

Understanding of Sexual Consent Among Youths in Bangladesh

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Sexual consent is a topic that impacts nearly everyone on a regular basis, while simultaneously not having enough open discussions. Questions of what exactly constitutes as consent differ from person to person, and from study to study. In Bangladesh, sexual morality is usually simplified to abstinence before marriage, and all sexual activity after that is condoned. This makes marriage the dividing line between right and wrong. However, reality differs from moral expectations as most late teens and young adults do have romantic and sexual interactions, without any proper conversation or education on the exercise of consent. A huge obstacle to such conversation comes from the normalization of being quiet about sexual topics. Sex education is mostly unheard of in the region, and schools go as far as to exclude or simply skim over the reproduction topics in biology books. Even when sex is mentioned, they are talked about in terms of visible health issues such as sexually transmitted diseases, or pregnancies, rather than the emotional understanding of other complications that come with sex, one of which is the exercise of consent.

Building on this gap, this study aims to look at a small sample of university students to discuss how they perceive consent in difficult sexual situations. Their responses touch over issues of legality, morality, and culture, all of which are very specific to the background and demographics of the sample. All of these social aspects further added to the necessity for sexual education in Bangladesh itself.

Literature Review

The scholarly understanding of consent differs in each study, as it differs in people's understandings. Over the years, consent has been defined and redefined differently. In her paper *Analysis of Sexual Consent Literature*, Beres explores how literature on consent has developed.

Some authors use the term sexual consent to imply a boundary or dividing line. In these cases sexual consent is used to distinguish good sex from bad sex (Wertheimer, 2003), pleasurable sex from unpleasurable sex (Jones, 2002–03), morally unproblematic sex from morally problematic sex (Hurd, 1996) or making love from a criminal act (Archard, 1998).¹

Here we see how there is no one specific definition, but different perceptions of how consensual sex is differentiated.

A trend observed overall is “the assumption of [the] gendered nature of [consent] – that is, women give consent to men”². This view was predominantly of women as gatekeepers and men as the pursuers. Beres notices the lack of “recognitions of lesbian and gay sex (and sexual

¹ Beres, Melanie A. "Spontaneous' sexual consent: An analysis of sexual consent literature." *Feminism & Psychology* 17, no. 1 (2007): 93-108.

² Ibid

violence), sex with multiple partners and heterosex initiated by women” in sexual consent literature³.

The definition of consent as an agreement is also contested. One view would be of consent being “any yes” where, ‘no matter how much force is used to obtain it, consent can still occur’, whereas others qualify this consent into “full consent, non-full consent, and coerced consent (Panichas, 2001); real consent and quasi consent (Archard, 1998)” and other such terms.⁴ On the other hand, there are those who claim “it is not possible for someone to consent when they are being coerced or threatened” (Hall, 1998; Hickman and Muehlenhard, 1999; Humphreys, 2005).⁵ This brings to question people’s perception of coercion, and whether it is considered socially acceptable in certain situations.

Another aspect of discussion addressed was whether consent could be defined by actions alone. Beres notices that Alexander (1996) comes to the conclusion that “consent does not consist of the behaviors, it is not possible to draw up a list of consenting behaviors, and it is recognized that different behaviors can have different meanings in different contexts”⁶. Relating to the previous discussion on coercion, this view also takes into account the situation and implications before a “yes” was obtained.

Furthermore, her article ends with recommendations “interrogating normative and conventional ways in which women and men agree to have sex and communicate this willingness”⁷. This is quite a nuanced aspect, which when looked at the research available in Bangladesh, or South Asia at large, seemed like a long way off.

To look more into the depth of sex and communication, Rebecca Kukla’s “Sex Talk” was insightful. While typically sexual consent means an agreement between two participants, Kukla puts consent into two detailed categories of ‘requesting for sex’ and ‘invitation for sex’⁸. Consent is not only about asking for sex, but it’s more about communications. Aside from the typical ‘request-and-consent-or-refuse model’, Rebecca introduces two other models which are ‘sexual negotiations’ and ‘sexual invitations and gift offers’⁹. Kukla’s article helps us see the practical use of consent and the most fruitful methods of applying them. She goes on to use different analogies such as comparing sexual invitation as an invitation for dinner that can be both accepted or turned down without hurting any of the parties. In her words, ‘invitations are

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Kukla, Rebecca. “Consent and Refusal Are Not the Only Talking Points in Sex.” Aeon. Accessed January 31, 2020.

⁹ Ibid

welcoming without being demanding'¹⁰. As much as we talk about consent at the initiation of an activity, we also 'need to be able to *exit* that activity easily and freely'¹¹. Kukla emphasizes on the importance of proper sexual communication that doesn't limit the possibility of proper consent. The necessity of how Kukla views consent was observed by us when a certain number of our research sample lacked the idea of sexual communication and believed in a 'yes or no' negotiation only. Her work of introducing the 'pragmatic structure' of sex words will not only balance the existing power dynamics in sexual relationships but also will pave ways for healthier interaction¹². Another factor she discusses is the male responsibility of initiating sex and how it clouds the idea of consent. In Bengali culture, it is assumed that men always initiate sex and women will say yes to it. Kukla argues that this cultural practice negates the necessity for men to ask for consent from women. This too was seen in our research that participants believe in the autonomous consent that comes with the preassumed duty of initiating sex.

She concludes that sexual autonomy needs to include "uses of language that go well beyond consenting to and refusing requests for sex."¹³ Kukla's writing not only talks about the need for sexual consent to exist but also the refining it needs.

It is apparent that there is a large difference in existing literature between Bangladesh and the west, more specifically the USA, where Kukla is based on. While Kukla goes into that much depth and expects men to look beyond the existing typical consent model, the literature that exists on sex in Bangladesh does not even acknowledge the concept of exercising consent in sexual spaces.

Very few pieces of demographic literature have been found on how people view consent in Bangladesh. One such is the article "Inclusion of Sex Education in School Curriculum of Bangladesh: Parents' Attitude" by Mohammad Kowsar Bhuiyan that talks about the necessity of sex education in Bangladesh. To avoid bias, not only the researchers conduct primary research on parents from both the urban and rural side, but they also analyze the reactions of the parents based on their religious background. It was observed in their study that from 120 parents '48.3%' supported sex education while '25%' did not, as they mainly supported "value and culture-oriented" education instead of direct knowledge on sexual intercourse and related activities¹⁴.

The article also compares UNESCO's holistic approach to sex education to what would be possible in Bangladesh. According to UNESCO, "Sex education covers six concepts e.g. i) relationships; ii) values, attitude, and skills; iii) culture, society, and human rights; iv) human

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Bhuiyan, Mohammad Kowsar. "Inclusion of Sex Education in School Curriculum of Bangladesh: Parents' Attitude." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education* 4, no. 5 (2014): 32-40.

development; v) sexual behavior; and vi) sexual and reproductive health”¹⁵. As the article sets the background with this definition of sex education, later on, it goes onto building the topic of “sexual and reproductive health”¹⁶. While sexual consent falls into the first five concepts of sex education, the particular approach to sexual health only gives us an insight into how much sexual consent is ignored in the culture. Bhuyian explains that sex is usually a “dirty and uncomfortable” topic that hinders parents from talking about it to their children¹⁷. Bhuyian questions the existing sex culture and criticizes the cultural approach and ignorance of it. However, it is really interesting how the word ‘consent’ has not been used in the entire paper. As much as the author believes “providing sexual knowledge” is very essential, the main problem lies with the fact that the literature piece fails to address a major concept of sex education - consent.

In the study, from the list of the proposed curriculum of sex education, the two points that were the most ‘disagreed’ by the parents were ‘Healthy and safe physical relation’ and ‘Practicability of knowledge to establish a sexual relationship antenuptial’¹⁸. It is highly noticeable that consent is related to both of these topics. To establish a safe and healthy marital or premarital relationship consent plays a vital role, and it is not a desired topic of discussion for ‘60%’ of the parents. Bhuyian says, “parents were more conscious about abstinence and sexual consent might create tension as it acknowledges the sexual engagement of their children”¹⁹. This highlights the fact that despite the overall results that imply a positive attitude towards the discussion of sexual education in Bangladesh, the discussions are only focused on visible health problems and don’t acknowledge a concept as nuanced as sexual consent.

Gaps and Contribution

Our research has found that there is a huge gap on consent-specific literature in the South Asian context. Furthermore, the literature on ‘consent’ in Bangladesh is in its nascent form. There is a lack of research on how young adults view consent even though this is an age when many people begin engaging in sexual relationships. The gap is mainly because of lack of formal conversation about sex, where the topic of sex itself is either tabooed or misunderstood. The literature barely puts an importance on sexual consent and the perception of it among the youth.

The aim of our study is to start the conversation by looking at how students learn about consent, their opinions on exercising sexual consent, and the effect of their social background on their personal understanding of consent.

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Ibid

Research Question

How do youths in Bangladesh understand sexual consent?

Methodology

To investigate the research questions discussed, a qualitative, cross sectional method was used. The sample observed were 13 participants, divided into three focus groups. Each group was gender specific. The informality in structure and situation in a focus group discussion dynamic also allowed the participants to talk about an issue considered so taboo in this culture. Additionally, a group setting allowed the emergence of different relevant topics, and an analysis of how other participants respond to it. It was also a suitable methodology to get a variation of opinions from people of diverse backgrounds in a time effective manner. Prior to the discussion, three scenarios were prepared to direct the conversation towards different nuanced situations where consent may play out. As the discussion proceeded, specific questions were asked to see how the participants felt about each other's answers.

Before the discussion, all participants were informed about the details of the research project, asked to verbally consent to audio recording of the session. They were strictly asked to keep the discussions confidential.

The discussions took place in both Bangla and English, and participants were asked to speak in whatever language they were comfortable speaking in.

The study population was selected through convenience sampling method. The sample consisted of 13 first year students from various universities of Chittagong. The participants were separated into three groups, two groups consisting of male students and one of female students.

The data analysis was from the field notes taken during the interview, and from the transcribed audio recordings of the focus group discussions. The interviews were conducted in both Bengali and English, and thus was translated by the researcher. The transcribed notes were reviewed and analyzed by the research team and then cross-referenced to find trends in the participant's opinions. The results found were then compared with existing theories which have been described previously.

Limitations

Hawthorne effect - The participants may have been affected by the knowledge that they were being observed, and might have censored or sugar-coated their opinions. Additionally, as all the researchers were women, the male participants might have been uncomfortable speaking of sexual topics.

Observer bias - Since, data from qualitative research design depends heavily on the researcher's interpretation, there is space for researcher bias during data collection and analysis. To minimise this, notes were taken by all present members of the research team. The data description was also done by one researcher per group and then cross referenced with other's notes. Similarly, the analysis was done separately and then cross referenced and discussed.

Non-representative sample - Due to the small sample size and convenience sampling, the data collected is not representative of the entire country.

Cultural unfamiliarity with casual sexual relationships, or premarital sexual relationships also acted as a limitation in our discussions. Due to the accepted moral and social understandings of sexual relationships in Bangladesh, the scenarios discussed were presumed to be heterosexual and marital (or part of a long-term committed relationship). Another limitation was of the Bengali language, where there are no gendered third-person pronouns. Thus in the areas discussed in Bengali, especially for Focus Group 2, it is difficult to judge whether the participants always considered men to be the pursuers of sexual activity.

Ethical Considerations

- 1) The participants were well-informed regarding the research objectives and their respective roles..
- 2) Informed consent was sought before the focus group discussion and before audio recording and note taking.
- 3) The data collected was kept confidential.
- 4) The participants were informed that they could always leave the discussion or remain silent if anything made them uncomfortable.

Data Description

For the discussions the participants were divided into three groups. Group 1 and 2 consists of men, while Group 3 of women. The flow of the discussion was maintained by using scenarios to introduce the different aspects of consent.

Consent Overview

All the participants in all the focus groups were aware of the concept of consent. However, it was observed that participants of group 3 did not know of the term "consent" explicitly. Everyone initially described it as an agreement/negotiation between two people.

Group 1 also noted consent as being an aspect of respect and emphasized how it is between two people who have equal rights to agree/disagree. Words like “mutual respect” were brought up by one participant in group 2 while another in group 3 said that it is “situational,” when asked about what consent meant to them. When asked to elaborate on the word “situational” the participant from the group 3 further said that it’s an agreement but varies according to different situations and relationships. It was evident during the discussion that they perceived consent in a broader sense and outside of the usual sexual dynamics. However, when the discourse was specified to sexual consent, group 1 brought up the topics of both verbal and non-verbal cues in consent, while this perspective remained absent in the other two. 3 participants emphasized the importance of verbal consent as the only valid form of agreement between two parties, the other 2 thought non-verbal cues often took place in the “real world”. The former contested stating that “you cannot read people's mind.” One of the participants responded that in a relationship, non-verbal consent was equally valid. He reasoned that in Bangladesh, girls were expected to be “shy”, and how, therefore, picking up on body language cues was important. However, the groups 2 and 3 did not elaborate any further on the topic of consent, and the discussion proceeded to the next question about where their existing notions of consent come from.

For groups 2 and 3, the idea of consent first developed from their family, which they later applied into sexual activities as well. Since families’ decisions were according to everybody’s opinions that’s how they got used to “respecting opinions.” The word “consent” itself was learned from books and/or the internet, according to group 2. However, group 1 learned about consent from Social media and the Internet, out of self-interest. Group 3 participants who were all female, highlighted a gender difference in the context of family. In the family, according to one participant, since it is “conservative”, there are different rules for different genders. She clarified that since coming to AUW, she could “exercise consent more... because (she had) no family” here and everyone in the group agreed with her.

Theme 1 : Persistence

A person agrees to kiss the other person after saying "No" multiple times. No force, threat of force, or substance was used in order to reach that agreement. This is okay if the two people are: Friends, Relationship, Married.

This scenario was put in place to understand the perception on the theme of persistence in terms of consent in different relationships. Here, group 1 unanimously agreed that it is never okay, no matter what the relationship is and noted that the person is being pressurized in this scenario. Even though group 2 also initially thought that it is unacceptable, when the idea of shyness was brought up by one participant, they all unanimously agreed with him that the answer actually depends on other factors. According to them, in Bangladesh there is often a “familial barrier” in expressing these desires, thus people may be shy. They felt you can tell from the person’s behavior whether they are shy, and in that case, it is okay to persuade as the answer will change eventually. They were prompted to discuss this social effect of considering girls as shy.

After scattered discussions on topics like how it is different in case of marriage and relationships, as marriage brings along issues such as “legally have to stay together” and “doing it to make the other people happy”. Ultimately, they concluded that it depends on the individual relationship. The response of the female participants of group 3 was divided. While one of them remained stern on how “no means no,” the others unanimously agreed that repeatedly asking to kiss was “irritating”, and thus unacceptable. One participant in this group 3 stated that in marriage it is acceptable. She explained that since they are already married, the person should respect the other’s desire to kiss and therefore, repeatedly asking is fine. Hence, 4 out of the 12 participants said the response to the question changes depending on the nature of the relationship, in this case, marriage. The rest of them remained stern that it is “never okay.”

Theme 2 : Coercion

A person asks their friend to kiss them. Upon rejection, they add that they will spread the other person’s secrets if they don't agree. As a result, the friend finally allows the other to kiss them. This is consensual.

This scenario was put in place to understand the participants’ understanding of power dynamics involved when it comes to consent. All the participants strongly disagreed that this scenario is consensual. It was observed that there was a difference in terms used by group 2 participants when expressing their disapproval when compared with groups 1 and 3. The participants of Group 1 and 3 used words like “forcing someone”, “pressurizing”, “threatening” and “blackmailing” consecutively to show the reason for their disapproval. In contrast, to put their reason for disapproval in words, most of the participants in group 2 referred to law, using words such as “illegal”, “threat”, and “file a case”.

Theme 3 : Blanket consent

A couple has been physically intimate for a while now. One of them wants to initiate sex. The partner should agree as they have agreed to intimate actions in the past.

The aim of this question is to discuss “Blanket consent”, which is how people presume that consent to one sexual action can be considered as consent to all, moving forward and affirmative consent is altogether neglected.

Here the group 1 developed on their verbal/non verbal consent discussion that initiated in the beginning. For 3 participants, verbal consent was important while another participant considered both verbal and non verbal consent equally important since, “verbal consent is not always perfect and can be flawed. A person might say yes out of obligation. Thus it is important to notice of non-verbal cues. The other participant was slightly confused with the nuances of verbal and non-verbal consent. Even though he started off with, “consent is important in every step/verbal consent is required because we can’t read people’s minds,” he further added that, “

asking for verbal consent in every step is not feasible/ non-verbal consent exists in the real world.” and ended up with “so being quiet means agreement.”

With the participants of group 2, it was more of a question of morality in pre-marital sex than consent in relationships itself. While one participant said that this scenario is not acceptable regardless of the aspect of marriage. Two remaining participants thought it was okay to pressurize as long as they aren't physically forcing, due to the legal status. The elaborated that regardless of whether the marriage was done with or against the wife's wishes, she is not obligated to say yes to sex, however the husband has the right to be persistent. The participant one whose stance was that this scenario is not right counterargues that the individual right to say no exceeds the marital right to have sex. However, the other participant noted that when talked about the social context of Bangladesh, how the girl does not have consent in the entire idea of marriage, not just sex. So it usually translates to everything. One participant mentioned that the wife has to remain firm in her decision not to have sex.

With regard to the scenario, everyone in group 3 agreed that everyone's opinions matter, so both partners should equally want the same thing. One participant however brought up a question of, “if you have been intimate, why can't you just agree, why sex is (any) different” to which participant (4) responded with “if it's a long term relationship I'll agree but if it's short term I won't be comfortable.” So, when the question of marriage was brought up, except for 1 participant, the rest agreed on how the aspect of marriage does not affect the usual “no means no” in consent. The remaining participant (4) had different views. When everyone else concluded that the person's “mood matters” in whether they should agree, participant (4) responded with “even if I am not in the mood, if I think from the side of my husband I should agree.” She concluded that aside from health complications “where one cannot have sex”, a spouse should be considerate of the other's feelings and thus agree regardless of whether they personally want to.

Changes in views about consent

Out of the 5 participants in group 1, 4 participants didn't know about sexual consent until grade 11-12, while the other participant learned it early on, since his family taught him to always question.

In group 2, one participant mentioned that being in a single sex school had an effect on how he viewed women, and thus consent. This changed once he entered mixed gendered academic institutions. The other two participants had consistent understanding for the past year.

In group 3 except for one participant, all the others agreed that their views on consent had changed after high school. The other participant whose view had not changed clarified that it was

similar to the teachings of her family even if it did not involve the terminology itself.

Factors influencing consent

Group 1 participants discussed about how movies, culture, religion and media(Bollywood) all add to the confusing narrative about consent. They further explained that these narratives were not practical and were different from our cultural reality. They brought up the example of romanticizing non-consensual behavior where such behaviour is equated to being “manly” in the society.

Two of the group 3 participants noted how friends and partners can influence your understanding of consent.

Data Analysis

In our initial discussion of consent, it was seen that the majority of our participants defined ‘consent’ beyond just the sexual discourse. As Rebecca Kukla in her article mentions how the ‘typical’ narrative around ‘sexual consent’ is seen as an “agreement between two parties”²⁰, similar understandings were reflected by our participants as well. Groups 2 and 3 were the major reflectors of this view, where their initial understanding of ‘consent’ mainly extended to ‘agreement’. However, a deeper insight was brought forward by Group 1, where the nuances of verbal and non-verbal consent arose. Similarly, in Group 3, there was only one participant who discussed ‘consent’ in terms of the context that it was brought up in. Her view went it parallels with Alexander’s view on his paper, which states that “consent does not consist of the behaviors, it is not possible to draw up a list of consenting behaviors, and it is recognized that different behaviors can have different meanings in different contexts”²¹. It was observed that the participants who brought about these insightful comments on ‘consent’ were either in a relationship, or had been previously in one. According to the opinions brought about by our focus group participants, it was seen that a relatively deeper understanding of ‘consent’ was present among participants who have had romantic or sexual experience. These participants didn’t just view ‘consent’ as an ‘agreement’, but thought about it in terms of context and verbal and non-verbal expressions.

Additionally, while discussing the 3 scenarios, it was noted that when the scenarios were evidently black, or white, participants had a unanimous response to it. However, when the

²⁰ Kukla, Rebecca. “Consent and Refusal Are Not the Only Talking Points in Sex.” Aeon. Accessed January 31, 2020.

²¹ Beres, Melanie A. “‘Spontaneous’ sexual consent: An analysis of sexual consent literature.” *Feminism & Psychology* 17, no. 1 (2007): 93-108.

scenarios didn't fit the 'request-and-consent-or-refuse model'²², mixed opinions were expressed. The factors of persistence and dynamics in relationships created differences in view, where some still stuck with the importance of autonomous verbal consent, whereas for the others the dynamics brought differences in their answers. What was even more interesting was to observe the reasons behind the stances that were taken. As noted in Group 3, 3 out of the 4 participants agreed that persistently asking for a kiss was not okay in any forms of relationship. However, even among these 3, 2 thought so because they saw it as being an 'irritating' act as opposed to a 'no means no' approach, which was proposed by the third participant. Similar difference in reasoning was observed while discussing scenario 2. Even though all the participants pointed out the event to be non-consensual, Group 1 and 3 described the reason for their disapproval on the basis of morality, however, for Group 3 legality of the situation was the main reason. Here we can see what Beres talks about as the 'dividing line', where 'the cases of sexual consent' are seen in terms of either "morally unproblematic sex from morally problematic sex", or "making love from a criminal act."²³ Thus, a dichotomy of legal vs moral reasoning was observed when talking about sexual consent.

Another key observation was the gendered nature of the act of consent. It was seen that all our participants in their speech referred to the man as the one who sought for consent, and the woman as the one who gave consent. This view reflects the idea of how our society perceives men as the "pursuer" and women as the "givers" of sex" However, it must also be emphasized that this gendered nature of consent is also present in western consent literature.²⁴ Furthermore, the gendering of roles also points out how sexual relationships are viewed in terms of binary, without addressing relationships outside the heteronormative model. On this topic, Beres also points out that the literature on sexual consent in itself lacks "'recognitions of lesbian and gay sex (and sexual violence), sex with multiple partners and heterosex initiated by women"²⁵

Interestingly, a common pattern was observed among the participants, where culture was used as an explanation for persistence, or for the validity of non-verbal consent. The male participants of the focus group brought forward the fact that females in Bangladesh were encouraged to be 'shy' about sexual activities, and were discouraged to be vocal about it. On the basis of this reasoning, 5 out of the 8 men pointed out the validity of the usage of persistence or non-verbal consent in relationships. However, none of the 4 female participants expressed such a view on being 'shy'. Although, one of the female participants did mention the acceptability of

²² Kukla, Rebecca. "Consent and Refusal Are Not the Only Talking Points in Sex." Aeon. Accessed January 31, 2020.

²³ Beres, Melanie A. "'Spontaneous' sexual consent: An analysis of sexual consent literature." *Feminism & Psychology* 17, no. 1 (2007): 93-108.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Bhuiyan, Mohammad Kowsar. "Inclusion of Sex Education in School Curriculum of Bangladesh: Parents' Attitude." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education* 4, no. 5 (2014): 32-40.

persistence in a married relationship. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that one of the male participants emphasized the importance of both verbal and non-verbal consent in a relationship in order to deal with the cultural nuances.

Furthermore, a distinct visibility was seen in the lack of formal sexual education. None of the participants mentioned learning about sexual consent specifically in their families, or schools. The ones who did mention about learning about consent from their family expressed that it was about consent in general than specific to sexual engagement. As Bhuiyan explains, sex is usually seen as a ‘dirty and uncomfortable’ topic that hinders parents from talking about it to their children in Bangladesh. Most of the participants pointed out that they learnt about sexual consent through informal means of media and friends. The consequences of this absence was seen in the confusion and lack of uniformity that was expressed by the participants in their answers.

Conclusion

Overall, we see that a lot of the misunderstandings or confusions are a result of lack of open conversations. The biggest shift in the participants understanding occurred only after they could openly talk to and about the other gender in both platonic and romantic terms. While the understanding of right and wrong did not greatly vary in the broad sense, the differences lay in their reasoning for each action, which had an impact on how they interpreted the details of each scenario.

As mentioned, there is a lack of culturally relevant studies, and this research further proved that it is not easy to simply assume that the results or understanding found in western culture would fit the understanding in Bangladesh. A lot of the participants’ answers referred back to the cultural expectations of women’s sexual behaviour, gender roles, and marital obligations, all of which are specific to Bangladesh itself. As a result, conversation about these specific topics is necessary. This paper recommends the use of comprehensive, holistic, and culturally sensitive sex education, complete with conversations about sexual consent itself.

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