

# Youth Moral Atrophy: An Exploratory Study to Focus on Reasons and Possible Solutions in Bangladesh

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## Abstract

*In Bangladesh, there is around 30 percent of the total population is youth [1]. Undoubtedly, youths are the valuable assets of a country. But, if they take the wrong route in life, they may turn into severe liabilities too. Khera [2] said, “people can be your biggest asset or your biggest liability”. It may act as a disease that will destroy a nation day by day. One of the common diseases is the moral downfall. Due to this downfall, young people behave rudely with seniors and juniors, tease girls, disrespect their parents and teachers, engage in social crime and their families also suffer seriously due to their activities. This article is based on secondary data and is all about finding out the possible reasons behind these sort of behavior and the possible remedies of those.*

**Keywords** — Youth, Moral, Atrophy, Bangladesh.

## I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The researchers are engaged in university teaching for more than three years. During this period of time, they have experienced that a significant number of their students are with low moral values and customs, lack of mannerism and patience, becoming short-tempered and aggressive day by day. They quarrel with each other with almost no reason; rebuke regardless the presence of seniors even their teachers; smoke publicly; use slang here and there, and so forth.

To be frank, this condition is not only found among their students but also among the young generations surrounding the society. Rape incident is possibly one of the major effects of ethical dissolution in Bangladesh. Hence, the increase in criminal activities shows that moral degeneration has been evolving severely in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the families whose one member becomes involve in any vicious act, they face several consequences such as- fronting criticism, bear disregard, miss relationships, confront legal issues and tolerate community-based assessments. The young people who are involved in these varieties of activities do not continue their study in many cases; rather they often find involved in sinful activities like eve-teasing, taking and trafficking drugs under political identity, political combats, hijacking, threatening, question leaking of different board exams and employment examinations and so on [1]. These

people are making society insecure and uncomfortable for living.

Unfortunately, most of the youths are getting enormously involved in these activities and are creating many impediments to the state just because of moral decadence. However, they could become assets and blessings of the country.

A similar situation is also observed in abroad. During visiting London, England, Huq [3] described that the present generation is living aimless life, they are living like animals. He also added that they are ignorant, irresponsible, rude, stupid, and shameless. While staying in Melbourne, Australia, another teacher expressed his similar feeling about the young generation. Young people are reckless, they don't respect the teachers at all and show attitude in such a way that they have paid money for education. So, they should not be failed by the Institute [4].

This whole situation encouraged the authors to find out the reasons behind this sort of change in the behavior of young people and to find remedies of it.

## II. OBJECTIVE

The prime objectives of this study are to search for the reasons for the degradation of morality in youths and find out the probable solutions to it. Other objectives are-

- To focus on various activities performed by young people being morally fallen down.
- To create public awareness regarding youth ethical impairment.
- To identify possible strategies to resolve the issue.
- To draw the attention of the concerned authority so that they can take nationwide action by imposing rules and regulations.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The study is basically qualitative in nature. So, exploratory research has been performed. To complete the research report, the data have been collected mostly from secondary sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles, books, newspaper, dictionary,

websites, and other online resources have been gone through. An interview has also been taken of a professor who served an overseas university. In some extent, unstructured observation has been performed on some youths too.

#### IV. DEFINITIONS

Before going to the detailed discussion about the chosen topic, the meaning of the terms needs to be clarified. Let's have a look in the following definitions:

##### A. Youth

Merriam-Webster [5] refers that youth can be defined as the early period of existence, growth, or development. To specify the age Smith [6] suggests that most frequently political commentators seem to use the term 'young' to describe those under the age of 25, but at least one has suggested that 'youth' extends as far as the mid-forties.

##### B. Moral

According to Dictionary.com [7], the moral teaching or lesson pertaining to practice enclosed in a myth, story, experience, etc. can be defined as moral. "The standards of good or bad character and behavior" is moral [8]. In these, both cases moral has been defined as a noun. But, in the title of this paper, it has been used as an adjective. Let's look at some definitions of moral as an adjective. The moral is connecting with the benchmark of good or bad behavior, fairness, honesty, etc. that everybody trusts in, rather than to laws [8]. Moreover, Vocabulary.com [9] states that moral is "concerned with principles of right and wrong or conforming to standards of behavior and character based on those principles".

##### C. Atrophy

Atrophy refers to waste away, especially as a result of the degeneration of cells, or become vestigial during evolution [10]. Where Merriam-Webster [11] states it as a wasting away or progressive decline. The synonyms of atrophy are wasting away, decline, wasting, decay, decaying, withering, deterioration, meltdown (informal), shriveling, degeneration, diminution [12].

Therefore, the degradation or devolution of principles or standards reflects in young people life can be treated as youth moral atrophy. For instance-it's found in most of the cases, young people behave roughly with the seniors in public transport while traveling; male young people tease girls on the street by saying bad words; nowadays it's very common that both male and female youth are taking drugs and consuming alcohols; young are mostly engaged in crime we can find it in regular newspaper; even students of all levels are found not to respect their teachers, and so on.

#### V. REASONS FOR YOUTH MORAL ATROPHY

On the basis of observation and review of various literature, the researchers have noted out several reasons responsible for youth moral devolution. They have categorized these issue under four groups. These are discussed below:

##### A. Family

Among all reasons, family plays the most influential role to push the youth in danger. Real love acts as a medicine in a very critical moment sometimes. It has dominant power to rescue a person from uncontrollable situation. But when a child will not get proper love and affection from the family but the continuous negligence and ignorance, he will carry negative energy in their mind. As a result, they channelize that negative energy in committing crimes [13]. Apart from this, nowadays in most of the urban families where both father and mother are employed or busy with their works and cannot provide their children with enough time, day by day the children go out of control. In the long run, they engage with violence [14]. In support of the Withmer's finding Enyinnaya [15] said about a similar thing. She states poor parenting may create worry, hatred, inferiority complex, anger and other negative emotions in a child. Sometimes parents are not aware of the reason for behavior change in their children. The home where family violence has become a daily routine, the children in those families learn the same automatically. As a result, when they become young they behave similarly as they learned from their family [14].

##### B. Third Party

Authors included neighborhood, peers and politics under this group. These three parties also act as a catalyst in moral atrophy of youths. The neighborhood can make teens deal more fiercely. In a neighborhood where teens are pressurized to engage gangs where fighting is the custom, the teens become aggressive and behave violently [14]. "A man is known by the company he keeps" is a well-circulated proverb. But its truth is observed about all corner of the world. A bad company can ruin a life. Youths are easily influenced by their friends. The youth who has a group of immoral friends has a higher chance to be a criminal. Teens prefer committing crimes in the form of groups which makes them exciting and also reduces the chances of getting caught [13]. Politics is for the benefit of general people. But nowadays political parties misuse young people for the sake of political achievement. So, political misuse is one of the root causes of moral deviation among youth [16].

##### C. Youth Themselves

There are some causes youth themselves are responsible for. So, authors incorporated those causes under this heading. The drug is one of the dangerous tools to vanish a person's life. Consuming drug and

alcohol reduce the judgmental ability of a person. Due to this the propensity of crime among teens increases [13]. The intensity to consume drug and alcohol does not emerge overnight. It basically starts from taking those as fun. When a child uses recreational drug it makes him feel good. But in the long run, it creates some unbelievable effects such as- depression, anger, and frustration. This can lead a teen to exhibit aggressive behavior [1]. The set of traits that differentiate a person from another is his personality. The person with strong personality may do positive things whereas the person with weak personality may do some works that are unexpected. Shyness, for instance, may cause a student to feel out of place amongst his peers. Thus this situation influences him to be rebellious or try to get noticed by others by any means. As a result, he engages in gang fights [15]. Human beings are not satisfied with what they have. It is not only found in adults but also in teenagers. They are often attracted by the lifestyle of their rich friends. They need much money to accompany with those friends. To collect money young people adopt wrong ways like- theft. But with the passage of time, they keep falling deeper and deeper into the life of crime [13]. A very common proverb is 'an idle brain is the workshop of the devil'. It's important to utilize a person's leisure time effectively. But due to not having the idea to use the free time properly a teen chooses any destructive work such as watching pornography, visiting restricted websites, online dating over social media, etc. So, lack of application of leisure time is one of the root causes of moral deviation [16]. Bullying gives birth to other crimes. Teens who bully others have the probability to become criminals in the future. On the other hand, the victims of bullying may turn into criminal just to take revenge [13].

#### **D. Others**

The reasons which are not directly connected with family, themselves and third party have been included under others. Media is a powerful tool to influence society. It carries both good and bad things. What children learn through media he wants to apply in their practical life. They are often influenced by their

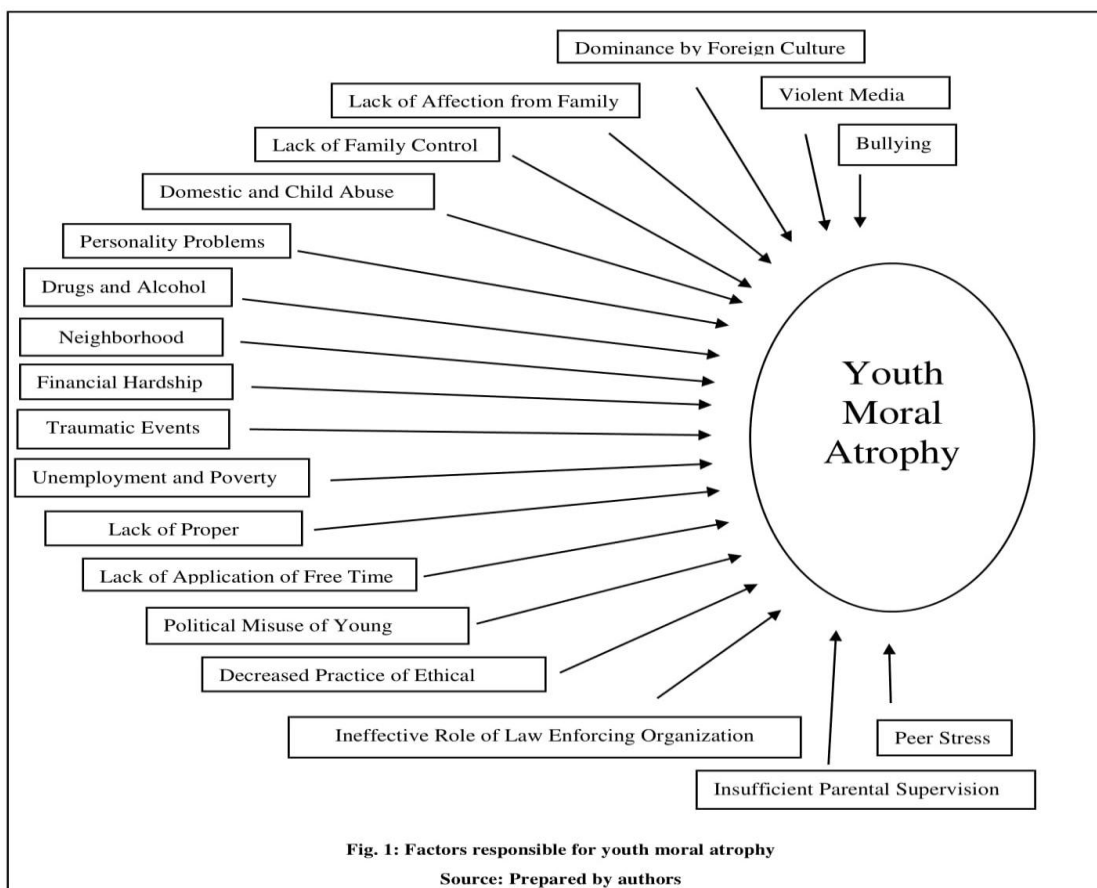
favorite television characters in action films. And this leads them to behave violently in their educational institute [15]. Further, "Research on violent television and films, video games, and music reveals unequivocal evidence that media violence increases the likelihood of aggressive and violent behavior in both immediate and long-term contexts." [17]. Sometimes, few events can fully a person's usual life situation. It may be better or worse. A situation like the death of a very close person affects one's mind extremely. This is called a traumatic event. Due to such a traumatic event, a teen feels a serious attack and gets shocked. Eventually, he may behave with anger and in the long run, the anger turns into violence [14]. Religion provides us with a moral foundation. It sets in our mind the seed of judgment what is right and wrong. We can know this through moral instruction. But there is a huge gap in linking religion and modern education [18]. Due to this gap young generations act many unaccepted works. Some other root causes of moral deviation are as below:

- Lack of proper education
- Unemployment and poverty
- Lack of family control
- Ineffective role of law enforcing organization
- Impact of foreign culture, etc.

Through the deep study and personal observations, the authors have found these above factors are more or less liable for youth moral ebb.

#### **VI. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

On the basis of the above discussion, with some significant reasons a conceptual framework can be drawn. Here, the reasons found will act as independent variables that affect the dependent variable- Youth Moral Atrophy. It is as follows:



## VII. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO YOUTH MORAL ATROPHY

If the reasons have been identified, then possible solutions will be easier to find. A common proverb is “where there is a problem, there is a solution. The researchers have recommended the role of four parties as solutions to the problem created by young people. The measures that can be adapted to reduce youth molar atrophy are:

### A. The Role of Parents or Guardians

Parents play a crucial role in influencing their child behavior. Quality time with love and affection from parents helps children restrain from bad doing. Parents must ensure good communication and violent-free atmosphere at home, where the child is brought up and feel secure to express their opinion and feelings [15]. Parents should increase moral values among the kids from the very beginning of their life by enhancing family bondage and strengthening interpersonal communication [16]. They should also keep close monitoring regarding the folks having close intimacy with their children. Parents should also modify their language, act, and behavior in front of

their children because children are like sponges, they sculpt and incorporate everything they see and do into their everyday lives. Parents may also seek professional advice about which type of video games and TV programs their kids should be shown [15]. Moreover, extended family instead of a nuclear family where both of the parents are working parents also play a vital role in shaping the moral and religious values and customs of children. Parents can also carry their children to holy places, inspire them to maintain religious norms such as fasting, praying, chanting, etc.

### B. The Role of Educational Institution

The prime apprehension of education is to evolve the good, the true and the divine in man so as to establish a moral life in the world. The main function of education is to enrich the character and act a powerful tool to cultivate values in an individual. In all sort of educational institutions ranging from primary level to tertiary level, there should have a system for regular counseling on anger-management, battle solving, character development and a horde of other issues that will aid to allot with the psychological issues associated with institutional violence [15]. According to GKToday [19], for

inculcating values many educationists have suggested different ideas such as:

- Provision of value-based curriculum
- Value-based foundation courses
- Publication of literature based on values
- The necessity to develop a code of conduct for teachers and students
- Inculcation of philosophical view towards life among teachers and students.

Several academics have little power to redesign their syllabus. They can include the negative consequences of drug consumption and drug use prevention information in the formal education textbook starting from class four to class ten [16].

### C. The Role of Government

In every country, the government is the most influential body to enforce law and regulations for any sector. Of course, to reduce the moral decadence among the young generation government can take a substantial part. Govt. should stop the supply and availability of drugs. It should also take the initiative to give exemplary punishment to the drugs marketers [16]. Smoking in public place is a punishable offense. But with the passage of time, everybody is going to forget it. Govt. should take necessary action to implement the rule again. If any young people do the same and other crime, then quick and consistent punishment can reduce the occurrence [20]. The change most of the educational institutes can't make can easily be done by the govt. It can include life skill education such as stress management, coping with emotions, self-awareness building, empathy, etc. in the national curriculum [16]. After that, the govt. can facilitate the imams to take part in a training program with respect to youth awareness.

### D. The Role of NGOs and Religious Institutions

Non-Government Organizations, the larger community, working in Bangladesh such as- BRAC, ASA, TMSS, etc. can affect society in a positive manner. They have a great contribution to circulating important messages all over the country in an interesting and effective way. Various public awareness programs are arranged by NGOs are through drama, songs, play a role, canvassing, etc. In order to eliminate the youth moral decadence NGOs can reach to the youth providing them with information regarding negative consequences of drug misuse [15]. They can also promote the moral values among each and every member of a family [16]. Apart from that, religious organizations can also spread a spiritual message. From the spiritual perspective, they can create awareness in youths about the punishment and negative effect of any kind of

crime. Trained imams may create aware the young people not to join any terrorist organization, do any violence, etc. [21].

These very bodies may act as the catalyst to reduce youth moral degeneration.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

The people of Bangladesh love the country very much. So, all sorts of the wellbeing of the country are highly desirable. It is true that the future of the nation mostly depends on its current generation – the young generation. There are around sixty million youths in our country [16]. However, if most of the young people of the country are immoral, then the nation may submerge with many social issues. To overcome these issues, all stakeholders have lots of responsibilities. Families should continuously monitor their young members as to where they go, whom they meet (the peer group) etc. Educational and other social institution should teach the young generation with ethical behavior in order to clarify them about what is right and what is wrong. The religious institutions should also come forward to promote spiritual education focusing on the difference between a blessing and sinful actions with their consequences. The Government should also come forward and impose strict rules and regulations with a clear message of punishment in case of any law breaking activities. The NGOs should also promote awareness programs through several interesting and fascinating way targeting the young people of the country. Last but not the least, it is expected that each and every person of the country should aware about the recent moral destruction of the young generation and motivate to take steps against the young person if any young person is being engaged in any subversive activities. If all concern parties could take a step in a holistic approach against the unexpected behavior of young generation then hopefully it is possible to save the young generation in particular and the country as a whole in general.

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