

EVE TEASING, TEARS OF THE GIRLS: Bangladesh Open University towards Women Empowerment

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ABSTRACT

Many Young girls of Bangladesh are curtailed from education, which is their basic right due to eve teasing. Parents are afraid of their daughter's honor, family and social prestige, so ensure the safety of the daughters; sometimes they take the decision to withdraw their daughters from schools and colleges. Most of the time this type of occurrence like eve teasing happen when girls were in the way to educational institutions. In our country most of the people are devoid of their basic rights and they are considered as the disadvantaged group. The fruits of technology and modernity are the subject of enjoyment of the privileged class of the society.

So the Open University is the bridge of information among the disadvantaged people based on their needs, culture, environment and economic status. Promoting open and distance learning is a crying needs especially in the context of Bangladesh where more than 60% of total population is illiterate and living below poverty line. Their main objective of BOU is to reach the unreached. From the empirical study, it has been found that women are benefited mostly from BOU. They are other disadvantaged groups of women who are economically, socially, geographically and culturally disadvantaged.

The aim of this article is to examine the role that open and distance learning how it plays in providing access to secondary education for girls in Bangladesh giving emphasis on overcoming physical mobility and social security problem of the young girl due to eve teasing.

Keywords: Eve teasing, mobility, despair, ODL, empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh as a developing country going through a progress to many important areas related to human welfare should not be undermined. Development in education and economic sectors are turning towards development of the country in general. Apparently it seems that due to the total development of a country, development of both male and female are going in a same direction and a same level of equality. Still there are lots of open and hidden problems are there, which are the responsible of gender unequal position in the society.

The causes of this unequal position are identified by the society but many are not ready to unmask and uncovered the root cause of the unequal gender status because most of the respective person are carrying the flag of patriarchy, it is there power, pride and mechanism to stay above the women and subjugate the position of women in the society.

We know that fifty percent of the total population in Bangladesh is women. If half of the populations are victim of violence in many forms, patterns and style, how a country

can claim their achievement.

Among these violence some are visible some are invisible, some are named and some are unnamed. Eve Teasing are compose of two words, sometimes not visible and provable, but due to this type of grave violence, young girls of Bangladesh are crying, feeling degrade, confused with their development because in most of the case they have to quite from the educational institution sometimes from job.

Eve teasing has remained a concern since many years, but at present it is strongly identified as a eve teasing, previously it was not named and definition. With the development of the country, people are thinking in a distinctive way, especially the women working in the NGOs and dealing with violence and legal matters brought the issue of eve teasing in a separate entity of violence. Eve teasing has become the burning issue for the country because of its adverse long term effects on the young girls of Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, almost 90% of girls aged 10-18 are victims of public sexual harassment, according to the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association. Most cases of the sexual harassment are unreported and unpunished due to the young girls' fear of further physical and sexual harm, being socially rebuked, or becoming the subject of local "social gossip. According to another report published by Ain-O-shalish Kendra(ASK) on 13 th December 2010, Sexual harassment against girls and women in Bangladesh is turning deadly , 28 women have committed suicide this year and another seven attempted it to escape frequent sexual harassment. According to Ain-O-Shalish Kendra (ASK), a human rights organization of Bangladesh one statistics has revealed that during January-July 2008 period only , about 13,000 women became victims of eve teasing of different forms across the country. This figure counted only reported cases. Many occurrences remain unreported as the majority of the victims of eve teasing prefer to ignore this out of fear or not to be disgraced or part of social gossip.

This situation is becoming alarming that, in general, it can be argued that at present no girls have been spared from being a victim of eve teasing in one form or another. Teasing young girls is not a new phenomenon in everywhere. From electronic media to our nearby street, we are almost used to seeing girls subjected to teasing. Even middle age women while go outside of home, they are more likely to become a victim of indecent verbal comments or physical gestures, anytime, anywhere and by anybody. In the contemporary development context, eve teasing is being recognized as formidable challenges to women's mobility as well as to the overall development of the society. Eve teasing causes different unpleasant situations to women at individual and social level. There can be found numerous instances where due to teasing girls being forced to discontinue their education, working women to quit their job.

The Bangladesh education statistics 2011 report said although the dropout rate among girls was higher than their male counterparts. According to the report 46.73 percent of boy dropout in 2011 while it was 56.43 percent among girls, it said. The enrolment rate in primary level had increased tremendously to 9.83 percent though the dropout rate was still high, 39.80 percent in 2011. (BANBEIS director Ahsan Abdullah told in the launching program.

The report was launched by Bangladesh Bureau of Education Information Statistics, BANBEIS, Tuesday, January 1, 2013, The Daily Star).The results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey(MICS) 2009 indicate that girls were more likely to drop-out more of secondary school irrespective of area. In the first two grade of secondary school, boys seemed to more likely drop-out of school. The last grade of secondary

school(Grade 10) seemed the highest drop-out rate for the girls, it is t 8.6 %(UNICEF 2009) As a result parents feel insecure and early marriages take its role.

The aim of this article is to examine the role that open and distance learning how it plays in providing access to secondary education for girls in Bangladesh giving emphasis on overcoming physical mobility and social security problem of the young girl due to eve teasing. Open schooling provides a flexible and adaptable approach to learning that is compatible with the cultural roles and responsibilities that often restrict and constrain females from continuing secondary education. Education statistics show that there is a significant decline in the number of females enrolled from primary to secondary school (UNESCO, 2000). Primary net enrolment ratio - girls 83% and boys 80%. Here gender gap is 3%. Secondary gross enrolment ratio is boys - 56% and girls - 52%. Here gender gap is 4%. (Sources: Statistical Yearbook 1999). Reasons for this are many and include poverty, early marriage, ill health, pregnancy, and cultural constraints on female education.

The significant impact that education has on girls and their households is well documented. It has been shown that educated mothers are able to contribute more efficiently to enhance the quality of their children's education. (Raj, 1982; Chaudry, 1995). What makes the task of educating girls potentially more difficult is that illiteracy is concentrated in countries with low per capita income. Poverty and illiteracy in general are positively correlated. The poor can ill afford to forego current earnings in favor of education that may possibly lead to higher income later on. In the case of girls from poor households, the choice is even clearer. Given the social construction of gender roles, boys will be given preference over girls in matters of education.

Especially since after marriage, women leave to join their husband's families and, hence are not regarded as being useful to their own families in the long term (Lunnborg, 1994). When resources are limited and opportunity costs are high, the girl is doubly condemned. The second factor that works more directly against education for girl is the dominant social code in some parts of the region that prohibits intermixing of the sexes to restrict violence against women.

Societies often impose physical restrictions on women's mobility. Studies from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan have clearly shown that parents refrain from sending their daughters to school not so much because they fear for their daughter's safety, but because they are worried of upsetting traditional gender roles which give girls little choice in matters of education (Kanwar and Taplin, 2001).

EVE TEASING AND THE SITUATION OF THE WOMEN IN BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh the frequency of eve teasing is growing high, but unfortunately there is no specific law against eve teasing. The prevention of Violence against Women and Children Act 2003 does not address eve teasing. There was provision of penalty against offences like "indecent verbal or physical gestures motivated with an illegal sexual intention"(article 10.2) in the original version of the Prevention of Violence against Women and Children Act of 2000. But the act was amended in 2003 where no one can be charged with sexual abuse of a woman until it is physical. And thus those who bother women in public places such as streets, shopping places and buses can no longer be tried under this law.

Defending the amendment, the education. Government has said the provision had been abused to harass rivals. Plaintiffs could not prove any cases of eve teasing. Eve teasing or non-euphemistically sexual harassment or molestation of women in public places is a

growing concern in Bangladesh and also throughout this sub-continent at present. It is appalling and in some cases an extremely perilous practice. This is something that the women are supposed to either just tolerate or are even accused of bringing it upon themselves. But the fact is that the act of eve teasing is widely condemned and considered a nuisance by the public and is also punishable.

As eve teasing does not involve any physical harassment the law refuses to recognize it as a violent act. What is discerned here is that women becoming victims of eve teasing is not seen seriously even by the police. Yet eve teasing can be as cruel and as violent as physical assaults. In Women and Children repression and Prevention Act-2000 an excellent provision was included in section article 10 that teasing of women like making obscene comments or gestures was an offence covered by it providing for up to seven years of simple imprisonment or meticulous imprisonment for two years. But the act was amended in 2003 where no one can be charged with sexual abuse of a woman until it is physical.

Gender discrimination leading to gender violence is deeply embedded in Bangladeshi social structure; all Bangladeshi social institutions permit, even encourage the demonstration of unequal power relations between the sexes. In other words, violence against women in Bangladesh is culturally accepted, tolerated and 'in certain prescribed forms and given contexts' it is legitimized (Alim, 2011, p. 3). Eve teasing is the result of the unequal status between the sexes.

What is eve-teasing?



Chart: 1

Eve-teasing is normally meant as teasing a girl or woman.

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Eve-teasing is normally meant as teasing a girl or woman. Eve-teasing is normally meant as teasing a girl or woman. "Eve-teasing" refers to public sexual harassment or street harassment to a girl by a boy, when it turns into a serious issue. Eve-teasing is a very common term in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. Eve teasing is not a new problem in Bangladesh. It is a concern since many years.

Almost every young girl is a victim of teasing, especially by the local young teaser. The most of the people may avoid it as a common matter with young generation. Yes, it is. But it is not every time. It can be tolerated until no girl is being attacked. But when it crosses the line, it will raise as a problem to us. It is surely a social problem. These days, many girls have committed suicide only to save themselves from eve-teasing. That

means, eve-teasing in Bangladesh has reached its maximum range. This is against the women rights without any doubt. Those who are involved with this kind of embarrass stuff can be named as a terrorist. The teasers wait in schools, colleges or outside the house gate and as soon as girls walk passed by them they start teasing with ribald comments, smutty jokes, coarse laughter, sly whistles and even indecent exposure.

Eve teasing is a very different form of sexual assault. There are many forms the teaser behaves with the girls in a different manner. It ranges from whistle, catcalls, sexually evocative remarks, brushing in public places to outright groping and sometimes teasing by mobile phone and mobile tracking.

This type of violence has no boundary no definite form, as a hidden way eve teasing is becoming the grave issue for the young girl which throwing to them in the dark world of fear, disrupted education, social stigma which sometimes bound them to commit suicide. Eve teasing is a hidden and most dangerous form of violence which many of the close people of the girls come to know when it is public in the newspaper.

Eve teasing of school girls has many negative outcomes from increased school drop-out rate to many instances of suicide as the only way out. Drop-out rate of adolescent girls are strongly related to the increased prevalence of cultural and social norms that disempowered adolescents girls and make them vulnerable.

One of these causes is child marriage, eve teasing, and sexual harassment. Eve-teasing has no bounds. Every other person on the streets intend to assault women ranging from rich to poor, being literate to being uneducated. It is very sad that, a healthy number of educated boys from reputed families are growing lust towards this practice. According to the report from 'Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association' (BNWLA) the probable eve-teasers on the streets of Bangladesh are teenage boys, traffic police, rickshaw pullers, bus drivers, supervisors or colleagues of the working women.

Statistics suggests 32% of the eve teasers are students, 33% are middle-aged men while 35% are anti-socials.

A common scenario of defining how girls are sexually harassed would be the fact that these teasers wait in schools mostly, in colleges or they just sit outside the houses and as soon as they cite the girls walk past them they start passing vulgar comments, filthy jokes, sly whistles, uncouth laughter, and sometimes reaching the extreme of indecent exposure. The society blames the women or girls stating that they aggravate the teasers by failing to wear modest clothes. On the contrary, those wearing decent dress are not found to be teased as usual and sometimes to an even greater extent.

Who Are the Teasers?

Eve teasers are any person on the street, in front of schools and colleges, in the bus, train, lift, shopping mall anywhere teases girls in any form of vocabulary, gesture, or directly physical assault. Among the eve teasers from rich to poor, being illiterate to educated, being young to middle age men are included. According to the report from 'Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association' (BNWLA) the probable eve-teasers on the streets of Bangladesh are teenage boys, traffic police, rickshaw pullers, bus drivers, supervisors or colleagues of the working women. Statistics suggests 32% of the eve teasers are students, 33% are middle-aged men while 35% are anti-socials.

Eve teasing in Various Forms

- **Eve teasing with girl students:** most of the eve teasing occurs near girl's school. Adolescent's boys wait there sometimes for particular targeted girl sometimes generally. Normally the boys follow the girls from their

house when they started for school. Sometimes they pass bad comments; sometimes they throw a letter with bad proposal, sometimes the teaser force and threat the girls to make a relationship with them, sometimes they propose the girl for marry. If any girl refuses, they are threat to be raped or kidnapped.

As a result the girl has to leave the school and forced to do early marriage just to rescue her from the in secured situation sacrificing her total potential life.

- **Teasing by Mobile Phone:** With the advancement of technology everyone is enjoying the fruits of modernity. From one side it is an advancement using mobile for communication on the other side, misuse of this mobile practice, girls lives are becoming hell. The teaser sends an SMS in an ornamental, romantic and rhetorical language; as a result the adolescent girls are easily trapped with the false appreciation of the teasers. The girls sometimes take it as a love with the boy and become the victim. The boy capitalizes the innocence of the girl by using mobile camera or video recorder, some intimate moments or dialogue. Sometimes use of technology becomes curse to some people.
- **Sexual Abuse through Internet:** In the face book or in chatting young boys and girls are coming closer to each other. Sometimes the boys exploit the girls with some photograph by insert with modern technology, blackmail them , sometimes the boys encourage the girls to watch some restricted side as a result they fall victim of the sexual extreme world. It is a most dangerous form of violence through technology.

Causes Behind the Eve Teasing

There are no specific causes behind eve teasing in Bangladesh. It is a social issue and one of the issues among other forms of violence. Eve teasing is not a recent phenomenon, it was there and it is and it will be but the pattern, definition and intervention are changing. With the advancement of technology the mechanism to tease the girls are changing. The young boys browse many restricted site in internet and learn and adopt many things from there, afterwards out of curiosity they apply the behavior in the form of eve teasing to the young girls of Bangladesh.

Eve teasing mainly occurs due to attitude towards girls, family culture and education and loss of morality. There are laws but eve teasing has no specific law because sometimes it becomes very difficult to judge whether it is eve teasing or not. Eve teasing is very complicated in nature. Sometimes too much restriction and religious fundamentalism not to intermix with the girls make the boys more curious towards the young girls. From experience and common understanding about the causes of eve teasing some causes could be generalize.

- **Misuse of technology**
- **Influence of electronic media and film**
- **Having a curious attraction to opposite sex**
- **Time passing because they have no job to do**
- **Drug addicted due to frustration or bad company**
- **Lack of family education and culture.**
- **Attitude towards girls and no respect to them**
- **Loss of morality and lack of ethical sense.**
- **Lack of social values.**

Impact of Eve Teasing

- **Drop out from the educational institution:** as a result many young girls are depriving from their basic rights to education. And ultimately they are becoming burden to family and society because without economic independence no one could be empowered. They ultimately become parasite in nature.
- **Reduce the mobility:** Due to threat of eve teasing young girls are getting confined within the four walls, devoid of enjoying education, entertainment, outside work. By reducing physical mobility, they are losing their mental mobility also, they are staying within a limited and narrower mental state which ultimately destroy their mental clarity and independent thinking for any development.
- **Early Marriage:** Early marriage destroys the dream and total life of the girls. Due to early pregnancy and too many responsibilities in household work their physical and mental health becomes very weak. Neither can she take care of herself, nor to her children and family. Due to early pregnancy mothers and child mortality is higher in Bangladesh.
- **Psychological Problem:** Many girls become psychologically abnormal out of fear and social security. \Sometimes they do not get support from family due to mistrust. All these causes and frustration leads many girls towards committing suicide.

LAW AND INITIATIVES OF GOVERNMENT

Government of Bangladesh has introduced many strong law to resist violence against women, but due to the proper implementations of the law in due time, violence against women are rising day by day. There are many laws which need genuine and clear evidence of violence against women. In most of the cases, women cannot produce direct evidence due to fear and treat by the oppressors, due to poverty, lack of influential person in their family and mostly due to social prestige not be stigmatized in the society, they do not complain against the oppressor.

Society most often accuse the girls after becoming victim, that she should wear modest dress, should not go outside and should not talk with the male person.

A few of the legal acts are in chronological order:

- **Penal Code, Section 375, 186**
- **The Code of Criminal Procedure, 189The Child Marriage Control Act, 1929**
- **The Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939**
- **The Muslim Marriages and Divorces Registration Act, 1974**
- **The Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance (DMPO) of 1976**
- **The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980**
- **The Family Court Ordinance, 1985**
- **The Legal Aid Provision Act, 2000**
- **The Prevention of Women and Children Repression Act, 2000**
- **The Acid Crime Prevention Act, 2002**
- **The Acid Control Act, 2002**

Interestingly, eve teasing sometimes has nothing to do with any physical harassment and thus the law of our country rejects it to be a violent act because the issue is not provable. . Thus the tragedy lies that the victims of eve teasing are never being taken seriously by the police or the legal authority. Yet facts, report and evidence states that the victims of eve-teasing are brutally affected mentally some of which leads to suicide,

compare to other violence it is the worst form of hidden violence.

As stated above in the Prevention of Women and Children Repression Act, 2000, a remarkable provision was mentioned in article 10 that teasing women through vulgar gestures and comments is offensive and the punishment for such act would be simple imprisonment for seven years or two years of meticulous imprisonment. But then again in 2003, the act was amended stating that no one would be charged of sexual abuse until and unless it is physical.

The women right activists struggled to change the law. Finally the law has change, when harassment of women has increased in Bangladesh tremendously. But one can enforce her right under section 509 of the Penal code where it is clearly stated that if anybody intending to insult the modesty of any women, utters any word, make any sound or gesture or exhibits any object, intending that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object shall be seen, by such women, or intrudes upon the privacy of such women, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine or with both. But in most of the cases , eve teasers are not identified and eve teasing also has no proof, in that cases most of the teasers those who disturb the girls in mall, bus and train no longer fall under the law.

Under the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh, women`s rights are protected under the broad and universal principles of equality and participation.

- These principles are found in the following Articles in the Constitution:
- Article 10 of the Constitution provides that steps shall be taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life.
- Article 19 (1) provides that the State shall endeavor to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens.

Article 27 specifies that all citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law. Moreover, Article 28 (1) provides that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. Article 28 (2) more directly and categorically says that women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the State and of public life.

Theoretically our constitution are completely in favor of equal right and equity between male and female, laws are also there, but unfortunately implementation is very rare. Bangladesh Government is committed to reduce violence and eve teasing from the society. In Bangladesh Prime minister, opposition party leader, Speaker and most important ministers are female, so it is expected that women and girls would be in a safe and secured environment. Government alone cannot stop violence by enforcing law, attitude, mind set and family education is needed to curb the violence and eve teasing from the society.

ROLE OF BANGLADESH OPEN UNIVERSITY

One of the most adverse consequences of eve-teasing is the rise in drop-out rate of girls from formal school. Some parents withdraw their daughters from formal schooling to protect their daughters from not losing their respect and also keep them safe, parents keep their daughters at home, ultimately in most of the cases it turns to child marriage. As a result girls are becoming the victims of violence to be married at childhood. It destroys their social life, childhood life and educational life. When they are becoming mother in a very early age, it has a tremendous negative impact on their physical and mental health and in their intellectual development. Despite of being innocent, the girls of Bangladesh are bearing the punishment of child marriage, suicide, homicide, without

expected the punishment of the teasers.

Distance education overcomes many of the obstacles faced by the girls and women in Bangladesh because, in distance education time, needs and places of the students are regulated according to their convenience. In this article the main concern is to highlight the use of distance education through some of case studies of young girls who left formal schooling due to eve teasing and take admission in the Bangladesh Open University, and to identify some of the common problems and solutions in strengthening secondary education through open and distance learning.

The Open School is part of the Bangladesh Open University (BOU), and it offers secondary education through two formal programs – the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) and the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC).

This paper is concerned with the former. BOU was established on 20th October 1992 by an act of the parliament with the objective of transforming the vast human resources into an educated and trained work force. The University is composed of six academic Schools (faculties), and the Open School accounts for roughly 40% of the student enrollment.

The Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) exam is the first public examination; the minimum entrance requirement is 8 years of schooling. There is a great demand for admission into the SSC course and students are allowed up to five years to complete their course. The following table shows enrolment for the last seven years and the percentage of males and females. Bangladesh open University was set up to serve most who were excluded from the traditional system and those who had dropped out. (Shamsher ali)

The case for formal education is well documented. Education is seen as an indispensable agent to bring about a qualitative change between what we are and what we want to be. In this context the role of distance education is not an option but an unavoidable imperative for many of us (Dhanarajan, 1998). It has been demonstrated categorically in a wide range of studies that an informed and educated mother can cater for the health and nutritional requirements of the child in a much better way than an uneducated mother can. The significant impact that education has on women and their households is well documented. It has been shown that educated mothers are able to contribute more efficiently to enhance the quality of their children's education. (Raj, 1982; Chaudry, 1995).

What makes the task of educating women potentially more difficult is that illiteracy is concentrated in countries with low per capita income. Poverty and illiteracy in general are positively correlated. The poor can ill afford to forego current earnings in favor of education that may possibly lead to higher income later on. In the case of girls from poor households, the choice is even clearer. Given the social construction of gender roles, boys will be given preference over girls in matters of education. Especially since after marriage, women leave to join their husband's families and, hence are not regarded as being useful to their own families in the long term (Lunnborg, 1994).

When resources are limited and opportunity costs are high, the girl is doubly condemned. The second factor that works more directly against education for women is the dominant social code in some parts of the region that prohibits intermixing of the sexes.

Societies often impose physical restrictions on women’s mobility. Studies from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan have clearly shown that parents refrain from sending their daughters to school not so much because they fear for their daughter’s safety, but because they are wary of upsetting traditional gender roles which give girls little choice in matters of education (Kanwar and Taplin, 2001).

The impact of cultural norms on women’s education is clearly visible. The only way to increase literacy levels among women and young girls is to generate the demand for literacy, implying thereby that it is not lack of resources but the absence of demand, which is the constraining factor. We know that attitudes are difficult to change, but changes are needed in those attitudes of men, that are derogatory or patronizing to women. The lives of Bangladeshi women are very complex, and no simple solution is possible to their problems.

It is impractical, in the present context of the Bangladesh scenario to suggest any overnight or radical changes. One must, therefore, find out the ways that are acceptable. Through education, a woman can become self-reliant, more aware of the changes in the surroundings, and have better self-esteem.

The importance of education is aptly reflected by the various forms of discrimination against women based on their social and economic dependence on men in a male-dominated society.

In order to improve their situation, women must have wider access to education, which can be possible through distance education. Distance education overcomes many of the obstacles faced by the girls and women in Bangladesh because, in distance education time, needs and places of the students are regulated according to their convenience.

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Enrolment for the Secondary School Certificate

Table: 1
 Enrolment for the Secondary School Certificate

YEAR	TOTAL NO. STUDENTS	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
2001	16199	8938	55.18	7261	44.82
2002	12855	7082	55.09	5773	44.91
2003	15881	8352	52.59	7529	47.41
2004	16281	8866	54.46	7415	45.54
2005	23854	13413	56.23	10441	43.77
2006	25694	14132	55.00	11562	45.00
2007	31783	17481	55.00	14302	45.00
Total	142547	78264	55.00	64283	45.00

(Source: Examination Division, BOU)

The table above shows the total number of students enrolled in the Secondary School Certificate program over the past seven years. Interestingly, the gender ratio is 55% male and 45% female. This is an encouraging way forward in bridging the gender gap.

RESEARCH AREA

- **What are the causes of the female students' dropout from formal schooling? As an answer to the above question I got to know that, in our country maximum female students cannot continue their study due to poverty eve teasing and social insecurity. There are other reasons too. In our society poor parents always try to educate their son not their daughter and they are just like their burden and early marriage take place.**
- **How many of them are victimize of eve teasing?**
- **After studying I was able to find out almost 67% women from formal schooling are victimize of eve teasing. In Bangladesh eve teasing is not a new phenomenon. From electronic media to the nearby street, school and college premises, in working places, especially in the garments factory, we are used to see that the girls are subjected to teasing.**

Due to eve teasing, parents feel insecure and early marriage get importance and girls being forced to discontinue their education.

- **How they came to know about BOU and how Open and distance learning is helping them?**

Amongst the respondent majority people said that they came to know about BOU from media or their family members who are also get benefit from BOU. I came to know that Open and distance learning is actually helping the women very effectively.

The Open School is part of the Bangladesh Open University (BOU), and it offers secondary education through two formal programs – the Senior Secondary Certificate (SSC) and the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). Distance education helped them to overcome fears and worries about being a student after a break. In distance learning women don't need to move too much because they have few tutorial classes. It helps them to continue their study without any fear and make them educated people:

- **Are female students of BOU are still facing problems? From my the study it was found that female students of BOU are still facing some problems but the problems are not that much major and these can be solved easily. Amongst the respondents' majority said that they face accommodation problem from the point of security and money matter, other said about security problem. Some female students are still facing some security problem inside BOU. There are few male students pass offensive comments, few stuff take the chance to take bribe. So these are some problems that the female students are facing.**
- **What are the necessary solutions in strengthening basic education through open and distance learning in Bangladesh?**
- **Distance learning institution like BOU can minimize the physical mobility so that women don't have to move that much, testimonial giving procedure should be decentralized. Tuition fees could be reduced in a case of female students. Female students who are still facing security problem inside BOU that should be reduced and BOU authority should take necessary steps for that. There should be code of conduct ensuring gender balance and justice within the institutional process**

HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis to prove that, as follows:

- **H₀: Open and Distance Learning is helping towards Women Empowerment through Mobility and Social Security**
- **H₁: Open and Distance Learning is not helping towards Women Empowerment through Mobility and Social Security**

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected using a qualitative and quantitative data. Questionnaires (a combination of open-ended and coded) were distributed to over 30 female students, but some were returned incomplete.

For this paper we have only considered the completed questionnaires. In addition to the questionnaires, we conducted in-depth interviews and case studies with a small range of female learners & the secondary data were collected from articles and publications.

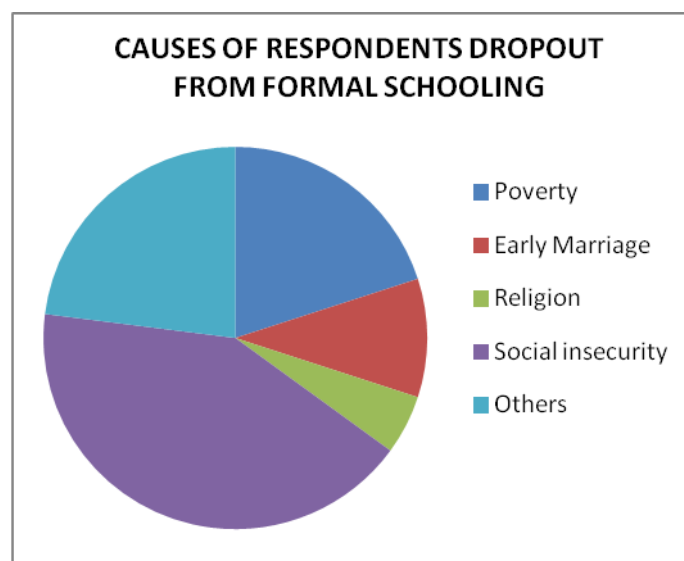
Primary Data Analysis

Table: 2
Respondents According To Age

SIZE	FREQUENCY	%
16-20	37	37%
20-22	33	33%
22-25	12	12%
25-30	10	10%
30 above	08	8%
Total	100	100

There was a wide age range of the respondents; the age varied from 16-30 years above. The majority (37%) were aged 16-20 years.

Reasons for low female enrolment in secondary education are well documented (dropping out of formal schooling and a variety of reasons were given). The most common reasons in our study included poverty 20%; early marriage 10%, religion 5%, social security 42%, and other cause 23% for dropout from formal schooling.

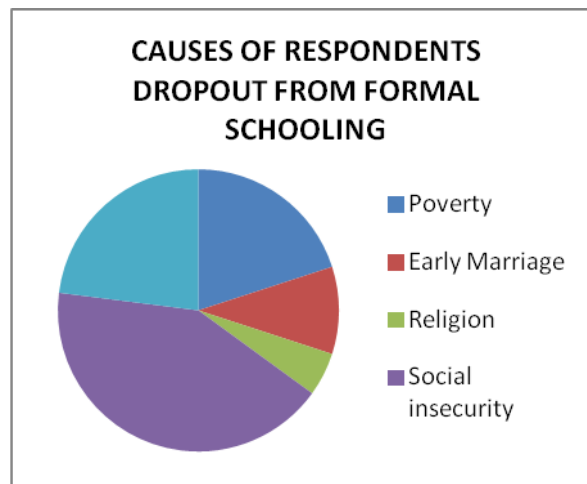


Postulated are the various reasons why women have to drop out of formal schooling. In formal terms the reasons behind the low enrollment of women in secondary education has been highlighted here. It's deciphered that the prime reason for women to drop out is social security followed up by poverty, religion etc. Eve Teasing, Frequent Experience for Women in Public Sphere

Table: 3
Table name

Respondents	%
Eve Teasing is a frequent experience	67
Eve teasing is rare	33
Total	100

67% respondents experienced frequent eve teasing and 33% said that eve teasing is rare



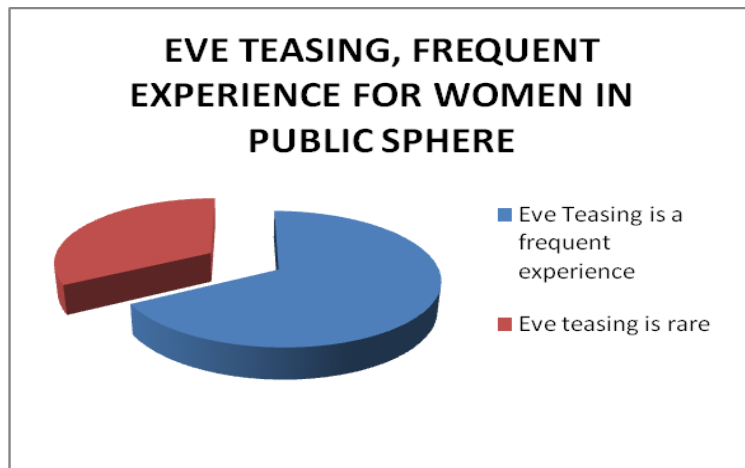
There are the various reasons why women have to drop out of formal schooling. In formal terms the reasons behind the low enrollment of women in secondary education has been highlighted here.

It's deciphered that the prime reason for women to drop out is social security followed up by poverty, religion etc.

Table: 3
Eve Teasing, Frequent Experience for Women in Public Sphere

Respondents	%
Eve Teasing is a frequent experience	67
Eve teasing is rare	33
Total	100

67% respondents experienced frequent eve teasing and 33% said that eve teasing is rare

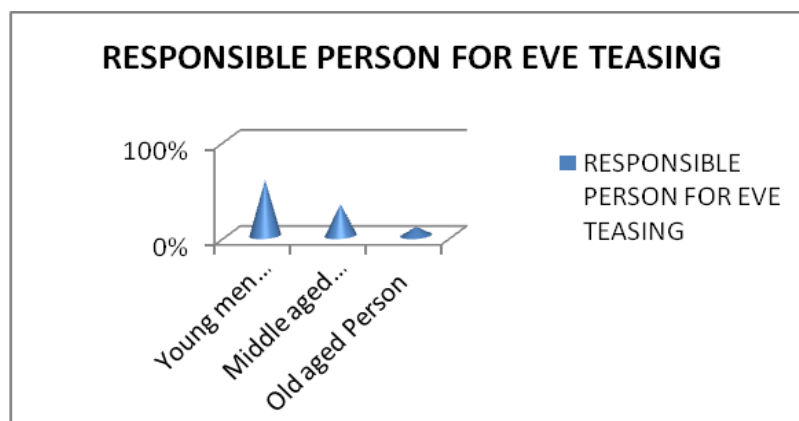


Here we have the respondents reply to the experience of eve teasing. It's crystal clear from the graphical representation that 67% of the respondents do experience it. On the contrary 33% do not. To them it's a rare scenario. The reason depicted behind this could be their belonging to wealthier families where they are brought up in such a fashion that they never have to experience such vile acts.

Table: 4
Responsible Person for Eve Teasing

Causes	%
Young men associated with friends	58
Middle aged person	33
Old aged Person	09
Total	100

The question regarding responsible person for eve teasing sometimes elicited multiple responses. 58% said that young men are responsible for eve teasing, 33% said about middle aged person, 9% said about old aged person.



Now asked the question of the people responsible behind eve teasing the survey shows staggering results. It has even been seen that the old and the wise engage themselves in eve teasing, albeit the percentage being really less (9%). Other than that it has been observed that it is the nimble teenagers who resort to such acts (58%) with middle aged men filling up the pie with a share of 33%.

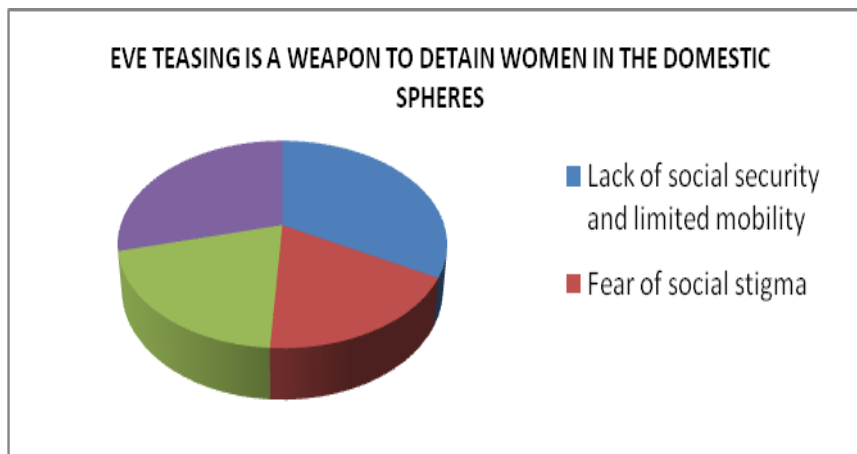
Table: 5
Eve Teasing is a Weapon to Detain Women in the Domestic Spheres

Yes	73%
No	27%
Total	100

Given the respondents that I had 73% actually agreed to the fact that it is a weapon to detain women. This is completely attributable to the orthodox institutional and social structure that we have. 23% said that it is not a weapon. These I believe are the ones with the post modernistic views.

Table: 6
institutional and social structure that they have.

If yes mention the causes	%
Lack of social security and limited mobility	33%
Fear of social stigma	18%
Fear of kidnapping and acid throwing	20%
Panic to face eve teasing	29%



Asked the respondents about the repugnant reason behind this stigma, they replied that the lack of social security and limited mobility is to be blamed for this, with its toll reaching up to 33%.

Fears of social stigma, kidnapping and acid throwing had their share as well. Women also get petrified of the thought of having to face eve teasing again. This accounts for 29% of the respondents.

Table: 7
How Did You Get the Information of BOU

Sources	%
Media	32
Family Members	43
Friends or Neighbors	25
Total	100

Amongst the respondent 32% said that they got the information from media, 43% from family members, and 25% from friends or neighbors.

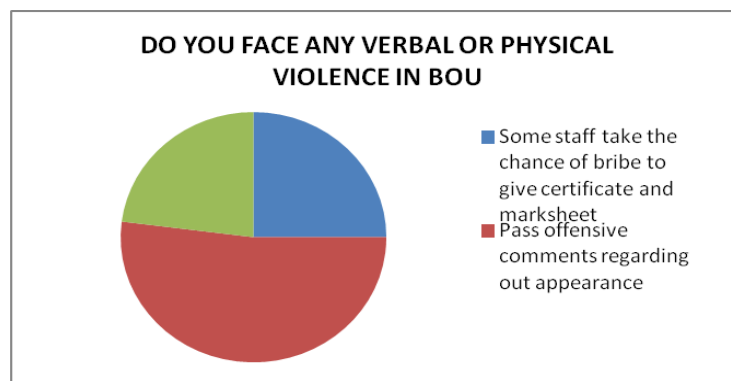
Table: 8
Do You Face Any Verbal or Physical Violence in BOU

Yes	11%
No	89%
Total	100

11% agree that directly or indirectly they faced violence when they visited different place regarding their study in BOU and 89% said that they did not face any unpleasant situation.

Table: 9
Responds that they often get offensive comments from their colleagues

If yes mention the causes	%
Some staff take the chance of bribe to give certificate and mark sheet	25%
Pass offensive comments regarding our appearance	52%
Try to get mobile numbers	23%



Almost more than half of the pie responds that they often get offensive comments from their colleagues, fellow mates etc. due to their appearance.

Although the chances of bribery and asking of mobile phone numbers plays its part as well.

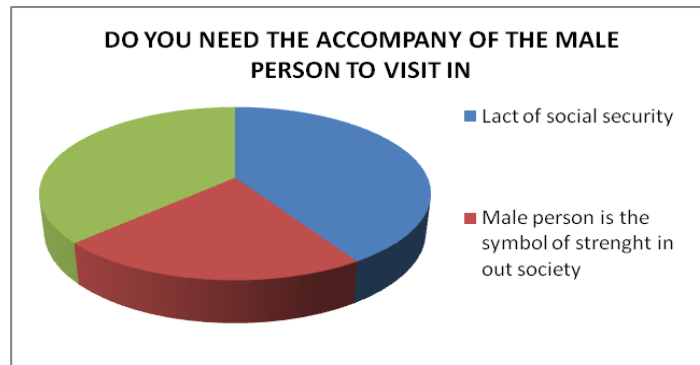
Table: 10
Do You Need the Accompany Of the Male Person To Visit In

Yes	92%
No	8%
Total	100%

Most of the respondents come from other district and villages to BOU. So they need male person to accompany them. 92% respondents said that male person have to accompany them and only 8% told that they do not need.

Table: 11
Why is it needed for them to be accompanied by the opposite sex

If yes mention the causes	%
Lack of social security	41%
Male person is the symbol of strength in our society	22%
We have to come from the remote areas to collect our certificates and mark sheets.	37%



Asked the question of why is it needed for them to be accompanied by the opposite sex the results reveal that lack of social security and the lack of proper knowledge regarding the collection of certificates and mark sheets appears to be the driving force with a share of 41% and 37% respectively.

The symbolic attribute of men which is presumed to be strength fills the pie with its share of 22%.

Table 12
Do You Agree That BOU Need To Minimize Physical Mobility To Ensure Women Security? If No mention the cause

Yes	11%
No	89%
Total	100%

89% respondents agree with the above statement and 11% disagree with the statement.

Cause: The people who said NO it was asked them the reason and majority said that BOU does not require attending classes that much, only twice in a month they need to attend tutorial classes which are optional.

So there is no need to minimize physical mobility as they have already given them the facility.

Table: 13
Problems Face When the Female Students Visit To BOU

Causes	%
Accommodation	49
Security	17
Transport	14
Monetary	22
All	08

Amongst the respondents 49% said that they face accommodation problem from the point of security and money matter, 17% said about security problem, 14% said about transport problem, 8% said about money problem because to stay in other district is costly. 8% respondents said that they face all types of problems.

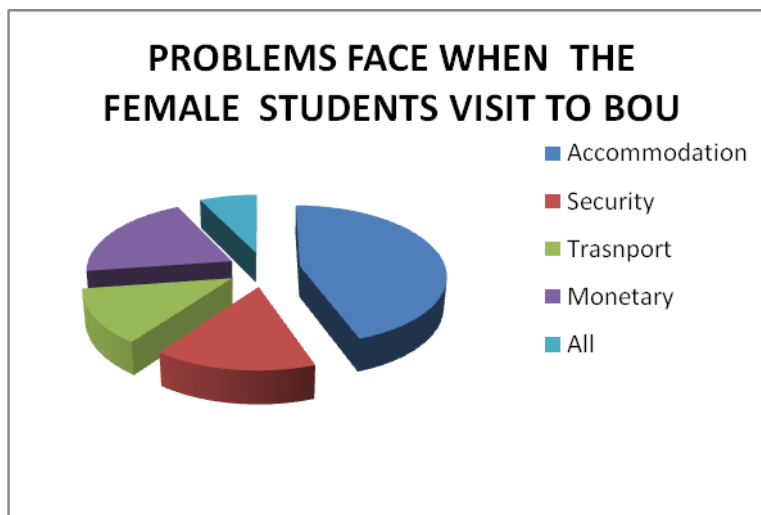


Table: 14
Suggestions for BOU to Minimize Physical Mobility of the Female Students

Causes	%
Tutorial center near to house	11
Information collect from Media or Local center	23
Testimonial Collected from Local center	52
All	14

Secondary Data Analysis

Despair To Hope for Empowerment

A girl named Tahera, she is now 27. She got married when she was only 16 years old. After two years of marriage her husband went to Middle East for job. After going few months he did not keep the relation and communication with Tahera. After five or six years she came to know that her husband died in road accident. Tahera was so unfortunate that she could not give her higher secondary school certificate program

because she became pregnant just after her marriage; her son is now 10 years old.

When her son became five years old she again started to think for her studies. But their brother did not allow her to carry her schooling in the formal institution. Where she lived in old Dhaka, and the young men of that locality used to disturb the girl in a very bad manner. She very often fall victim to eve teasing, which compelled their helpless parents to marry them off at a tender age says 16-year-old Tahera living in a slum at Chankharpul, in the old part of Dhaka. She was a regular victim of "eve teasing" (verbal sexual abuse) on her way to school. One day she was walking into the bus counter and went to have her ticket stamped at the machine, a guy behind her was too close, so she turned around and said 'what happened?' and he backed off, then two minutes later, as she was walking towards bus, she realized he was right behind her again! She went and stood with other women in the bus he just stood there on the side, arms crossed, staring at her!!! This is such a load of bullshit when she got on the bus. She got so scared; heart beating becomes so fast that she felt very unwell and scared.

Therefore her brothers thought that she should stay in the house. She was staying at her parents' house though her father was not alive. At present, five of her brother is doing small business and agricultural work; fortunately they were taking care of Tahera and her son.

One of her brother passed Higher Secondary School Certificate program from Bangladesh Open University, so he encouraged her sister to get admit in the HSC program of Bangladesh Open University.

Tahera got admitted at the BOU and passed HSC exam successfully. After that she got a job in Madrasa (Religious school). Her family had a pressure to work in religious institution because they are dogmatic believer of religion. She is not allowed to work in any public office due religious belief. She wear veil and covered her body with over garment. She is now getting only 1000 taka per month.

At present she is studying at BOU in the Degree program and expecting that after passing the exam she will get better job in Govt. Madrasa. When she was talking she said if there were not the opportunity or access to Bangladesh Open University she could never carry her study with a big family load and a burden of poverty.

Though the money she income is very low, she think herself independent person and empowered in the sense that she is becoming capable of earning her own. She is completely satisfied with the service and quality of Bangladesh Open University. She was so emotional when she was talking about her life history.

She will marry again if she get suitable person who wants to marry her with her son. The degree of BOU gives her strong feeling to decide about her future and enhance her social prestige and value to her family.

Coming Out Of the Mute Life

Parveen is a lively and pleasant girl of 14 years. She was supposed to appear the SSC examination of 2005. She is the eldest among three siblings. Her father is a garment worker and mother is housewife. Mithu, a distant cousin lived nearby. He used to visit their house.

One day she met Mithu on her way to school. He proposed her to marry him, but she refused to marry him. After that Mithu threatened her to kidnap Parveen and to marry her forcefully. Mithu also demanded three lac taka and threat them that otherwise they would kill her. Her helpless family went to another place to get relieve from Mithu.

Her family was shifted to another area for their betterment. She got admitted to the Bangladesh Open University for the safety of her own and family. Unsecured physical mobility compelled her to drop out from formal schooling.

She is now happy with the learning process of BOU. She has been able to overcome the difficult situation in the name of eve teasing. BOU has opened the door of empowerment through education.

Some of the Commonalities That Are Derived From The Cases Show That

- Most of the girls are from the lower middle class.
- Most of them have experience of eve teasing
- Most of them have cultural and social barriers.
- Almost all girls dropped out of schooling because of eve teasing and social security.
- Bangladesh Open University has given them second chance for education.
- They received cooperation from their tutors and course mates.
- They could continue their study without hampering their stereotype role.
- Distance education helped them to overcome fears and worries about being a
- Student after a break.
- It seems difficult to them in collecting testimonial from the main campus of BOU.
- Finally, it enlightened their soul with dignity and self-respect.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COMBAT EVE TEASING FROM SOCIETY

- Education policy should ensure equality and equity between girls and boys.
- Curriculum has a strong role to take initiatives to portray girls and boys equal
- In the textbook, moral education should be included immediately and should have a chapter on the violence against women by giving emphasis to establish eve teasing as a social curse.
- Healthy family atmosphere and progressive family education and the trust between the members of the family are necessary.
- Teachers in the class should be aware of treating both boys and girls equally. They should talk about morality about violence to make them understand the gravity of violence on total humankind.
- Law should be implemented
- Local police and school security should play a strong role
- From government level, an award could be announced for the person who could resist eve teaser.
- Electronic media and printing media should aware about the consequence and negative impact of eve teasing
- Journalist should get training on gender issues, so that they could handle the issues very carefully. Some news in the newspaper due to the week presentation of the newspaper makes the girl vulnerable and the boys as a hero.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BANGLADESH OPEN UNIVERSITY

- The access of audio-visual facilities should be provided in RRCs and in tutorial Centers.
- Tuition fees could be reduced in case of female students.

- Some financial incentives could be given to the female students.
- There is a need for girl's education below secondary level. They can be uplifted through distance education.
- To empower women and bringing them under the umbrella of BOU, it needs more advertisement by distributing booklets.
- Testimonial giving procedure should be decentralized.
- Media of BOU can play a vital role for public awareness campaign to resist eve teasing towards women empowerment through distance education.
- There should be code of conduct ensuring gender balance and justice within the institutional process.
- BOU should have a Counseling cell for empowering women and should go for further Research.

CONCLUSION

Violence against women is a social evil, and must be faced socially. Social action is probably the most effective shield against it. Social mobilization must, therefore, be attained to curb violence. There are several pre-conditions to ensure a social movement. First, society must know the extent and gravity of the problem, and harmful effects should be brought home to them.

People must be made to feel the harm, the loss, the agony, and the cruelty that they or their near and dear ones may suffer from unabated violence. Everyone must know that he himself may be victim one day.

The results from the questionnaires and the case studies show how women were able to overcome social and religious barriers by their own willpower and with emotional support from kin groups. It is very encouraging that through distance education, women are becoming an asset of the family.

In the urban areas and also in some rural areas. The younger, generally are more affluent urban, educated women may not live as the past generation did. With wider contact, the growing necessity for both partners to earn and other contemporary changes in the everyday lives of the people, many urban and some rural women are becoming aware of their need to become independent.

Our national dailies regularly publish reports like "Papia is afraid to go to school "or "Parents are afraid to send their girls to schools. "If we consider those stories, we will realize sadder dimensions to the incidents, such as "Parents security concern forces papia to marry off early. As a result, these girls are forced to go back their traditional household roles. Women are forced to go back to their traditional child bearing roles, the family members remain helpless, and the society has to pay huge.

This paper shows that open schooling can provide an adaptable and flexible approach as an alternative to formal schooling for Bangladeshi women. It is proved that Open and Distance Learning is the best affordable place for the disadvantaged people of Bangladesh. It really reached to the unreached

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Dr Akhter also worked as Social and Gender Development Specialist (National Consultant) for Public Awareness Campaign of Multi-Sectoral Programme on Violence Against Women in Bangladesh (MSP-VAW), Ministry of Women and Children Affairs; as Female Education Specialist for Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP-II), Ministry of Education and as Gender and Development Specialist for Second Primary Education Program (PEDP-II), Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Government of Bangladesh, Secondary Education Sector Development Program (SESDP-11). She has many articles in National and International journals, her most of the writings on gender issues. She always gives emphasis on socio-cultural impact on women against any mal practice.

Dr Akhter presented papers in many International Conference on Gender issues towards women empowerment. In international platform, she always takes the opportunity to raise the voice on behalf of women in Bangladesh. She is also a member of "Women for Women" which is one of the largest research organization of Bangladesh.

Dr Zobaida Akhter did her Ph.D. in "Women and Equality: The Context of Bangladesh" from the University of Dhaka and completed Post-Graduation course on Gender and Body Language from the University of Hannover, Germany. In Ph.D. dissertation she explained how education and culture affects women's lives. She established in her thesis that mistaken education are the real cause behind women disempowerment. She did research based on case study on women empowerment in collaboration with International Research Foundation of Open Learning (Cambridge). She loves to teach, to build awareness and do research. She believes that research is the most essential and important vehicle for any educationist to enrich one's own knowledge and she strongly believes that sharing that knowledge in international platform could enhance the experience of the researcher in a maximum level

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