of neuron is not normal when the teenage girls are confessing sexual harassment. They face some neuron problems primarily. If they don't recover it, they suffer from some mental diseases such as epilepsies, neuromuscular disorders, neurodegenerative disorders, inflammatory disorders of the central nervous system and some other, miscellaneous conditions [24,25].

The survey respondents (73%) said that they fall into the big trap during adolescence in adolescent inertia if they admit to sexual harassment by relatives and for this reason; they hide it in their close person even parents [26].

**Mental condition and outward behavior:** The mental condition of teenage girls is very bad because of such sexual harassment and changes their behavior step by step. Md. Abu Sayed of the expert respondent in in-depth interview stated that (Figure 1):

*The behaviors of harassed teenage girls are changed step by step –*



**Figure 1.** The behaviors of harassed teenage girls are changed step by step.

The harassed girls end their life for the changing behaviors day by day. Relatives are the close person of their family when the relatives harassed them. They are very depressed mentally and they are not trust anyone even their brother, fathers and doctors who helps them to recover it. Md. Abu Sayed of the expert respondent in in-depth interview said that:

The harassed teenage girls who admit to harassment want to commit suicide again and again and they don't resolve their mental trauma. I get some patients who are not believed me because of this



mental trauma. They are not interested to talk to me and they are afraid of every male [27-30].

The survey respondents (80%) said that they are very mentally depressed and they don't want to talk anyone even parents or close friends and some respondents (51.40%) said that they help their friends who are mentally depressed because of such harassment [31].

**Social condition and status:** People survive by clinging to society and sometimes they support society, sometimes society is supported by them. Teenage girls are the part of society. When they harassed by relatives, the social condition and status is very bad for them. Prof. Mst. Taslima Khatun of an expert respondent in in-depth interview stated that:

Teenage girls are sexually harassed by relatives for many social reasons. These are social situations, conservative society, lack of social awareness, structure of the society, male dominated or male powerful society [32,33].

A greater number of survey respondents (91.62%) said that they hide the information after confessing harassment. The main reason of it is 'fear of public shame' which is the social problems. Prof. Mst. Taslima Khatun of an expert respondent in in-depth interview said that:

Socialization is not the only reason in hiding this sexual harassment but it is the main reason. Conservatism of parents, fear of father, fear of harasser, fear of losing a place to live, adolescent inertia is also the reasons to hide it [34].

The harassed teenage girls are mentally depressed for many social factors. These factors influence male to harass the female. According to Prof. Mst. Taslima Khatun of an expert respondent in in-depth interview:

Lack of acceptance, family values, socially abuse and other social factors are mentally depressed the teenage girls after facing such harassment. Male dominates social structure don't accept normally these girls who harassed by relatives. Society blamed that girls body structure, dress up, family education and family acceptance. The social condition and status of harassed girls are very bad in our country because of male power [35,36].

A large number of respondents (53.85%) represents that they are mentally depressed to face such harassment and they are not sharing only for some social factors. They (3KII) want to remove this problem in our society and for this reasons they provide some advice in their own point of view.

---

## Conclusion

Due to the structure of society, male dominated society, conservative family situation, lack of proper education, lack of strict law, lack of public awareness, lack of parents' awareness, girls are constantly admitting to sexual harassment by male. Sexual harassment is the known and talkative issue but this harassment is still perpetrated by men even by female's own individuals. The teenage girls of our society are harassed by relatives confidentially because they are not aware of bad touching or bad signals and their parents are not aware of their relative's activities. Most of the time the teenagers don't disclose information when they are confessing sexual

harassment by their relatives due to conservatism of parents, fear of father, fear of harasser, fear of losing a place to live, adolescent inertia. The mental and physical condition of harassed teenage girls is much squandered. Teenagers are the light of the future and adolescence is the best time to make the life in the light direction and it is also the worst time for teenagers to go wrong way. In that time, teenage girls face such harassment by relatives who are responsible to protect them. So it is the social disease and if we don't remove it, it will destroy our new generation. Such sexual harassment is happening due to many psychological and social factors such as social situation, conservative society, lack of social awareness, structure of the society, male dominated or male powerful society, hormonal change, mental change etc. Most of the time, teenage girls are harassed by touching and the harasser's greedy eyes. It is necessary to remove it our society so we need to increase public awareness, parent's awareness, proper education, strict law, governmental support etc. It is our responsibility to protect the girls who harassed by relatives because they are not revealed it some barriers and for this reasons, they don't get any help. On the other side, researches and media coverage should be increased in this topic so that parents can know about the problem and they aware of it.

---

## Recommendations

On the study of teenager's sexual harassment, some recommendations discuss below. Here are:

To use the in-depth interview to parents of harassed girls. Parents are the best observer of a child. To conduct the case study method or only qualitative method to gain deep information. To analyze the information of this problem not only teenagers but also other aged female or male because they can be harassed by relatives. To conduct the research of this topic in Khulna city or other area for finding same or other results. To do more and more research work. To use greater number of respondents.

---

## Authors' contributions

Tandra Mondol had the basic idea for the study and Mamunor Rashid supervised the research work. Tandra Mondol performed the data collection, statistical analysis and prepared the first draft including results and tables; Mamunor Rashid contributed in the literature review, discussion section and finalized the manuscript. Both the authors read and approved the final manuscript.

---

## Ethical consideration

In any research, ethical consideration is very important because it ensure respondents to give accurate information without any fear or hesitation. At first the aims and objectives of the study was clearly explained to the participants and assured them that this information will be used only for the study purpose. Participants informed that their participation should voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any time if they wished to do so.

## Funding information

This research received no funding.

## Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare

## References

1. Abdin M. A Hand Book of Research (Second ed.). Uttoran Offet Printing Press, (2005).
2. Kaplan DW, Feinstein RA, Fisher MM and Klein JD, et al. Care for adolescent sexual assault victim. *Pediatrics* 107 (2001): 1476-1479.
3. Berzins KM, Petch A and Atkinson JM. Prevalence and experience of harassment of people with mental health problems living in the community. *Br J Psychiatry* 183 (2003): 526-533.
4. Hicks C and Harris L. Vascular Disease in Women. Academic Press publisher, (2021): 492.
5. Carpenito-Moyet LJ. Handbook of nursing diagnosis (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, (2004).
6. Chapleau KM and Oswald DL. A system justification view of sexual violence: legitimizing gender inequality and reduced moral outrage are connected to greater rape myth acceptance. *J Trauma Dissociation* 15 (2014): 204-18.
7. Clifford S. Teaching teenagers about harassment. *New York Times*, (2009).
8. Crooks CV, Goodall GR, Baker LL and Hughes R, et al. Preventing violence against women: Engaging the fathers of today and tomorrow. *Cogn Behav Pract* 13 (2006): 82-93.
9. Cushman DP and Florence BT. The development of interpersonal communication theory. *Commun Q* 22 (1974): 11-15.
10. Chambers D. Teachers' views of teenage sexual morality. *Br J Sociol Edu Pages* 25 (2010): 563-576.
11. Ehsan Qaane. Harassment of Women in Afghanistan: A hidden phenomenon addressed in too many laws. *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, (2019).
12. Fineran S and Bennett L. Gender and power issues of peer sexual harassment among teenagers. *J Interpers Violence* 14 (1999): 626-641.
13. Fredrik Bondestam. Sexual harassment in higher education-a systematic review. *European J Higher Educ Pages* 10 (2020): 397-419.
14. Goelman DM. Shelter from the storm: Using jurisdictional statutes to protect victims of domestic violence after the Violence Against Women Act of 2000. *Colum. 101*, (2004).
15. McLaughlin H and Uggen C. Sexual Harassment, Workplace Authority, and the Paradox of Power. *Am Sociol Rev* 77 (2012): 625-647.
16. Hallways H. Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School. Washington: *Am Ass Univ Women*, (2001).
17. Hyman I and Guruge S. Primary prevention of violence against women. *Women's Health Issues* 10 (2000): 289.
18. ISil ISik and Ozen Kulakac. Verbal sexual harrassment: A hidden problem for Turkish adolescent girls. *Asian J Women's Stud* 21 (2015): 431-449.
19. Johnson PA. Sexual Harassment of Women. Climate, culture, and consequences in academic sciences, engineering, and medicine. Washington: National Academy of Sciences, (2018).
20. Katja, Gillander Gadin. De-normalizing harassment and (threats of) violence in the hospitality workplace. Department of Economics, Geography, Law and Tourism (EJT). (2019).
21. Lederman NG and Lederman JS. The status of preservice science teacher education: A global perspective. *J Sci Teacher Educ* 26 (2015): 1-6.
22. Lenhart. Cyberbullying. *J Pew Res Center*, (2007):1-8.
23. Kaufman GK. Hidden Forms of Victimization in Elementary Students Involved in Bullying. *School Psychol Rev* 36 (2007): 345-360.
24. Muftuler-Bac M. Turkish women's predicament. *Womens Stud Int Forum* 22 (1999): 303-315.
25. Nahar P and Reis R. Contextualizing sexual harassment of adolescent girls in Bangladesh. *Reprod Health Matters* 21 (2013): 78-86.
26. Okoro FI and Obozokhai O. Sexual Harassment: The Experience of Out-of-School Teenagers in Benin City, Nigeria. *Afr J Reprod Health* 9 (2005): 118-127.
27. BBC News. One-third of teenage girls sexually harassed online. (2017).
28. Lowdermilk DL and Perry SE. Maternity and women's health care (12<sup>th</sup> edition). St. Louis, MO, Elsevier Health Science, (2007): 125-144.
29. Sakir. Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces in Bangladesh. *Share-Net Bangladesh, South Asia*, (2019).
30. Sengupta A and Chaudhuri A. Are social networking sites a source of online harassment for teens? Evidence from survey data. *Child Youth Serv Rev* 33 (2011): 284-290.
31. Macleod S and Appleton RE. Neurological disorders presenting mainly in adolescence. *Arch Dis Child* 92 (2007): 170-175.
32. Compendium of court desition. Supreme Court of Bangladesh, *BNWLA v. Government of Bangladesh*, Petition No. 5916 of 2008. Bangladesh, South Asia, (2009).
33. Susan F and Bennett L. Gender and Power Issues of Peer Sexual Harassment Among Teenagers. *J Interpers Violence* 14 (1999): 626-641.
34. Susan F and Gruber JE. Youth at work: Adolescent employment and sexual harassment. *Child Abuse Negl* 33 (2009): 550-559.
35. Tora A. Assessment of sexual violence against female students in Wolaita Sodo University, Southern Ethiopia. *J Interpers Violence* 28 (2013): 2351-2367.
36. World Health Organization. The effects of Sexual Objectification on Women's Mental Health. *Applied Psychology Opus On The Brunch Pro Theme*, (2011).

**How to cite this article:** Rashid, Mamunor and Mondol, Tandra. "Hidden Sexual Harassment on Teenage Girls by Relatives: A Study on a Sub-urban City of Bangladesh." *J Mass Communicat Journalism* 14 (2024): 584.