

# WOMEN AND CHILD VICTIMIZATION IN CONTEMPORARY BANGLADESH: A CRITICAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

This article is an attempt to describe the types of women and child victimization and to find out the changing trends and patterns for analyzing the root causes of violence in contemporary Bangladesh. To conduct the study, we have reviewed relevant articles, books, statistics, reports, and related literature situated within the framework of our subject. In order to analyze the data, we employed qualitative methods and thematic analysis techniques and we applied a critical feminists perspective. The study finds that Rape, murder, sexual harassment, dowry-related violence, acid violence, domestic violence, and trafficking are the common categories of women and child victimization. Further, the trend analysis reveals that reported victimization was reached its peaks in 2014 and 2015 while, the number of reported cases dramatically dropped in the last year. Notably, we argued marginality and the intersectional effect on gender, sexuality, ethnicity, minority status, discrimination, disability, and class are the main cause of the victimization of women and children. Finally, we conclude poor and marginal women are more likely to be victims of violent crime.

**Keywords:** Women, Child, Victimization, Rape, Violence, Marginality, Feminist.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Women and child victimization appear the most challenging issue in the last decade which is closely linked to the patterns, trends, nature of emerging issues in the 21st century (Faruk and Khatun, 2008; Polk, 1999). The feminist focus on women as a victimized class has obscured the diversity among women in various levels of society. Feminist thinkers and lawyers have attempted to transform the societal understanding and to reshape legal definitions of several interrelated violence against women as women abuse, rape sexual harassment. In each of these arenas, feminist redefinition of violence has been premised on a theoretical framework of gender subordination in which women are primarily viewed as victims. In contrast, as feminist work on these issues has developed, tension within feminism and conflicts among feminists have emerged concerning women's victimization (Schneider, 1993). Violence against a person, particularly violence against women and children, is the world's worst type of violations of human rights that from the perspective of women, like other countries in South Asia, violence against women has become a very common phenomenon in Bangladesh. Victimization of women and children is now a major social concern in contemporary Bangladeshi society.

Despite the existing legal initiatives of the country, improvement of the national economy, and other developmental indicators, several police and newspaper reports, and hospital statistics indicated the widespread increase in violence against women and children in Bangladesh. This issue has become a national problem and it must be strictly handled immediately through concerted efforts (The Independent, 2017). Moreover, women and children become susceptible to different forms of violence and repression like sexual harassment, sexual assault including rape, murder, and grievous harm, domestic violence, trafficking, dowry-related violence, kidnapping and abduction, acid throwing, , illegal fatwa, illegal arbitration, violence against minorities, wage discrimination and social discrimination in Bangladesh (The Daily Star, 2013). Particularly, violence and abuse perpetrated against women and children have various types including domestic violence, murder, rape, acid-throwing, dowry-related violence, fatwa-instigated violence and sexual harassment, trafficking, custodial violence, and the violence in the workplace. At the same time, women and children are subjected to many forms of marginalization as exploitation, deprivation, and

oppression, and repression and these are all contributors to violation of the fundamental rights in recent Bangladesh.

Statistics reveal that the highest number of women and child repression being 73% of total crime across the country. Women and child repression include killing, abuse, oppression, rape, sexual harassment, molest, incest, etc. Rape, a particular type of sexual crime committed 24 percent of total violent crime in 2007 in Bangladesh (Faruk and Khatun, 2008). In Bangladesh, rape is an alarming issue given the context of increased incidence of rape victimization (Chowdhury, 2007). Consequently, the victims of rape, torture, acid attack and sexually abuse bear the brunt of the atrocities and trauma throughout their lives. Noteworthy, the actual number of rape incidents in our country turned dark figure of crime and much higher than the newspaper reports or police records also, incidents are not reported to police for fear of reprisals (The Independent, 2018). According to statistics of Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) and Ain O Salish Kendra, child-killing incidents have risen by 574 which is 28 percent up than the previous year. However, the number of rape incidents has increased all over the country, a total of 892 incidents of rape happened in Bangladesh in the last eight months since January, according to Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA). Apparently, humanity and the rule of law are extremely devastated throughout the country. While victimization has been considered both domestic and international attention in the last decade and victimization of women and children rising as a historical and contemporary social epidemic, therefore, it's critical to understand the victimization from a critical feminist point of view.

This paper contains the analysis of women and children's victimization and the causality of different types of violence based on the theoretical explanation. This article has been designed into three major parts. The first section discusses the research gaps, importance, objectives, methodology and structure of the article. The second section explores victimization nature and types, trend analysis and theoretical argument described in different themes. Finally, it concludes with a summary that contributes to a critical understanding of victimization.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the paper is to show the types of women and child victimization by identifying the changing trends and patterns in contemporary Bangladesh. The other additional objectives were-

1. To find out the nature and types of women and child victimization.
2. To identify the causes of women and child repression in the context of Bangladesh.
3. To know the changing patterns and trends of violence in contemporary Bangladesh.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

This article has been developed based on the latest data collected from different secondary sources. This paper is developed through the document review using the content analysis methods mostly following the qualitative approach. The data from different secondary sources like relevant books, journal articles, crime statistics (Bangladesh police and NGOs), research reports, newspaper articles, web contents were applied to analyze rigorously to draw the findings. For conducting content analysis, data has been collected by studying five-year issues of two daily newspapers of the country, two famous and the most circulated English newspaper the Daily Star and the Independent has been studied from January 2015 and October 2020. In addition, we used crime statistics for the last five years (2015-2020) from the top four NGO's in Bangladesh including Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF), Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA), and Odhikar as they work on violence against women and child-related issues. Conversely, to show the changing trends and patterns of women and child victimization, data has been collected from Bangladesh police crime statistics from 2011 to 2019. Basically, we focused on those materials that reflected the context of women and child repression in Bangladesh. The process of data analysis started with the coding of the qualitative data. We have identified the key codes from the secondary sources and then constructed the sub-themes that outlined women and child repression nationally. Finally, the themes have been analyzed elaborately to fulfill the research objectives.

#### **4. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

Women and child repression is the most widespread and pervasive problem and violations of human rights not only in Bangladesh but also throughout the world. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, and economic abuse, and it cuts through age, race, culture, wealth, and geographical boundaries. Thus Women and child victimization reflect and determine gendered social structures that extend the economic, social, and cultural marginalization of women in contemporary Bangladesh (Khan et al., 2017). Furthermore, violence against women (VAW) has been a serious social, cultural, and economic problem in Bangladesh, where nearly two out of three women have experienced gender-based violence during their lifetime (SDG Fund, 2017). Side by side, we have discussed the nature, trend, patterns of women, and child victimization from the critical feminist lens also the existing laws and policies as limitations.

##### **Types of Women and Child Victimization**

Women and child repression include any kind of incest sexual harassment, battering, kidnapping, abuse of the elderly, rape, trafficking, etc. (Evans and Wood, 1989). Watts and Zimmerman (2002) identified the other form of harmful practices – such as child marriage, honor killings, acid burning, dowry-related violence, and widow inheritance and cleansing as violence against women. Forced prostitution, trafficking for sex and sex tourism appear to be growing problems (Radford and Tsutsumi, 2004). However, in Bangladesh, different types of abuse committed toward women and children ranging from eve-teasing to murder. Women and children are vulnerable to crime and violence of varied nature. Besides, social class is a factor especially low-income couple immune to spouse abuse (Cherlin, 2004). The lower or poor social status of the parents has the higher the risk or probability of oppression on any child. A female child remains at risk and women always are susceptible to outsider attacks from those who are physically stronger than them. Scholars have reported that crime and violent occurrences to women and children for their vulnerability.

##### **Rape**

Rape prevails in an alarming situation in Bangladesh. It is the most common and vicious form of violence in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, police statistics on cases registered on violence against women (VAW) show that rape is the second most commonly reported form of violence

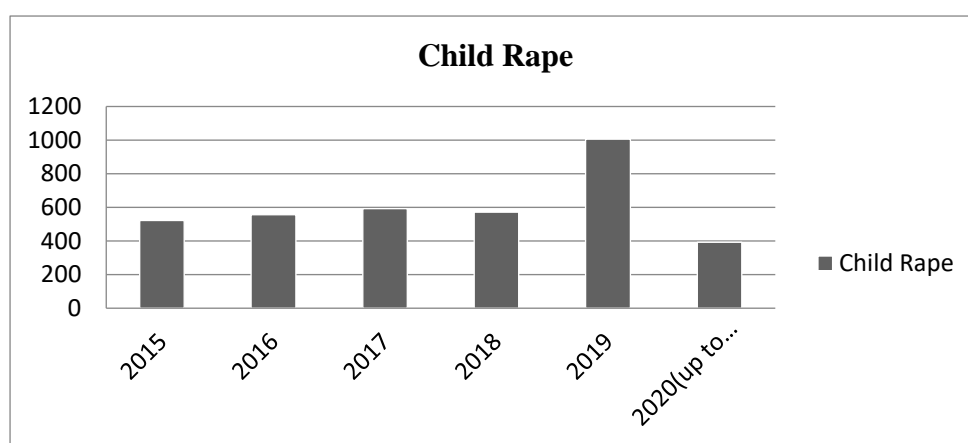
against women, following dowry- related harassment (Basu, 2012). Rape is the common form of repression as stated and most of the victim was young according to FIR 1345 (66%) of total victims are below 25 years of age. Strijdom and Schurink, (1977) pointed out that only 45% of rape cases were reported to the police. Out of the total of 2045 victims, 39% are below 15 years of age indicates an extremely vulnerable position of girl children in Bangladesh (Khan, 2014).

Rape incidents committed against women and children in 2015 were gang rape 272, killed after being raped 65, and 5 committed suicides after being raped. In 2016, gang rape 206, killed after being raped 29, and 3 were committed suicide after being raped and in 2017 up to February Gang Rape 25, Killed after being raped 3, and 1 Committed suicide after being raped. On the other hand, Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) reported, a total of 818 women were raped across the country in 2017. The number of reported rape incidents was 635 in 2018 and 1080 in 2019 across the country (Odhikar, 2020). According to the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) based on news of 10 daily newspapers between January and August, 892 incidents of rape were committed between January and August in 2020. Besides, there were 192 incidents of rape attempts, 41 died due to injuries after the rape, and nine died by suicide after being raped, the Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association reported. However, in the first four months of 2019, religious and ethnic minorities suffered 250 incidents of violence including rape and murder (The Daily Star, 2020). Research conducted by Amir (1971), Chappell and Singer (1977) their findings on research showed the majority of rape victims were unknown to their offender, (68%) were strangers to each other. But in Bangladesh's perspectives, More than two-thirds (64.60%) of the assailants were known to victims. A total of 94 (29.0%) cases were gang rape participating by two or more assailants. Women are often raped by their close relatives such as in-laws, and most of the cases were unreported to the police for fear of family honor and the future of the victim. The majority (85.80%) of the alleged rape cases in Bangladesh were reported for medical examination after 24 hours (Ali et al., 2015).

The atrocity of child rape has jolted the human mind as a large number of small children have been raped in recent times. International studies estimate that 25% of children around the world experience sexual and physical abuse (Cohen and Mannarino, 1996). In the United States, Rates of sexual abuse are higher than international estimates of abuse. Several studies in north America reveal that 30–40% of female children and 13% of male children experience

sexual abuse (Corcoran and Pillai, 2008). Several human rights organizations have expressed concerns over rising incidents of child rape in just the last years, as 1,005 children were raped in the country last year. On average, in each month of 2019, about 84 children were victims of rape. The incidents almost doubled compared to 2018. Between 2015 and 2019, at least 3,136 children were raped, 52 incidents every month on average but only 164 of the cases had been disposed of, the BSAF said, observing that the impunity enjoyed by perpetrators was the reason behind the frequent incidents of rape.

**Figure 1: Child Rape Incidents in Bangladesh (2016-2020)**



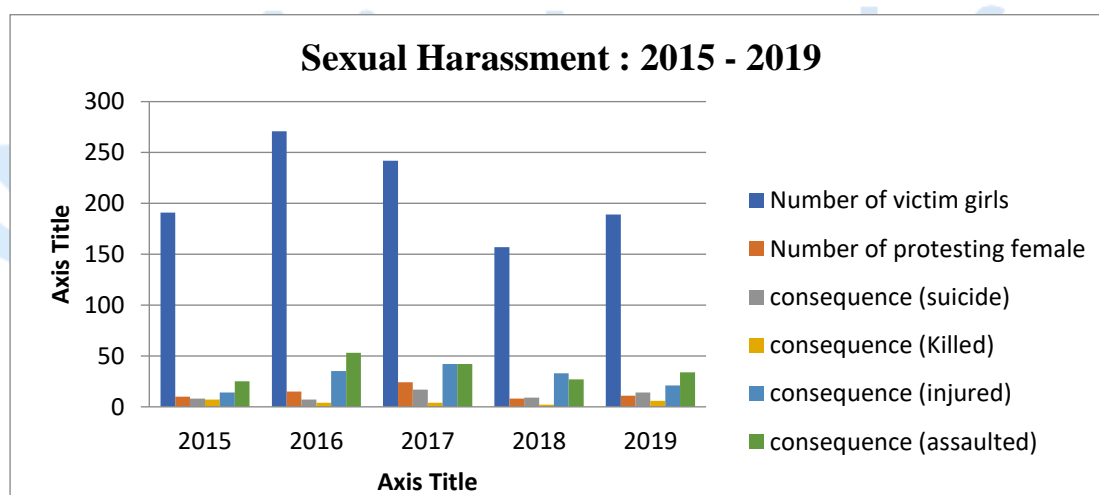
Source: Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF)

The chart depicts that, child rape incidents increasing day by day but in 2019 it was the highest rate which crossed the record of last four years. According to the child rights organization, 446 children were raped and 265 were murdered in 2016 (The Daily Star, 2018). However, about 593 children have been murdered in this year 2017, which is up by 33 percent from the previous year; the report also showed that child abuse and child rights violation rose by 7.13 percent in 2017 compared to the previous year. In 2018, the number was 571 which has been doubled to 1005 in 2019 and 392 in 2020 (up to September) the rate of child rape has crossed its entire limit. Seventy-five of the victims were raped by their teachers and 141 by their neighbors According to BSAF. Overall, 1,383 of sexual assault cases were recorded last year – a 70.32 percent increase compared to the previous year (BSAF, 2020).

## Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment against women and girls is not confined to any particular political or economic system, but it prevails in every society in the world. Sexual harassment in the workplace, roadside, and educational institution is a growing concern for women and girls in Bangladesh. Males are abusing their authority to get sexual flirt from their female co-workers, classmates or subordinates. Girls who refuse to give in to such unwanted sexual advances, risk of anything from demotion to lose her life. World Health Organization (2013) reported that the proportion of women suffering sexual violence by non-partners after the age of 15 varies from less than 1 percent in Ethiopia and Bangladesh to between 10 and 12 percent in Peru, Samoa and the United Republic of Tanzania. In Switzerland, 22.3 percent of women in their lifetime experience sexual violence by non-partners.

**Figure 2: Sexual harassment in Bangladesh (2015-2019)**



Source: Odhikar Statistics.

From the chart, we can see that the sexual harassment rate increased from the previous years. It was a more acute problem in 2016 that reported a total of 271 incidents as a result, where 7 were committed suicide, 4 were killed, 35 were injured and 53 were assaulted. In 2017, 242 women were harassed and among them, 4 were committed suicide. Besides, in 2018 157 girls were the victim and in 2019 the numbers of the victim were 189. Comparatively, in the USA and England, assumed that women at least 50% experience sexual harassment in their workplace. A survey conducted on 607 women, figure out 45% of them experienced sexual harassment (Glass, 1998). In addition, cultural variations in gender roles and permitted gender



behaviors may play an important role in cases of sexual harassment by men from one culture on women from a different culture (Farries et al., 2008). Moreover, the cultural sanction of violence also may encourage sexual violence in many cultures. For example, higher rate of rape were observed by La Vine in the Gusaii or Kisii tribe in Kenya. In different culture as in Ghana, female infanticide and through sexual practices (Trokosi) the girl child is marginalized, because of intersection of her gender, age, race and culture which reminds the situation of restavek children of Haiti where they were sexually abused regularly (Banarjee and Islam, 2019). Relevant to the examples, we all know that when a woman is sexually harassed in Bangladesh, the society blames her in most cases. As a result, the country has experienced a lot of suicide cases of victims after being sexually victimized in recent years.

### **Murder**

Widespread violence, repression and brutal attacks against women and children have become a common scenario in Bangladesh. Newspapers are loaded up with reports of physical and mental torture, sexual harassment, rape, assault, dowry-related violence, trafficking, coerced suicide, and murder. Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) did a study on child and study reveals a total of 122 child murders in 2020 among them 13 have been killed after being kidnapped, 10 have been killed by their own parents, 12 have been raped and then killed, and four have been beaten to death. Meanwhile, the report showed that child murder increased by 7.18 percent last year. Every month, on average, at least 37 children were murdered. Most of the cases were results of trifling matters, family violence, conjugal feud, dowry, extramarital affairs, enmity and revenge. Thirty-six of the victims were killed by their parents while 47 were murdered after rape. The highest number of child murder (448) in five years was reported last year. The court delivered verdicts in 24 child murder cases in 2019. Causes of murder (women and child) behind these incidents including land dispute, rape and failed rape, dowry, family conflict, political conflict dowry, domestic violence, vulnerability and lower socio-economic status.

Upwards of 28 children are killed and 49 raped in the country consistently, as indicated by a report by Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF). The nature of child-killing was very pathetic and brutal, a total of 292 children were killed between January-December 2015, complied by BSAF statistics. But in 2016, the highest recorded child murder incidents were

465. The forum noted that in annual report of “State of child rights in Bangladesh – 2017”, 300 and thirty-nine children were killed in 2017, up by 28 percent from the previous year. According to Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), a total of 574 children were killed in the country from January till November 2017. Among them, 135 were aged between seven and 12 years and 137 were aged six or below (The Daily Star, 2018). On the contrary, According to the Uniform Crime Reports of 2009, victims of murders were infants and number was 193. Another 298 homicide victims were one- to four-year-old age, while an additional 72 criminal homicide victims were between the ages of five and eight (FBI, 2010). Also, 15,241 homicides occurred throughout the nation in 2009 recorded by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2010a). They researched the basis of information available on 7,650 of these cases. Tabulations based on those files indicate that 78% of the victims knew their assailants, while 22% were murdered by strangers. Further, 18% of the detailed homicides were committed by spouses, boyfriends. Parents, offspring, siblings, and other family members were implicated in 14% of these deadly confrontations. Friends, acquaintances, co-workers, and employees accounted for the remaining 46% of victims (Doerner and Lab, 2012).

### **Acid Violence**

Acid throwing is another prevalent form of violence against women and girls that may well be a phenomenon unique to third world country like Bangladesh. With 9% of the total burn injuries constitute of acid burns, the highest worldwide incidence of acid violence recorded in Bangladesh. Acid violence involves throwing acid at a person's body or face to permanently disfigure and scar the person for life. Which is strictly prohibited by our state law mentioned in the penal code, 1860 in section (319-338). A study reveals that of acid attacks committed for dowry 5%, family related dispute 6%, land/property/money dispute 39% marital dispute 9%, refusal/rejection of love/marriage/sex 17%, unknown reason 13%, and others 11%. Acid throwing may occur for underlying causes-refusal to marriage, refusal of love, demand for dowry, or when there is a political clash or dispute (Khan et al., 2015).

**Table 1: Incidents of Acid Violence (2015-2019)**

Year	No. of Women	No. of Girl Child (below 18)

2015	29	7
2016	26	5
2017	33	9
2018	11	6
2019	15	6

Source: Odhikar (2020).

The table depicts those acid violence incidents in 2015 against women were 29 and girls were 7. In these cases, one-third of the victim was under the age of 18 (Odhikar, 2012). In 2016, numbers of the victim were 31, the number of victims consecutively increased in 2017, while, the number decreased in the next two years. In 2019, the number of victims was adult women were 15 and girls were 6. ASF statistics have shown that forty-six percent of perpetrators are someone close to the victim. Twenty-six percent of them are husbands and twenty percent are other family members. Therefore, many victims of acid violence are unable to return to their families; however, some are compelled to regardless due to a lack of an income source (Wikipedia, 2020).

### **Dowry**

In Bangladeshi society, the practices of dowry demand (Joutuk), has a gradual tradition but emerged as a major social problem in recent years. Generally, dowry means the property or promising money that the bride's family gives to the groom upon marriage. Dowry has been given an extended meaning in Bangladeshi law. Whatever is showed whether previously or after marriage under demand, impulse, or pressure as thought for the marriage can be said to be dowry. Dowry practice mainly occurred in rural areas and sometimes marriage is performed by dowry agreements (Huda, 2006). If the bride's father or family fails to give the total money her husband and in-laws verbally and physically abuse her. In many cases the abuse becomes severe, consequently, acid throwing on her face, burnt, beating, punching, or even murdered.

**Table 2: Dowry related violence against married women (2015-2019)**

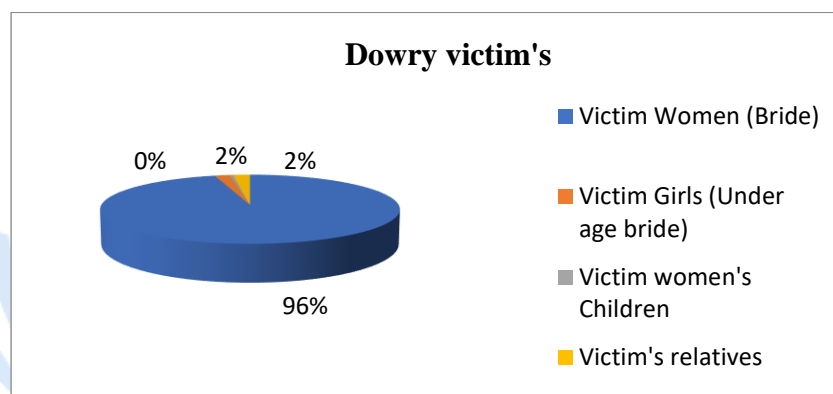
Years	Killed	Physical Abuse	Suicide	Total
2015	119	77	6	202

2016	107	94	5	206
2017	118	127	11	256
2018	71	69	2	142
2019	48	55	0	103

Source: Odhikar, (2020).

According to Odhikar statistics (2020), the incidence of dowry-related violence occurred in a total of 202 in 2015, 206 in 2016, the highest number 256 in 2017, 152 in 2018, and 103 in 2019. The victims were killed, abused, burnt, and alleged suicide.

**Figure 2: Dowry victims (2015-2019)**



From the pie chart, we can see the total numbers of bride's victim were 96%, under-aged bride were 2% and victim's relative were 2% for the last 5 years. Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) survey report in 2015 found that 50% of women respondents said they are physically tortured and 27% are sexually abused for dowry-related cases (BBS, 2016).

### Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a widespread phenomenon, prevailing throughout the world and it's a major social problem in Bangladesh. Women's social and economic circumstances may influence their risk of domestic violence in complex and contradictory ways in the context of Bangladesh. A survey by the World Health Organization of 24,000 women in 10 countries found that the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence by a partner range from 15% in urban Japan to 71% in rural Ethiopia, with most areas being in the 30-60% range. However, a survey on 1,200 women in Bangladesh revealed that 67% had ever experienced domestic

violence, and 35% had done so in the past year. Participants expected that women with more education and income were less vulnerable to domestic violence, according to the qualitative findings of this study (Bates et al., 2004). According to BBS (2015), Violence Against Women Survey shows the lifetime and 12 months prevalence of physical and sexual violence by the husband. It shows that the prevalence of lifetime physical violence is higher in rural areas (51.8%) than that in urban areas (42.2%). Further, the lifetime and 12 months prevalence of sexual violence by husband reveals that the prevalence of lifetime sexual violence is higher in a rural area (28.4%) than the urban area (23.5%). It is also true for the previous 12 months for ever-married women. For the last 12 months of physical and sexual violence, women aged 20-24 were tortured highest by their husbands. It stands at 28.1%, 18.3%, and 35.4% for physical, sexual, and physical or sexual violence respectively for the last 12 months. About 77 percent of respondents admitted they were abused by husband and family members, among them three victims did not get hospital treatment for their injuries (Asia News, 2014). Nearly two thirds (72.6%) of ever-married women have experienced one or more such forms of violence by their husbands at least once in their lives, and 54.7% have experienced violence during the last 12 months (BBS, 2016). The women of rural areas are mostly become victimized by domestic violence (Khan, 2014).

The total number of domestic violence in 2016 is a matter of concern. In the year, 191 women were murdered by their husbands; among them, 18 were less than 18 years of age. Women have been tortured by their husbands and members of the family have been 64. There were 26 victims tortured by their own family, while 18 were over the age of 30. 45 committed suicide, of which 2 were under 18 years of age. In contrast, Wolhuter, Olley, and Denham (2009) noted that the highest levels of domestic violence were recorded among young women aged 20 to 24, 28% said they had been abused at some point by a partner, and 34 percent were harassed or assaulted. Psychiatric services in London reported, High rates of victimization have also been amongst those presenting sample of just under 200, lifetime prevalence levels of some form of abuse, including physical and emotional abuse, reached 40 percent, with half-yearly levels of 16 percent (Tham et al., 1995). Almost one in four (24 percent) were victims of domestic violence. The women are being victimized mainly due to a patriarchal norms and practices vulnerability, marginality, biased laws, lack of implementation of laws, lack of victim and witness protection, corruption and criminalization of the members of law enforcement

agencies, impunity of the ruling party activists, economic instability, and weak administration (BBS, 2016). Whereas, Koenig et al., (2003) reported that increased education, higher socioeconomic status, non-Muslim religion, and extended family residence to be linked with lower risks of violence in rural Bangladesh.

### **Trafficking in Women and Children**

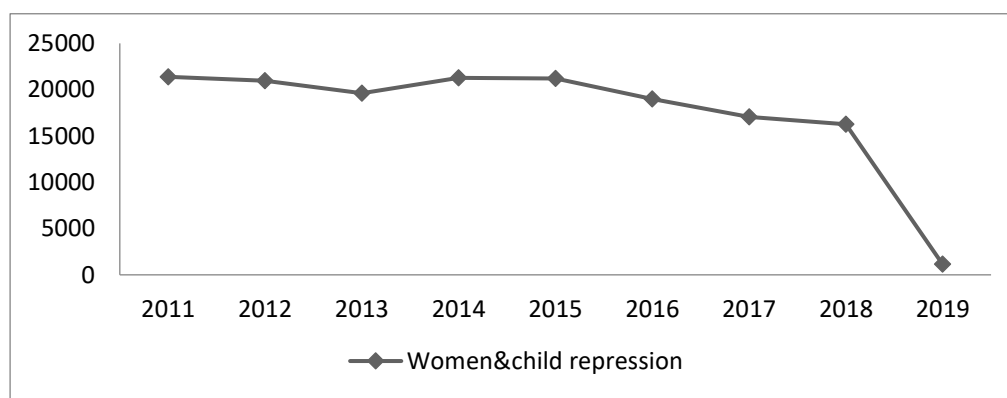
Trafficking of women and children is a significant problem in developing and third world countries around the globe, and particularly in South Asia and Bangladesh. Holding the position of marginalization, absence of social protection, economic insecurity, and legal support, an alarming number of women and children become easy victims of trafficking. The problem is more acute for Bangladesh that shares a porous border with India which is one of the safest routes for human trafficking. In the South Asian region, a study shows that every year 500 Bangladeshi women illegally transported to Pakistan (Karofi et al., 2006). Children and women trafficking to Western countries and the middle-east for prostitution, domestic servants, sexual slaves, etc. Furthermore, around 2 million women and children have been trafficked to the Middle East over the last two decades and around 2 million women have been trafficked to Pakistan in the course of the last ten years according to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs report in 1997. Moreover, the ILO study (2005) showed that 32% of trafficking all victims was trafficked for labor exploitation, while 43% were trafficked for sexual exploitation, and 25% for a mixture of both, and many of them were under age. An Estimated four hundred women and children are trafficked out every month from Bangladesh (Sultana, 2015). Although the vast majority of women are sold to the Middle Eastern market about 40000 Bangladeshi women and girls are engaged in prostitution in Pakistan alone and some remain in India. Notably, the unmarried and virgin girls' demand is high, they were sold for 15000-20000 taka each (Paul and Hasnath, 2000). In the case of sex trafficking, two million women prostitute themselves in Thailand, 400,000 to 500,000 in the Philippines, 650,000 in Indonesia, about ten million in India (of whom 200, 000 are Nepalese), 142,000 in Malaysia. Estimated at 150,000 prostitutes from the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Russia installed in Japan (Pouline, 2014). On the other hand, UNICEF (2007) reported that approximately 1.2 million children are trafficked for sexual exploitation worldwide. Pakistan-based Lawyers for Human

Rights and Legal Service reported that 200,000 Bangladeshi women and girls were traded in Pakistan annually. Another survey says, that the number of women and girls of Bangladesh illegally transported in Pakistan is undocumented and it will go over 250,000. A total number of 1.5 lac people reported trafficked by boats through the Bay of Bengal according to the UNHCR. Using the route of Teknaf, Ukhia, Cox's Bazar Sadar, and Maheshkhali points, the first 3 months of 2015, approximately 25000 people, different areas of the country, have been trafficked. Bangladesh Coast Guard team has rescued 116 people from Bay of Bengal among whom 2 were 16 and 1 were 25 years of old in June 2015. In July 2015, a total of 74 women have been rescued by BGB and Immigration police in Bangladesh (Foreign Affairs Insights and Reviews, 2015). Therefore, the social vulnerability of women and female children, Urbanization and migration, Low employment opportunities, dowry, divorced, the family breakup is major causes of trafficking (ICDDR, B, 2001).

## 5. CHANGING PATTERNS AND TRENDS OF VIOLENCE

Violence against women and children has been changed over time. In reality, trends in violent crime are complex and not necessarily easy to either describe or explain (Polk, 1999). Patterns of violence across the country and explains the similarities and differences with respect to motive, socio- demographic characteristics of victim, place, time, and severity of crime, use of weapon or way and changing political systems. We examined the most serious crime of violence, murder, child rape, sexual assault, acid violence, domestic violence and trafficking, and the data available suggest that over a decade in contemporary Bangladesh.

**Figure 3: Trends of violence against women and children (2011-2019)**



Source: Bangladesh police statistics (2011-2019).

In Bangladesh, women and child repression is a common scenario that happened in everyday life. From analyzing the graph it can be said that reported cases of women and child repression were always high since 2011. But the reported victimization was remarkably high in 2014 and 2015 which decreased slightly in the next year. According to the police report, the number of women and child repression cases remained stable for the next two years, but the number decreased dramatically in 2019, the number of incidents recorded 1139 in 2019.

Although the incidents of violence against women and children, including killing, trafficking, murder, and rape, have decreased across the country in 2019. Nevertheless, the atrocities and brutality depict a terrible picture of violence in reference to some recent cases of rape and murder in Bangladesh. The alarming rise of brutalities against children has triggered grave concern among policymakers as well as civil societies. From 2012 to July 2015 at least 968 children were killed after brutal torture. Bangladesh Shishu Adikar Forum (BSAF) reported a total of 122 child murders in 2020 and generated that incidents of murder, kidnap, human trafficking, rape, sexual harassment, and violence against children are the increase in this year. Different NGOs, law enforcers, rights organizations, and international organizations have shown concern over child abuse in recent Bangladesh (The Daily Star, 2015). On the other side, killing incidence has been raised in 2017 from the previous years. Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) recorded, 574 child-killing incidents in 2017 all over the country (BSAF,2017; The Daily Star, 2018). On the other hand, the East Asia and Pacific region by World Bank classification and gender found that, child deaths attributable to child maltreatment for 0-14-year-olds per 100,000 children (0-14-year-olds), based on 2004 WHO data, for - low income (male 3.1, female 1.4), lower middle income (male-1.6, female 0.8), high income (male-0.7, female-0.8) (Fang et al., 2014) data from the WHO for violence-related deaths for children.

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) reported that a total of 818 women were raped across the country in 2017. The number of reported rape incidents was 635 in 2018 and 1080 in 2019 across the country (Odhikar, 2020). According to the Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA) 892 incidents of rape were committed between January and August in 2020. Besides, there were 192 incidents of rape attempts, 41 died due to injuries after the rape, and nine died by suicide after being raped. In contrast, child rape incidents have doubled in



2019 from that of 2018 in Bangladesh with three children falling victim to rape each day last year. In 2019, a total of 1,005 children were raped. On average, that is around three (2.75) children per day and at least 571 cases of child rapes were reported in 2018. Whereas, the East Asia and Pacific region, percentage of young people who reported ever experiencing forced sex, Thailand 21.0% Palau 35.8% Marshall Islands 22.8% in 2007 (Balling et al., 2003; Lippe et al., 2008) and Percentage of respondents from the WHO multi-country study who reported experiencing child sexual abuse before the age of 15, Japan 10.4 and Thailand 8.0 (WHO, 2005; UNICEF, 2014). Assault (excluding sexual assault) since 2011 has trended upward. But after 5 years the incidents of sexual harassment remain relatively less than in 2011. Meanwhile, 2017 recorded 349 incidents which are more than the previous four years. Besides, in 2018 157 girls were the victim and in 2019 the numbers of the victim were 189.

Patriarchal capitalism pushes women in such a marginal and oppressed position in society that they are always subordinate to male domination, and this is reflected in many cases (Sultana, 2010). 60 percent of women in Bangladesh experience some form of domestic violence during their lives research revealed by the International Center for Diarrhoeal Disease Research-Bangladesh (2006). One-Stop Crisis Centre, a Bangladesh based NGO that supporting women victims of violence, reveals that nearly 70 percent of sexual abuse suffered by women occurs within their own homes (Khatun and Rahman, 2012). A recent study by WHO reported that Bangladesh has high levels of domestic violence, most of the women reporting having experienced violence at the hands of their husbands. Frequency of violence personally experienced by a woman from their family origin (Straus, 1977). Bhuyia et al. (2003) in their study demonstrated that around seven in ten (66.8%) women were vulnerable to abusive words against them and their parents by their husbands. It's a tragic consequence of marriage is the solution parents pose on their daughters as a punishment against the problem of sexual harassment and the fear of sexual violence. Hence, early marriage, withdrawing girls from education and preventing them from working and restriction are some of the unbearable costs of adjusting to threats of harassment and violence (The Daily Star, 2008).

## 6. THEORETICAL EXPLANATION

In critical criminology, scholarly attention to the arena of victimization of women and children involves a wide array of issues. Violence against women or gender violence expresses aggression which has a root in our society (Khan, 2014). Violence against women and children committed mainly based on their gender, age, race, sex, income, and social status. Feminist scholars argued the lower social and economic status, powerlessness and marginalized position of women are trigger causes and consequences of violence against women.

Sexual crime such as rape and other sexual harassment has discussed through a feminist lens in criminology. Feminist dissects that oppression against women in society is a clear symptom of dominance by male-based society (Barak, 1990). For example, rape victims are marginalized from their family and community. Firstly, after being a victim, they are marginalized by different types of blaming such as victim-blaming. Victim-blaming which is an alternative concept of victim precipitation has marginalized feminist concerns with gendered crimes, such as homicide, domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, and child abuse (Mawby and Walklate, 1994). In the context of Bangladesh, rape victims and their families are marginalized from society. For instance, a rape victim and her family in Bangladesh are forced to leave the village under the community threat (Sharmin and Islam, 2019). Secondly, they are marginalized by attaching stigma, women are socially rejected from society after being victimized. About 45% of victim withdraws themselves from society as a result of victimization (Naripokkho, 2009). Thirdly, the dominating role of males and the position of women in society promote rape culture. And the marginalized position limited opportunities for victims in different social, educational, and economic facilities. Conversely, patriarchy, the system of domination of women by men, is the fundamental characteristic of social organization for radical feminism. Radical feminists believed that subordination to men, inequality, and limited opportunities are the major causes of violence against women (Banarjee and Islam, 2019). Relating to this, the existing patriarchal social system of Bangladesh is making women and children vulnerable to trafficking to a greater extent (Sarker and Panday, 2006). Further, the dependency condition of women directly related to economic status in family life that is linked to capitalism. Contribute to family and avoid dependency women are engaging with low-paid works as labor, street workers consequently trapped in a rape encounter (Siegel, 2006). However, son preference, discrimination against girls, dowry, domestic

violence, unequal wage, discriminatory personal laws, the use of religion to oppress women, lack of education, lack of security, poverty, early marriage, and women's subordination all of these patriarchal practices exist (Sultana, 2010) which is the intermediate causes of violence against women and children in Bangladesh. Besides, Sarker and Panday (2006) pointed out (i) feminization of poverty (ii) increased insecurity of basic needs and civic facilities (iii) marital dissolution, separation and divorce of the women (iv) increased number of street and working children (v) unemployment (vi) increased level of corruption (vii) increased criminalization and brutalization of society- these are the causes of victimization of women and children in Bangladeshi society. In reality, the women of Bangladesh is that they remain a vulnerable, marginalized group that repressed by their male counterpart. Women are staying at the bottom rung of poverty, illiteracy, and landlessness (Mahtab, 2007). Apparently, poor and marginal women are significantly likely to victimize by violence.

Intersectionality theory argued that individuals face social oppression and discrimination based on identity markers like race, biological sex and gender identity, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and ability status (Collins, 2000). Sexual violence reproduces inequalities of gender, race or ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, ability status, citizenship status, and nationality (Armstrong et al., 2018). Violence against women and girls of minority people in Bangladesh focuses on womanhood or ethnicity and intersectional experiences and effects of violence and discrimination. For example, rape incidents against the indigenous and ethnic minority girls. A total of 48 cases of violence against ethnic minority women were registered during the year, according to Kapaeeng Foundation's Human Rights Report on Indigenous People on Bangladesh 2017. Of them, 20 were reported from the plain land while 28 from the CHT and about 56 ethnic minority women were assaulted sexually or physically. Among them, at least 12 were raped, rape attempts were made on nine, and nine were either killed or murdered after rape, said the report. Among other incidents reported, four were gang-raped, eight kidnapped and two women sexually harassed. Of the 75 alleged offenders, 65 were from the Bengali community while four from ethnic minority communities, according to the report (United News of Bangladesh, n.d). On the other hand, many disabled women and girls were reportedly rape in Bangladesh. Half of all the disabled children in Bangladesh are sexually abused, mostly by close relatives, according to BBC News (2010). The study says of the victims, 52% are girls aged between seven and 18 years. Comparatively, disabled women were four times more likely

to experience sexual assault compared to non-disabled women. Further, disabled women may be significantly more likely to experience, ‘Hyperviolent’ attacks than non-disabled women and sustained or escalating attacks (Balderston, 2013).

## 7. CONCLUSION

In the study of criminology and victimology, the issue of violence against women and children has exposed as great scholarly attention. In spite of all legal initiatives, women and child repression has risen alarmingly. In this article, we have discussed the types and nature of women and child victimization, changing patterns, and trends of violence from the theoretical point of view. In doing so, we have used the data of the last five years and for trend analysis, we have used data for a decade which is available in Bangladesh police statistics. We found rape, murder has increased over the last several years whereas, sexual harassment, dowry, domestic violence has decreased. From the trend analysis, we found the reported victimization was remarkably high in 2014 and 2015 which decreased slightly in 2016. According to the police report, the number of women and child repression cases remained stable for 2017 and 2018, but the number decreased dramatically in 2019. Notwithstanding the decreasing rate of reported cases, the atrocities and brutality have crossed its limit, a total of 122 child murders in 2020, and overall, 1,383 incidents of sexual assault cases were reported last year – a 70.32 percent increase compared to the previous year. Additionally, we analyzed marginalization and the intersectional effect on gender, sexuality, ethnicity, minority status, discrimination, disability, and class are the main reason for the victimization of women and children in the Bangladesh context. We showed rape victims are marginalized from their family and community, categorizing to victim-blaming, attaching stigma, and marginal position of the victim. Also, the patriarchal system of society, the feminization of poverty, and other forms of discrimination push women to hold the position of marginalization that exposure to victimization at every level. Therefore, poor and marginal women are significantly associated with the victimization of violent crime. Notable, to analyze the victimization of women and girls, we found intersectionality is useful to apply ethnic minority and disability studies. However, to combat violence against women, we recommended the government should strictly follow and implement existing laws and initiate a proper policy to prevent violence against

women and children. Especially, removal of remaining reservations on CEDAW Article 2 and 16.1(c), proper implementation of Women and Children Repression Act, 2003, training and orientation to Law enforcement personnel on violence against women, human rights, and gender.

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