



Original Research

## The Scars We Carry: How Dysfunctional Culture in Families Affect Our Personalities

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### ABSTRACT

Family is a basic nurturing unit for a human being where he builds his identity and navigates the world as a social creature. A functional family promotes a healthy upbringing of its child not only in terms of its physical but also emotional needs, which is what today's age demands. Dysfunctional families represent a complex social phenomenon characterized by various dysfunctional dynamics, conflicts, and maladaptive behaviour's among family members. Dysfunctional families aren't conducive to an individual's inclusive growth. This study targets those families who have been a failure in providing their children according to the changing times of contemporary. This study is know-how about the long-term repercussions on various aspects of the life of an individual who has been growing up in a dysfunctional family. This qualitative research involves a sample size of 35 individuals using purposive and snowball sampling methods. It includes in-depth interviews of 30 and case studies from 5 interviewees hailing from dysfunctional family backgrounds. Drawing upon empirical literary reviews, and anthropological and psychological theories, this endeavour is framed by Margaret Mead's cultural impacts on personality formation and Dr Murray Bowen's family system theory to analyze the study. Lastly, this exploration provides a comprehensive overview of specific characteristics of dysfunctional families due to the absence of proper emotional attention from the parents. It highlights the multifaceted consequences of growing up in a dysfunctional family environment, encompassing psychological and emotional repercussions. Finally, it underscores that, from impaired interpersonal relationships to low self-esteem, the effects of dysfunctional family dynamics can extend well into adulthood, influencing a person's social and personal life.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

People are naturally unique in how they think, behave, and respond to comparable situations (Sazzad et al., 2023). Some are reserved, some are hot-tempered, and some are easy going in their attitude (Sunny et al., 2023). Scholars do not support these kinds of judgements because they can be based on rushed studies or an ethnocentric mindset, but they do not deny that people have varied

personalities depending on their culture. (Ember et al., 2002; Moniruzzaman et al., 2023). Psychological anthropologists define personality as the subjective part of culture.

They see culture and personality as two sides of the same coin. (Hossain et al., 2023a). Culture is a set of derived needs. Culture is a way of life that encompasses mental, social, and physical means for living. (Hossain et al., 2023b; Malinowski, 1931; Rana et al., 2023) It is a combination of intellectual apparatus and material that fits an individual's social demands (Bidney, 1952; Chakma et al., 2022). Family is a basic requirement for the cultural environment of socialisation for humans. Families influence young people's cultural practices and views. Variations in cultural conventions, values, and child-rearing techniques in families can have an impact on a child's personality (Mead, 1925). Since early and simpler communities, the family has served as a means of fulfilling sexual, economic, reproductive, and educational functions. (Alam et al., 2023a; Bari et al., 2023; JHA 1994; Sunny et al., 2017). However, in complex communities, family has evolved into something much more. It is now a place where we can grow socially, psychologically, and emotionally. Psychologists and anthropologists describe how a child's development is influenced by its parents. Parents have a subtle influence on their children's psychological development by how they feel about them (Alam et al., 2023b; Ember et al., 2002; Islam et al., 2023). A healthy culture in a functional family is associated with emotional stability, care, and support for its members (Kuddus et al., 2022). A family is called dysfunctional if there is a culture of constant conflict, neglect, and misbehaviour. Abuse, secrecy, addiction, and denial flourish in dysfunctional households (Sunny et al., 2020). Children's emotional needs go unmet in these families because the parents prioritise their own interests. A dysfunctional family is one in which family members' interactions are detrimental to their emotional and physical health, relationships or communications are strained, and individuals are unable to engage in closeness and self-expression. (American Psychological Association, 1994).

### *1.2 Statement of the Problem*

The ancient Barhi culture of Bangladesh has developed into flat culture as the number of extended families declines and more nuclear households emerge. Contemporary cultural transformations such as changes in marriage patterns, a fall in polygamy and male dominance, an increase in the number of neo-local families, growing divorce, a weakening of kinship and the influence of religion, and so on have all had an impact on parenting practices today. Bangladesh has its share of dysfunctional households, where children grow up facing various sorts of instability, neglect, abuse, and conflict during their early years. Individuals' mental and social well-being suffers long-term because of dysfunctional family upbringing. Negative aspects commonly found in Bangladeshi families include intense parenting, over-parenting, parental fears, pressure from parents to perform well, excessive interference in the married or personal lives of the child that compromises privacy, parental manipulation, miscommunication, and an environment where there is constant conflict between the parents and the children. A child's mind is profoundly impacted by these unfavourable home environments, which contribute to the development of its general

personality. Children raised by dysfunctional parents are likely to experience severe cases of a range of psychiatric disorders (The Daily Star, 2023). In our nation, parents are highly esteemed for justifiable reasons, yet in certain instances, it is revealed that the parents are the root cause of their child's personality abnormalities. There has been a discernible rise in anxiety and despair among our children in recent times. The trend towards suicide has increased among college students in recent years.

### *1.3 Justification of the Problem:*

In Bangladesh, there is a lack of clarity around the definition of a "dysfunctional family." These homes consistently exhibit some obvious symptoms. The biggest clue that a family is dysfunctional is when a youngster doesn't feel loved by them or doesn't feel like they can tell their story to them. (Rafi 2023). There is a misunderstanding that says families with dysfunction are broken homes with divorced parents. This is not typically the case with most dysfunctional households. Toxins don't always need to destroy a family or force parents to live apart to have a negative influence on their kids' lives (The Daily Star, 2023). This research will enhance people's knowledge by elucidating the precise definition of a dysfunctional household. The goal of this study is to identify the internal conflicts that arise between children and their parents. People with conventional families who were deprived of family support; families that were in some way insensitive to their child's emotional needs and long-term security; families that were somewhat manipulative; families who were overly controlling to instil perfectionism in their child; and so on. This investigation will shed further light on the widely held beliefs about unfavourable family circumstances. Although the immediate effects of toxic family situations are widely known, less is known about the long-term psychological and social effects on children raised in dysfunctional households in Bangladesh's unique cultural and socioeconomic context. It will close the gap in that area. A functional civilization requires a generation of people who are emotionally stable. It's critical to understand the types of repercussions that today's youth are experiencing from their parents' tumultuous domestic situations. Even though current study in this field has yielded insightful findings globally, there are several directions that future studies in the context of Bangladesh could take. It is essential for mental health experts, legislators, and educators to comprehend the long-term consequences of dysfunctional families to create focused therapies and support networks that can assist people in overcoming these obstacles and leading satisfying lives. In doing so, our research will attempt to aid in the creation of support networks and interventions that are more focused.

## **2. Research Methodology & Respondents**

### *2.1: Methodology*

The methodology used for this study was qualitative in nature. Recipients were chosen using

snowball and purposive sampling techniques. Thirty-five people participated in the study, including neighbours, family members, and friends the researcher knew well. This made for a private and cosy setting for gathering data. The researcher made an informed decision on which individuals could supply the data required for the investigation, which led to the selection of these specific sampling techniques. Since the researcher knew the respondents' pertinent histories, being acquainted with them allowed for effective data collection. These responders also helped find other possible study participants who might be a good fit. The relationship that was built with these people guaranteed the supply of relevant and genuine information, which strengthened the validity of the study results. We contacted prospective responders informally by phone calls and texts, for example, to explain the goals of the study and see whether they would be a good fit as subjects. We set up interviews at convenient times and locations after getting their permission. To obtain a range of viewpoints, we performed thirty in-depth interviews (IDIs) with adults from different socioeconomic backgrounds. In order to obtain a thorough understanding pertinent to our study aims and findings, we also looked at five case studies. We used an audio recorder during the interviews to ensure that the conversations were appropriately captured. This reduced the possibility of missing important information by enabling full transcription and guaranteeing the preservation of crucial data for in-depth study.



Figure 1: Applied Methodology, Techniques & Tools

## 2.2: Demographic Information of Respondents

A sample size of 35 people was what we had anticipated. We conducted interviews with people between the ages of 21 and 30, including recent graduates, those engaged in undergraduate programs, and freshmen.

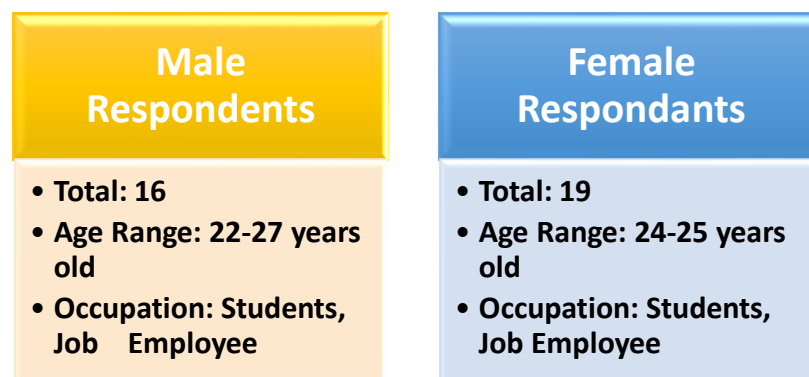


Figure 2: Respondent's Details

We also spoke with others who had grown up and gotten through different family circumstances. This gave us important insights into how they manage family dynamics and cope, even for those with professional degrees. With 19 girls and 16 males in our sample, we were able to evaluate gender differences within the parameters of our research.

### 2.3: Time & Place

The study took three months to complete, starting with the proposal writing stage. Data collecting started in early December 2022 and ended in late March 2023, at which point the study's goals had been achieved.

The study was carried out in the city of Chittagong, and the target respondents were local friends, acquaintances, and family members.

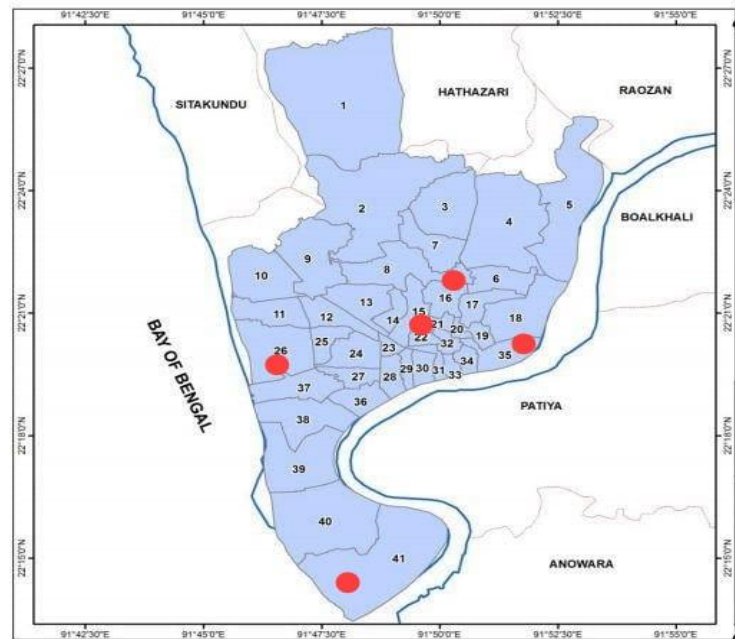


Figure 3: Study Area

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1: An Ideal Family

From generation to generation, there has been a significant change in the perception of the perfect family. The traditional definition of a perfect family for parents is a stable household consisting of a mother and a father, as well as their children living in a separate residence and being well-mannered, obedient, and responsible. It's a place where kids are raised with the predetermined values and norms of the society they inhabit. Society and personal preference should coexist in harmony. Children socialize there with people they find acceptable due to the possibility that they could be negatively influenced and become uncontrollable. What they deem incorrect ought to be the same for the kids. Some people define an ideal family as one that upholds the required religious laws. For some, a perfect family consists of all members who are well-educated, have a purpose in life, and are well-established in the community. For them, the foundation of an ideal family is education. They believe that the prerequisites for starting a family are education and financial and material stability. It is the parents' responsibility to support their children.

Upon asking my replies, "What's an ideal family for you?", a distinct scenario emerged from the previously mentioned statements. They generally view an ideal family as one in which all the elements of a supportive and understanding environment such as open communication and emotional transparency are present and the setting feels like a home. It's a location where parents work together as a team, engaging in both emotional and intellectual activities. Their concept of the perfect family is one in which the parents and kids get along well. When it comes to the decisions they make in life, children's opinions are respected. Parents ought not to force their beliefs on their children. Before making any judgments, there ought to be a forum where parents and kids can have a productive conversation. A family should have a parent who is socially engaged, capable of reason, and has a fundamental moral sense. A person having a strong relationship with his parents is the embodiment of an ideal family. It is simpler to create the ideal family when parents are emotionally involved. As we can see, the concept of families and their role has clearly changed between the two generations. People prefer quality of life over quantity of life in the age of the digital revolution. Consequently, even though their families provide for their basic needs, we see a hole in these individuals' feelings. People require emotional presence more than material possessions. The concept of a structural family is insufficient to make people currently work successfully. They believe that a family should be much more than that. They see an idealized family that supports their social and emotional development in addition to their bodily needs, going beyond simply providing for them.

### *3.2: Generic Nature of Dysfunctional Family*

As previously said, a dysfunctional family refers to a situation where the relationship between an individual and their parents hinders their growth, particularly in terms of mental development. The reference is from the American Psychological Association in 1994. A family does not inevitably exhibit dysfunction simply because an individual witnesses their parents engaging in conflicts or experiencing separation or divorce. All respondents, regardless of their backgrounds, desire an ideal family where parents exhibit understanding towards their children. Parents should provide a space for their children where they can freely communicate and share their needs. An open and unambiguous communication system should be established, ensuring that children feel comfortable and secure while expressing their personal emotions to their parents. The respondents express their desire for an ideal family to have parents who provide emotional support, without unjustly blaming the children for everything without considering their perspective. An ideal family for them is characterized by a salubrious atmosphere and an optimistic outlook, where parents foster harmonious interactions with one another.

The respondents, regardless of their age, occupation, or gender, have universally shown a strong desire for emotional support from their family. However, they claim that their parents are significantly deficient in that area. They have expressed dissatisfaction with their parents' lack of emotional responsiveness. By "emotional response," they are referring to the need of parents

showing empathy as their initial reaction. Parents should possess the capacity to exhibit tolerance while attentively listening to their child and trying to comprehend their emotions. Parental emotional detachment results in children concealing their personal emotions, hence producing communication difficulties. Children lack the confidence to openly communicate their problems without any hesitation. They prefer confiding in a third party rather than their parents. Some female respondents believe that parents should promote gender equality to ensure equitable development for their sons and daughters. This includes not underestimating the girls in the household and considering them a burden. They experience gender-based inequities in treatment according to their female gender.

In the realm of academia, it has become increasingly prevalent for parents to exert excessive pressure on their children to excel. It is depressing to witness individuals prioritizing the validation of their peers over the genuine well-being of themselves or their children. A number of participants encountered difficulties with their parents in relation to this matter. They claim that their parents have high scholastic expectations of them and there is no room for anything else. They had persistent pressure to excel in academics, resulting in unfavorable situations inside their household. In addition to these individuals, there are some who believe that their parents do not comprehend their desires and aspirations in terms of their academic and professional pursuits. Imposing academic expectations on a child that are unrealistic or illogical for their abilities might result in several hardships throughout their life. Below, we will discuss a specific situation related to this matter:

Case 1: Ninid (27), a current undergraduate student studying LLB at a private university in Chittagong, experienced significant academic-related stress due to conflicts with his parents. Upon finishing his Secondary School Certificate (SSC), he expressed a desire to transition from the field of science to pursue commerce for his Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC). He believed that commerce was his true calling and the area where he could excel. He desired to pursue business due to the difficulty he faced with physics, chemistry, and mathematics. He believed he would perform poorly in those domains. However, his parents refused to allow him to move. According to his father, due to his consistent focus on studying science, it would not be advisable to suddenly change his field of study. Moreover, he believed that as the sole male offspring, he should pursue a career in science due to the greater opportunities it offers for success in life. They failed to comprehend that their youngster lacked proficiency in science. Therefore, an individual who lacks proficiency in a certain domain will not excel in that domain, regardless of its lucrative nature in terms of opportunities. Consequently, the unavoidable occurred. Pursuing science in HSC had a catastrophic impact on him. He performed poorly in his board examination. His GPA plummeted significantly. Consequently, he was unable to gain entrance into any prestigious university. He is currently pursuing an LLB only for the purpose of obtaining a degree. This incident caused a significant conflict between him and his father. He consistently attributes his academic decline only to his father. His aspiration was to pursue a business education, but he was unable to do this due to his father's traditional outlook towards his academic pursuits. Due to his HSC results, he

was unable to pursue a BBA degree. He had to deviate from his love and enrol in LLB, a field he lacks enthusiasm for. He is merely pursuing it for the sake of obtaining a degree. He believes that with his father's support, he has the potential to achieve significant success. This incident caused a significant rift between Ninid and his father.

From a financial standpoint, we have identified a disparity between males and females. The investigation revealed that boys in this region were experiencing parental difficulties more frequently than girls. The overarching concern about both male and female viewpoints is that parents lack comprehension of the potential financial requirements their children may encounter in the external realm. They frequently fail to provide financial support for their children due to the belief that their demands are superfluous. In addition, males often have unique expectations from their parents or extended family to achieve financial stability at the earliest opportunity. This is due to the perception that they are the sole sons and so responsible for supporting their family. One person expressed concern about this matter, as he is fully aware of his obligation and is eager to assume the financial burden of his family. However, the main concern he experiences is the ongoing and unwavering pressure exerted by his environment, to such an extent that he believes he was unable to fully enjoy his best years as a result.

Occasionally, individuals residing in a collective household or in close proximity to their extended family encounter challenges related to their relatives, resulting in a strained connection with their parents. Occasionally, family members might create obstacles that hinder individuals from achieving a state of well-being inside the family. When individuals reside with or near their extended family, they have challenges related to financial matters that result in feelings of inferiority. Based on the feedback from my participants, there have been instances when they experienced financial hardship. During that phase, their affluent extended family stepped up to aid. The problem for my respondents arose from the assistance provided by their families, which they tended to flaunt. According to certain responders, they experience an unusual sense of obligation from their parents to avoid doing anything that would hurt individuals who sought assistance during their difficult times. They feel compelled to always tread carefully around them. It is claimed that they will stay closed even when their family member is speaking in an inappropriate manner. The individual has frustration with their parents' submissiveness towards them and the relatives' disregard for their feelings, despite having supported them in the past. Alternatively, some parents prioritize societal perception over their children's emotional well-being. This is a concern that affects both male and female participants. They believe that parents should adopt the new mindset and values to be helpful, empathetic, and open when it comes to sharing their children's new perspectives. However, much to their dismay, their parents are nowhere close to that location. For parents, an ideal family is one in which the children are consistently governed by rules. It is necessary for children to exhibit obedience towards their parents. This thinking frequently leads to rigidity and a lack of openness from the children's perspective. They perceive their parents as being too preoccupied with others' opinions and judgments. As a result, due to their fear of society, they modify their behaviour towards children



in accordance with societal expectations. One of the replies recounts the following experience:

Case 2: Rodoshi, aged 24, is currently pursuing her undergraduate degree. She resides with her parents and two of her siblings. Her uncle on her mother's side resides in close proximity to them. They operate in a manner like that of a collective family unit. Rodoshi (24) states that her parents are too aware of their surroundings. They hold the belief that it is imperative to uphold society's standards and rules, as they perceive them to be infallible. They prioritize society's opinions and judgments over the well-being of their own children. Rodoshi, who is 24 years old, feels that her parents do not listen to her. She recently encountered an inappropriate physical contact during a family event, specifically from one of her closest male relatives. She divulged this information to her parents with the expectation of acting. However, much to her dismay, her relatives inquired about her certainty on the matter. They ignored the occurrence by attributing it to her uncertainty. Upon expressing her concern, her relatives retorted by attributing the responsibility on her for not exercising caution or dressing appropriately. She was advised to drop the action due to the potential negative impact it could have on her reputation in society, given that she is a female. Their primary concern was the perception of society rather than their daughter's emotions. The lack of support from her parents inflicted severe psychological distress onto her, prompting her to make the decision to depart from her household.

Superstitious beliefs might contribute to the dysfunctionality of a family. Several of the participants' families are discovered to hold beliefs in superstitious phenomena. Some individuals are discovered to have a profound inclination towards spirituality. These kind of beliefs within a family foster a strong bond between children and their parents, as the children feel unable to express themselves openly due to the fear that their thoughts would be disregarded based on irrational, supernatural, or superstitious grounds. A significant number of parents were shown to be engaging in unwarranted acts of physical and emotional abuse towards these individuals. They perceived themselves as being subjected to their father's anger, which included instances of objects being thrown at them, being evicted from their home, and being severely beaten with various chemicals. In addition to the individuals, there are parents, particularly fathers, who fail to establish a commendable model for their offspring. Particularly for their male offspring. Not all dysfunctional families are consistently physically aggressive. Occasionally, a seemingly content and traditional family might be the most psychologically harmful for its members as they develop.

### *3.3 Navigating the Complexities of Mental Health*

Optimal mental health is a crucial determinant of a balanced and efficient lifestyle. Bangladesh, classified as a lower middle-income nation in South Asia, has a population of 163 million, positioning it as the ninth most populated country globally. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, Bangladesh has experienced significant disruption to its mental health. An investigation of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental well-being of adults in Bangladesh in 2020 has

revealed a significantly elevated occurrence of depressed symptoms (57.9%), stress (59.7%), and anxiety (33.7%) in the adult population. The authors of the publication are Banna, Sayeed, Kundu, Christopher, Hasan, and Begum, and the publication was made in 2020. A separate investigation conducted in the same year examined the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health and well-being of Bangladeshi students who were in home quarantine. The study discovered that 28.5% of the students experienced stress, 33.3% experienced anxiety, and 46.92% experienced depressive symptoms (Khan, Sultana, Hossain, Hasan, Ahmed & Sikder, 2020). Based on this information, it is evident that people have been spending more time with their families during the quarantine period. The positive and negative aspects of this situation have been clearly demonstrated in the statistics. The adverse family dynamics are causing the emergence of mental health problems among individuals. These problems manifest as worry, sleeplessness, low self-esteem, feelings of inferiority, tension, and various other mental diseases. Based on the feedback from my participants, they began experiencing mental health challenges because of the circumstances they encountered inside their family.

Anxiety is the most prevalent mental health concern among the respondents in my study. They experience significant anxiety difficulties because of the challenging circumstances involving their parents. They experience a sense of being triggered due to the feelings of helplessness they encounter in relation to their parents. Most individuals experience the problem of being unable to communicate effectively or express their desires to their parents. They perceive that their attempts to communicate are consistently misinterpreted. The persistent verbal and emotional discord occurring in their surroundings has significantly contributed to the activation of their anxiety. In addition to anxiety, my responders frequently have self-esteem concerns. While self-esteem difficulties may not be classified as a mental condition, research indicates a significant correlation between mental health and self-esteem. Individuals exhibiting depressive symptoms often display a pattern of low self-confidence accompanied by obsessive tendencies. (Benwell, 2022). Individuals who experience consistent comparisons with others from their parents tend to develop psychological conditions such as inferiority complex, lack of self-confidence, and excessive self-assurance. The respondent experienced constant comparison with his older brother, who was academically superior to him. He perceived that his mother had a dislike towards him due to his comparatively inferior scholastic achievements in comparison to his sibling. He believed that his relatives regarded him as a disgrace to their family. These factors resulted in him developing a highly pessimistic and self-aware personality. A case is registered below:

Case 3: Akib, who is 27 years old, has suffered from poor mental health from his childhood due to the persistent comparisons made by his family with his older brother. The initial self-reflective inquiry he posed to himself was regarding the reason for the persistent comparisons he faced, despite his utmost efforts. He harbours a perpetual dread that he will never attain adequacy. Since childhood, he has never experienced happiness due to the constant comparisons with his brother, which made him feel immensely self-conscious. His extended family frequently used to draw

comparisons between his physical appearance and that of his sibling. They would make comments about his inferior physical appearance compared to his older brother, mentioning that he is less attractive, has a darker complexion, less gorgeous hair, and is shorter in stature. Due to the overwhelming sense of imposed inadequacy, he captured only a single photograph of himself during his entire lifetime. He has perpetually had discomfort with his own identity and has consistently lacked contentment due to these feelings. He expressed a strong affinity for graphic design, according to his own words. However, his mother strongly forbade him from doing so. If he is engaged in a positive or fulfilling activity, she will deliberately strive to make him feel miserable about it. His parents never expressed sentiments such as "I'm proud of you" or "I'm happy for you" to him. He perceives that they never acknowledged or commemorated his minor accomplishments. All these factors exacerbated his despair and heightened his self-consciousness. His entire youth was characterized by trauma until he reached college. The accumulation of these various pressures is taking a toll on him. In addition to his mother's mental abuse, his father was also physically abusive. After receiving a worse score in mathematics, his father subjected him to a severe physical assault in a manner that appeared to be an act of attempted homicide from his perspective. His older brother had a more severe treatment from his sibling. His brother continues to experience recurring nightmares because of his father's physical abuse. Given all these occurrences, his boyhood appears to be a traumatic period for him.

The presence of such a detrimental atmosphere characterized by high levels of stress has been discovered to result in significant challenges to their self-esteem. Overly ambitious parents have high expectations on their children's academic performance, demanding perfection. This cohort of children developed a habit of constantly measuring themselves against their peers due to the explicit expectations set by their parents, compelling them to outperform others. In addition to these factors, many of them have also experienced depressive stress. Two individuals possess a history of clinical depression. Stress manifests itself in many forms due to various causes. Some individuals experience stress due to the academic expectations imposed by their parents, while others experience stress because their parents are overly reactive and sensitive, making it difficult for them to have open conversations.

Some individuals perceive themselves as lacking proficiency in certain areas. Some individuals believe that they were not provided with sufficient opportunity for self-improvement by their parents. Due to the absence of options for engaging in extracurricular activities, they were unable to fully realize their potential. Certain individuals possess a proclivity to engage in self-comparisons with others. Occasionally, these experiences elicit powerful emotions, such as feelings of suicidality. One of the participants, Minhaj (22), revealed that he made three suicide attempts.

During the interviews with my responders, we encountered some unfamiliar terms. One individual stated that he suffers from agoraphobia. Agoraphobia is classified as an anxiety disorder. An

individual suffering from agoraphobia experiences a profound fear of venturing outside of familiar or perceived safe surroundings. Individuals with agoraphobia, in extreme instances, perceive their residence as the sole secure setting. They may refrain from venturing outside their residence for extended periods of time, spanning from days to months, or possibly stretching into years. The person who is experiencing agoraphobia asserts that they have it, as they refrain from leaving their room and even engaging with their own family. He prefers to stay in his room constantly, avoiding social interaction. He believes that the reason for this is the harmful relationship he has with people, including his parents, when he is outside his room. Consequently, he has a sense of security and ease only by staying within the confines of his room. One of my responders introduced me to the term megalomania. A megalomaniac is an individual who possesses an abnormally intense desire for power and control, or who perceives themselves as significantly more important and powerful than they are. They are commonly referred to as those with a GOD complex. This is a critique of those who are believed to have an inflated sense of self-importance. Individuals who experience the absence of their parents, both in terms of physical presence and emotional support, often spend a significant portion of their childhood in solitude. There is a reduced number of individuals who oversee and manage them. As a result, individuals have a strong attachment to their freedom and are unwilling to make compromises. They somewhat cultivate a self-righteous demeanour in which they perceive themselves as superior to everyone else.

This sense of superiority does not necessarily have to be seen as a negative critique. Omy, who is 25 years old, asserts that he possesses a GOD complex, although he does not perceive himself as being superior to others. He experiences joy when he observes others in his vicinity engaging in virtuous actions. He does not consider himself to be on the same level as humans and hence does not believe he should be compared to them. In addition to the aforementioned factors, some individuals can experience attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that impacts individuals' behavioural patterns. Individuals with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) may exhibit signs of restlessness, experience difficulties in maintaining focus, and demonstrate impulsive behaviour. Individuals who experience impulsiveness may have an overwhelming want to cry in any location and in response to any unexpected event, regardless of its significance or timing. They tend to respond to their emotional impulses rather than to rationality. Certain individuals have been seen to engage in excessive eating when under stress. Some individuals exhibit quiet aggressiveness. Whenever I become irritated about something at home, I like to express my frustration by getting into an argument with someone outside of my household. Some individuals believe they have temperament issues because of the frequent verbal arguments they encounter with their parents daily. A significant number of individuals have reported a progressive deterioration in their ability to moderate their anger. Some individuals have a history of seeking professional assistance, and a few have even been discovered to have consulted with a neurologist. The responders exhibit various mental problems such as bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, speech dysfluency, rumination, anger management concerns, and sleeplessness.

### *3.4: The Interplay of Negativity in Social and Personal Realm*

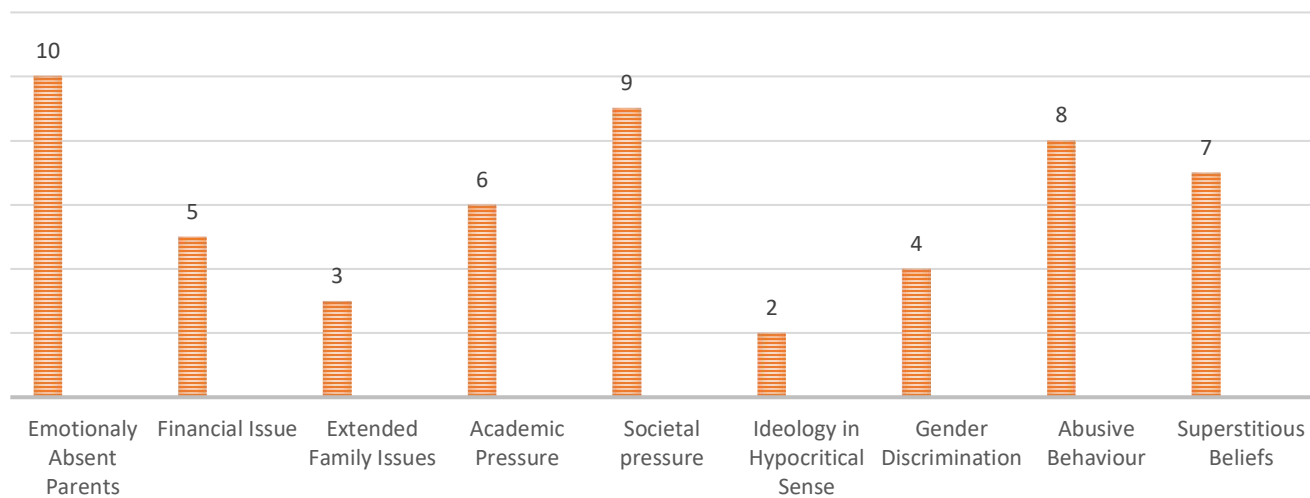
Individuals that encounter negativity within their familial surroundings also experience the detrimental effects of this negativity in their social and personal spheres. Due to their upbringing, many individuals developed a profound sense of inadequacy, anxiety, and poor self-worth, which is evident in their interactions with others. Approximately 90% of the participants encounter difficulties in socializing and managing their interpersonal connections. They had social anxiety when interacting with others. The adverse familial dynamics manifest in individuals through the development of trust issues, resulting in their reluctance to engage in social interactions. Individuals who lack experience in familial communication tend to engage in less communication with their friends, leading to difficulties in their friendships. Many individuals in this social context tend to exhibit reduced expressiveness or fear excessive self-expression, resulting in limited communication with individuals outside their immediate circle, such as friends, spouses, colleagues, and so on. Individuals who are brought up with exceedingly low self-regard encounter difficulty in establishing friendships with others. Several individuals had stringent parental limitations from an early age, being instructed to associate only with others who met their parents' approval. As a result of this inclination, they would be unable to establish and sustain connections with individuals. Individuals from dysfunctional family dynamics often lack the necessary conditioning to effectively engage and interact with others outside their household, hindering their ability to socialize. The majority of them come from a household in which their parents have imposed severe rules around socializing and interacting with others. Some individuals even had the firsthand experience of being transported by their mother all the way through their university years. Furthermore, exacerbating the situation, parents do not engage in such forms of communication within their household. The absence or inadequate implementation of social norms might result in a child who has been raised in such an environment experiencing difficulty in interacting with others when they are eventually exposed to the outside world in order to meet their basic needs.

Here, the parents of these persons overlook the fact that, as parents, they will not always be present to supervise or protect their children. Eventually, parents must let their children to become independent. Their offspring will be alone in this world when they are no longer alive. They fail to equip their child with the necessary skills to live independently. Consequently, these persons experience social awkwardness in the presence of others. They appear to lack the ability to establish a strong connection with others. Certain individuals acknowledge that they are gradually transforming into a different iteration of their detrimental parental figures. They experience the persistent negativity emanating from their parents, causing some to become conditioned or absorbed by it. Many individuals acknowledge experiencing anger issues in the present day, often finding themselves easily agitated. They are slowly approaching a point when they no longer have any liking for people. An example illustrating this is as follows:

Case 4: Minhaj, who was 22 years old, was restricted from leaving his house until he reached the 8th or 9th grade. The reason for this is because his parents were concerned about the potential negative effect of certain individuals or groups. His lack of socialization stemmed from that point. He struggled with socializing and faced bullying at school. He believed that he was receiving distinct influences from three separate domains: school, home, and society. He was unable to comprehend what to include or exclude. He abstains from meeting individuals in person. He has trouble in socializing with those outside his own circle. He claims that if an unknown uncle were to unexpectedly slap him, he would be unable to respond in kind. He suffers from agoraphobia. He is afraid when he leaves his room. He is at ease interacting with individuals in the digital realm. He has internet acquaintances with whom he feels at ease. A noteworthy observation is that individuals who lacked open and honest relationships with their parents sought such connections with individuals outside of their own households. These individuals did not receive sufficient attention from their parents, leading them to seek fulfilment from those outside their household. This, in turn, resulted in significant problems for some of them. An analogous case is as follows:

Case 5: Reena (25) asserts that she had a long-standing relationship from her school days when she believed she had found all her physical, mental, emotional, and materialistic needs fulfilled. She developed a strong emotional dependency on that individual. She believed that entering into a relationship with that someone would provide her with a sense of security. Upon receiving the attention, love, and devotion that she believed was lacking in her family, she became deeply attached to her boyfriend. She experienced a sense of validation, being heard, and receiving special treatment in that particular environment. Having acquired all of these things, she was prepared to sacrifice everything she had for it. She pushed herself to do something that made her uncomfortable, but she did it anyway to maintain the attention she was receiving. When the relationship ended, it caused her perception of being in a relationship to be questioned. It caused a significant disruption for her. She had profound distress in her social, intellectual, and mental spheres. She did not handle it effectively. It shattered her self-assurance and faith in establishing any new connection. She reveals that she had been involved in a casual relationship that was temporary and never progressed into a committed relationship.

Some individuals acknowledge that while they undergo personal growth, they may unintentionally adopt some traits or behaviours from their parents, which can make it challenging to maintain a healthy connection with their partners due to trust difficulties that have been ingrained in their familial environment. My survey participants who come from a history of separated families acknowledge experiencing feelings of abandonment and difficulties with commitment in their relationships. These types of relationship problems contribute to the emergence of terms like "situation ship," "open relationship," and "benching." In these situations, two individuals are hesitant to fully commit to each other, leading to significant stress for both parties. Consequently, people are becoming more distant from the concept of marriage and having children.



**Figure 4: Assorted Form of Dysfunctional Behaviour by Parents**

#### 4. Discussion

Many respondents attributed this scenario with their parents to the parents' orthodox worldview when questioned about the likely reason. They experience the generation gap, with the primary cause being the difference in age. The parents of these respondents are rather hesitant to embrace progress. They are so deeply entrenched in the established society conventions that they are unable to recognize their child's pain. This traditional parenting culture has been in existence since ancient times, when individuals in more primitive societies lived together as a community. It would be premature to assert that certain parenting techniques are incorrect. In the past, when society was communal, individuals prioritized their basic needs and had to consider the well-being of others beyond their immediate family to thrive within the community. Man is the creator of culture due to his inherent needs (Kuddus et al., 2020; Benedict, 1934). Human needs can be satisfied by establishing social standards in their living environment. Family is a fundamental requirement for both a man's biological and social well-being, which is met by maintaining relationships with others in their surroundings. Culture can be understood as an expanded version of an individual's personality. An individual's cognitive processes are influenced by their surroundings. Thus, we can see why these long-standing customs continue to exist in our parents' minds, as they also observed similar patterns in the way their own parents raised them. These are hereditary traits that are being passed down through generations. However, society has already reached a stage where these rules are gradually becoming obsolete due to the current times, we live in.

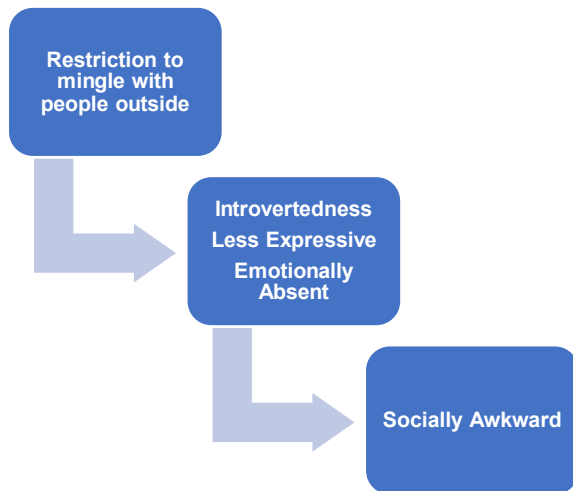
These existing dysfunctional surroundings serve as cultural entities inside our society. These are perceived as ordinary. These activities result in youngsters raised in this environment developing personas such as 'caretaker', 'scapegoat', or 'peacemaker'. This occurs because the expectations

stemming from these dysfunctional societies have an impact on the formation of one's personality (Kuddus et al., 2021; Mead, 1928). The negative circumstances inside families have a detrimental effect on an individual's personal growth and development. Adversities experienced during childhood have enduring effects on individuals' ideas, attitudes, and morals. It assimilates specific detrimental behaviours as standard. The presence of maladaptive dynamics between individuals and their parents is resulting in a notable estrangement between them (Sazzad et al., 2023). A significant number of these participants assert that they experience emotional detachment from their parents. Consequently, families experienced disintegration, with parents and children separating or only having sporadic encounters. A significant number of these respondents expressed that they have reduced communication with their parents. In order to deal with the dysfunctional culture inside their families, they made the decision to prioritize their own mental well-being by distancing themselves. Thus, we are progressing towards a Western cultural norm where the cohabitation of parents and their offspring is becoming less common. This is how we can observe the introduction of a new culture into the horizon of our familial culture (Moniruzzaman et al., 2023).

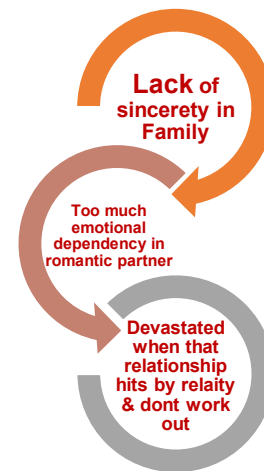
Based on the above chart, it is evident that there is a diverse array of mental health problems experienced by individuals because of their family circumstances. According to Dr. Murray Bowen's Family System Theory, human beings and families function as a cohesive emotional unit. Therefore, within a family, the actions of one member elicit reactions from others. The family is an intricate social entity in which the interaction among its members and their inherent characteristics shapes the behaviour of those residing within it. The foregoing statements clearly demonstrate the impact of everyone's family's dysfunctional behaviour on them. As a result, the conditions in their family setting and the negative relationship with their parents triggered emotional distress in them, which eventually led to the development of severe clinical depression in some individuals. The families' lack of effective communication and improper boundaries had a profound influence on the mental health of the respondents, significantly affecting their self-esteem (Islam et al., 2023). The table and the statements indicate that there are discrepancies in terms of mental and emotional health difficulties among these respondents. This variety is attributed to the diverse range of distorted and disputed behaviours occurring within their familial environment. The diversity of cultural practices has a significant impact on human behaviour. The source cited is Mead's work from 1928. Likewise, the assortment of maladaptive conduct is contributing to the prevalence of a broad spectrum of mental health disorders in individuals. It is disheartening to observe that a significant number of these cases are not receiving assistance from any professionals, except for a handful. What is even more disheartening is that parents fail to give any attention or recognition to that. They may be under the impression that their children are perfectly OK, while in fact, they are not. There is a prevailing social prejudice surrounding mental health, in which many still view obtaining therapy from a psychiatrist as a reflection of a severe and damaging health condition.



The pictures above illustrate that an individual who grows up in an emotionally absent household is impacted in both their social and personal life (Sunny et al., 2020). He struggles to establish his own social circle and attempts to fill the lack of attention and genuine connection with those outside of his family. When things go according to plan, as we observed in the case studies, it might lead to negative outcomes.



**Figure 6: Impacts on Social Realm**



**Figure 7: Impacts on Personal Realm**

Individuals experiencing difficulties in socializing also encounter challenges in establishing their social identity. As previously said in the theoretical framework, the disrupted home environment is the cause of the distortion in the normal process of an individual's socialization, as explained in the comments above. Mead's (1930) theory emphasizes the significance of socialization in the development of an individual's social identity. However, these responses have been unsuccessful in accomplishing that task. Currently, individuals are increasingly inclined towards forming friendships in the virtual realm rather than in the physical world. They prioritize their friendship through digital communication rather than face-to-face interaction. Currently, there is a progressive decline in people's perception of marriage, children, and other related concepts. The probable cause for these can be inferred from the assertions. Individuals who witness dysfunctional parenting, unsuccessful relationships, and the prevalence of poison in their family life may find it overwhelming to fully grasp the value of the institution of marriage (Sazzad et al., 2023). Individuals who experience unfavorable family dynamics are less likely to develop beliefs in such relationships. The relationship between culture and personality is interdependent. They exert mutual influence. A prevailing trend among many individuals nowadays is their inclination to avoid forming long-term or committed relationships with one another. He is influenced by the dysfunctional or failed marriages of others around him, which makes him feel that these relationships have no value for him. This worldview is widespread among most young people nowadays. This phenomenon is commonly known as "modal personality," which has been

extensively explored in the literature review section and was theorized by Linton (1945), Kardiner (1945), and Cora-Du-Bois (1944).

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study has examined the complex connection between dysfunctional family cultures and their significant influence on the development of individual personality. Extensive examination and combination of existing material have revealed that the family unit plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' personalities. Maladaptive familial interactions, marked by instances of disregard, mistreatment, discord, and maladjustment, can profoundly impact an individual's mental and emotional well.

As mentioned in the chapters on findings, a shared characteristic among all the dysfunctional families analysed is the parents' lack of responsiveness to their child's emotional well-being. The majority of respondents have expressed that their parents fail to allocate time to comprehend their perspective on various situations. This resulted in the emergence of diverse manifestations of misfit culture within a family, hence rendering it dysfunctional. The primary grievance expressed by their parents is that they prioritize societal concerns over the emotional well-being of their children. A significant number of the parents of these respondents have been identified as engaging in both physical and psychological abuse. It is alleged that they engage in emotional manipulation towards them. The parents of these responders are perceived to have pedantic mindsets. According to their assertions, their parents are resistant to adopting a modern attitude and are unwilling to even contemplate the necessary changes for the current day. Some parents still adhere to a culture of son supremacy, believing that their sons will provide more benefits for them than their daughters. Some parents continue to hold onto spiritual and superstitious beliefs that deeply impact their children's mental well-being and social interactions. Individuals who have experienced significant academic pressure imposed by their parents to excel in their education have asserted that it has undermined their capacity to confront and navigate failure. Individuals who have been habituated to strive for perfection throughout their lives sometimes struggle to cope with the ordinary experience of failure and are prone to being easily frustrated. The inclusion of additional sequences depicting extended family concerns introduces a multitude of intricate challenges, ultimately undermining the idyllic portrayal of a harmonious joint family for the viewer. Therefore, individuals find it tranquil to reside alone.

The various types of maladaptive behaviours within a family create an extremely challenging living environment for an individual. These have a detrimental effect on the individuals involved. The tumultuous atmosphere inside families can adversely impact an individual's psychological well-being, leading to the development of numerous mental diseases such as anxiety, depression, and anger management problems. When families excessively pressure their child by constantly comparing them to their peers, it can lead to the youngster developing great self-consciousness

and difficulty feeling good about themselves in comparison to others. These individuals experience an inferiority complex due to the poor self-esteem instilled in them by their family. On the other hand, there are individuals who develop a superiority complex as a means of protecting themselves from the bad emotions instilled by their parents. There are instances in which individuals have received support from psychiatrists and neurologists. A family that is unable of providing a conducive environment for the growth and well-being of their children might have a detrimental impact on their mental health, potentially leading to suicidal tendencies. These kinds of challenges are predominantly evident in individuals' adulthood as they observe and encounter harmful behaviour while growing up. The assimilation of these negative qualities into their characters can manifest in both understated and commanding ways. Research has shown that individuals who experience bad home environments tend to exhibit introverted behaviour, have difficulty expressing themselves, and struggle with effective communication in their interactions with peers or colleagues. They have been discovered to lack the social aptitude or proficiency to engage in meaningful conversations with others. The primary factor contributing to this phenomenon is the strictness of their parents when it comes to socializing with others. According to them, their parents were highly aware of their whereabouts, companions, and other related details. They were subject to limitations about social interactions and were not allowed to leave academic institutions or similar settings. The upbringing provided by their parents has left these individuals unsure with how to engage with others or establish relationships with them. In addition to this, a significant number of these respondents encounter significant difficulties in their personal relationships with their respective partners. They claim that their lack of trust is a result of the repeated experiences they have had throughout time during their upbringing. Individuals originating from dysfunctional households have been observed to have profound levels of self-esteem deficiency. They often experience fear and doubt regarding their own worthiness to be in the company of others, which leads to a constant sense of suspicion within their relationships. Moreover, these individuals often lack the desire to marry or have children as a result of the adverse circumstances they have encountered. Their parents inflicted lasting emotional damage upon them. They perceive it as an unfavourable notion for them to pursue. These mindsets of individuals are causing them to engage in relationships that lack commitment, are transient, and involve multiple partners.

The primary disparity between the attitude of these parents and children lies in their conception of provision. While these parents believe that fulfilling the fundamental requirements and giving necessary resources is sufficient for their parental responsibilities, their children perceive it as a more complex and multifaceted duty. Parents should provide emotional support to their children, creating a safe environment where they can freely express their feelings without fear of judgment and be understood. The results of this investigation highlight the significance of identifying and dealing with dysfunctional family cultures as major factors that contribute to maladaptive personality traits and behaviours. The consequences of dysfunctional home situations are numerous and long-lasting, ranging from recurrent feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem to challenges in establishing healthy relationships and managing stress. Furthermore, this study

emphasizes the necessity of specific assistance programs designed to alleviate the adverse impacts of dysfunctional family cultures on the development of individual personalities. Through promoting consciousness, enabling effective interaction, and offering support for recovery and development, individuals can be empowered to surpass the limitations imposed by their upbringing and nurture robust and adaptable personalities. This study enhances our comprehension of how familial effects and individual personality formation interact, highlighting the crucial role that family circumstances play in defining the course of human development.

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Each author participated in the development of the study design, data analysis, fieldwork, and execution stages. Each writer provided their consent upon reviewing the finished piece.

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