

Is the University Campus Gender Friendly? Explore the Status of Noakhali Science and Technology University

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ABSTRACT : This study employed to explore the current status of gender friendliness in Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU). A mixed explanatory research methodology is applied and mainly primary data are collected through using survey questionnaires, interview and FGD schedule. In this study, it has found that two third of the participants feel that, NSTU campus is gender friendly. Some positive initiative has been taken by the authority of the university are separate washroom for male and female, arranging comfortable psychotherapy support, growing positive attitude of the university stakeholders, active participation of male and female in cultural and co-curricular and political activities etc. Although there are numbers of improvement areas where university authority needs to pay their immediate attention to make their university more gender friendly. These are unhygienic and unhealthy washroom, no common room for male, no child care center and awkward feelings of the individuals to go to psychotherapists etc. To make the NSTU more gender friendly, 5 recommendations are also made.

KEY WORDS: Educational Development., Gender Friendly; NSTU; Physical Environment; Psychosocial Support.

1. INTRODUCTION

In most countries, students spend their maximum time in university campus. Along with traditional and academic learning, university campus is the place of learning with much broader duties, which go beyond the scope of traditional learning. The university campus is an environment in which young people learn about social relationships, about norms, values and the 'do's' and 'don'ts'. In other words, it is the environment in which professionals work with young people in a responsible manner focusing on the transfer of knowledge, skills and behavior. The university campus is also the environment in which students learn about their gender identity, the relationships between girls and boys, boys and boys and girls and girls. It is a process of learning 'who am I in relation to the others', and the environment of campus plays an important role in this process. The issue of gender identity is closely connected to gender equality and safety in university campus. NSTU is one of the highest educational institution in Bangladesh. And there are many opportunities for both male and female students to get admitted in this university. The socio-economic condition of Bangladesh is not gender friendly. Even its impact has also influenced the environment of NSTU (The daily star, May 27, 2019). But comparatively its environment is more suitable for female students. Though it is suitable but sometimes several unexpected incidents are occurred here like a girl was harassed by an outsider (Alokito Bangladesh, Online portal, Wednesday, 4th Sep, 2019). Sometimes they are harassed in many ways by their male counterparts too. Sometimes female teachers may have to endure misbehaves of their male colleagues. Sexual harassment is also seen in different social and traditional occasions like PahelaBaishakh, PahelaFalgun and Valentine's Day (Bangla Tribune, Online portal, Jan 2016). For examining the current status of gender friendly / Unfriendly campus environment of Noakhali Science and Technology University.

1.2 Objectives of the Study:

- To know about how males and female students play out gender roles in the campus of Noakhali Science University.

- To collect the opinion of the students of NSTU whether they pass their days in gender friendliness or not.
- To analyze the opinion and judgments of students about the gender friendliness of NSTU environment.
- To identify the need to develop policies, curricula and culture that support gender equity in varsity campus.
- To recommend how to solve existing problems

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Methods

This study is mixed and mainly explanatory research by nature and it is based on primary data collected from Interview Schedule, Survey Questionnaires and Focus Group Discussion (FGD).

2.2 Population and Sample Size: All students and the teachers of Noakhali Science and Technology University are the population of the study. Total 200 teachers and students participated in this study where 160 are students and 40 are teachers. Among of the 40 teachers, 20 are chosen for face to face interview and other 20 are chosen for Focus Group Discussion (FGD)



Figure 1: Sample size

2.3 Sampling Methods and Technique: A purposive sampling methods is applied in this study.

2.4 Data Collection tools and Techniques To collect the quantitative data a survey questionnaire was applied to collect data from students of different departments and faculties of NSTU. A Interview Schedule is developed and used to collect qualitative data form 20 teachers. A FGD schedule developed and conducted 4 FGD where 5 persons were the participants in each FGD.

2.4 Data Analysis: To analysis the data obtained from questionnaires, interview and FGD, a descriptive triangulation approach is used. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data increases the credibility and validity of this study. SPSS software was used for statistical analysis if the quantitative data. Different themes are identified, and data are analyzed under each theme. Simple percentages of respondents against the supplied evidence are computed for questionnaires, interview and FGD

III. AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

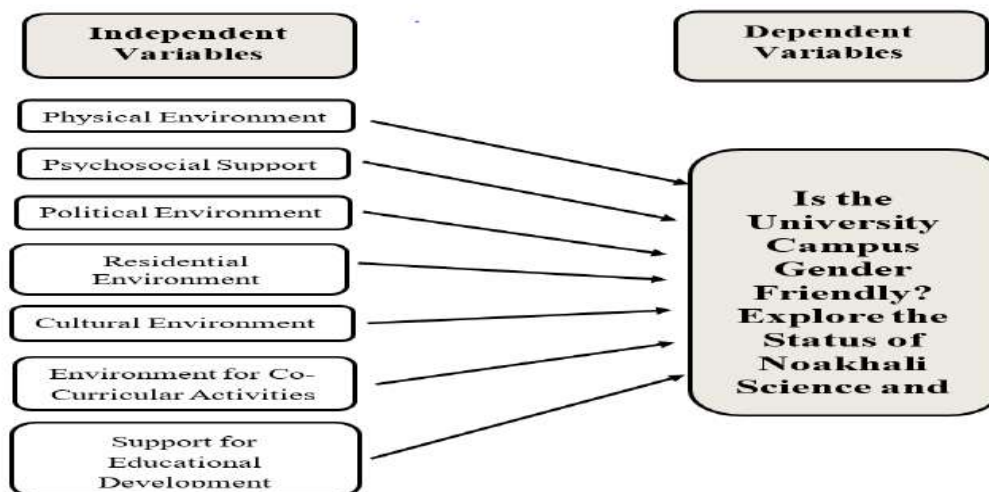


Figure 2: Analytical Framework

3.1 Measurable Indicators for Independent Variable

Dependent Variable	Explanatory Variables	Measurable Indicators
Is the University Campus Gender Friendly? Explore the Status of NSTU	Physical Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having Separate Washrooms Having Separate Common Rooms Having Child Care Center for Female Students Who have Children
	Psychosocial Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Equity in Psychotherapy and Student Advising Gender Friendliness in Social Relationships with friends and official staffs
	Political Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity in Political Meeting Placement in Committee Gender balance in Political Procession
	Residential Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halls Compare with Number of Students Environment in front of Female Halls
	Cultural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encouraging both genders to participate in programs-Rag Days, PahelaBaishakh Celebration, Fresher's Reception Harassment during cultural programs
	Environment for Extra-Curricular Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in Sports Having Gender Friendly Swimming, Gymnasium Participation in Various Clubs
	Support for Educational Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research/ Field Work Environment Gender unbiased Scholarship

Table -Measurable Indicators for Independent Variable

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Physical Environment

Table 1: Having separate washrooms for both male and female students

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	110	68.75
No	50	31.25
Total:	160	100

Table 1 shows 68.75% respondents said there are separate wash rooms for male and female students in NSTU. On the other hand, around 31% students blamed that, they haven't separate wash rooms for male and female. That means they feel negative that, their washrooms aren't separate. In the interview most almost same response came out from the participants. Where most of the male students responded negatively as there are no common rooms for boys. On the other hand, most of the female students responded positively as they have full facility regarding common room. Though male students have the facility of separate toilet and washroom but most of the washrooms are unhygienic.

Table 2: Having separate common rooms for both male and female students

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Yes	40	25

No	120	75
Total:	160	100

Table 2 presents the status of separate common rooms for male and female students in NSTU. Here only 25% respondents said that there are separate common rooms in NSTU for male and female students. On the other hand, majority of the students 75% respondents blamed that, there is no separate common rooms for the students. It is said that gender is not only an issue for female but also for male. So, positive answers only from 25% student are poor findings. P₂FGD₃ said that *male students have the facility of separate toilet and washroom but most of the washrooms are unhygienic and unhealthy.*

Table 3: Having Child Care Center

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Yes	10	6.25
No	135	84.38
No Idea	15	9.38
Total:	160	100

Above table-3, 15 students don't have any idea about having child care center for the teachers' and students' children. Among other respondents, only 10 said "Yes", another 135 said "No". Same opinions also shared by the FGD participants. P₁FGD₃ said that – *"There is no child care center in NSTU for teachers' children, not for female students' children so that teachers and students having young baby suffering a lots. As a result they have not been able to pay their full attention in their teaching learning process"*.

4.2 Psychosocial Environment

Table 4: Comfortable Psychotherapy and Advising Center for both Genders

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Yes	64	40
No	70	43.75
No Idea	26	16.25
Total	160	100

Among 160 students, Majority of them (70) gave opinion that, there is no comfortable access for male and female in psychotherapy centers. 26 respondents said "No Idea" and only 64 said "Yes" It is important to note that, 40% gave opinion that there is comfortable access another 43.75% gave negative comments. P₃FGD₄ said- *"There are separate time schedule for male and female in psychotherapy centers. There are also student advisers in every department which is good for both male and female gender. As well as there are separate psychotherapists in NSTU who is providing regular support where required"*. One interview participants shared that most of the time female students feel awkward to go to psychotherapists.

Table 5: Attitude of Office Staffs with Male and Female Students

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Same Attitude	119	74.37
Biased Attitude	41	25.63
Total:	160	100

Among 160 respondents, 119 said that, office staffs' behaviors are same with them as with male and females. 41 respondents blamed that staffs are biased attitude with students. So, in percentages, 74.37% said that, behavior is same and another 25.63% said that biased attitude is acute.

Table 6: Behavior of Male Students with their Female Counterparts

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Friendly	70	43.75
Unfriendly	15	9.38
Dominating	54	33.75
No Answer	21	13.12
Total:	160	100

Among 160 respondents, 70 said that, their behavior is friendly with their female students. Another 54 said that, sometimes students are seen to be dominated by their senior counterparts in campus. So, in percentages, 43.75% said that, behavior is friendly, 33.75% said that this is dominating and 9.38% said that, they face unfriendly behavior. Another 13.12 % didn't give any feedback.

4.3 Political Environment:

Table 7: Opinion about Dignity in Political Meetings

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Yes	74	46.25
No	86	53.75
Total:	160	100

This table is mainly focus on the clear picture about the dignity of male and female students during the political meetings. Most of the respondents (86) said "NO" that means they do not get same dignity during giving opinion in political meetings. Another (74) opined that they get same dignity during giving opinion in political meetings. Majority of the interviewee said that political involvement of students has a big influence on the campus environment in NSTU. University authority is independent of political influence. Many of them also expressed their content about the absence of political violence and unrest within their premises. Majority of them also confirmed about the occurrence of violence and unrest which results from the difference in political ideology and struggle for post in political parties. P₄FGD₃ said that *in most cases females stay in front of political procession and other is political meeting is open for both genders. Female are getting post in the political parties but higher posts are not got by female.*

4.4 Residential Environment :

Table 8: Perception about Residential Environment

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Residents Friendly	141	83.13
Residents Unfriendly	19	11.87
Total:	160	100

It is described that, among 160 male and female students 141 said that, there exists residence friendly environment for inside or outside any halls. For females it is an important issue to have residence friendly environment. It is an indicator for gender friendliness. Only 19 students said that there exists gender unfriendly as well as residence unfriendly situation. Among all respondents, 88.13% said that, there is residence friendly environment for both male and female gender and only 11.87% said that it is residence unfriendly.

Majority of the participants of the interview said that residential environment of NSTU is very secure for female. Some other also said that both male and females students feel less tired, as they come from nearer halls. One important point shared by P₃FGD₂. He said- most of the staffs in female residential hall of NSTU are male so that female feels awkward and uneasy in some cases. On the other hand P₄FGD₂ said that- *"Most of the time washroom and toilet remain busy and dining are overcrowded while having food in male halls"*. On the

contrary, female students get tremendous advantages from hall as they do not have any over crowded problem. In addition to that they do not have extra political pressure. So, it is said that the residential environment of female halls is better than male halls.

4.5 Cultural Environment:

Table 9: Equal Participation Encouraged in Cultural Programs

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Yes	145	90.63
No	15	9.37
Total:	160	100

It is really good indicator that among 160 respondents (Male, Female), 145 thinks that they are equally encouraged for taking part in cultural programs. Another 15 respondents weren't giving positive feedback. In total 90.63% of total respondents said that, both genders are equally encouraged. Another 9.37% said that, they are not equally encouraged. Most of the interviewee of this study also said that – *“Both male and female are equally participating in different cultural program like RAG day, PahelaBaishakh, PohelaFalgun etc. Both male and female are moving around in NSTU campus, Fresher's reception is open for all etc.”*.

Table 10: The environment of NSTU is gender friendly in terms of any kind of movement raging from demonstration to normal moving

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Yes	115	71.87
No	45	28.13
Total:	160	100

This table is mainly focus on the clear picture about the environment of NSTU is gender friendly in terms of any kind of movement raging from demonstration to normal moving. Most of the respondents (45) said “NO” that means they do not face same raging. Another (115) opined that they face.

Table 11: Gender Violence during Cultural Programs

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Yes	15	9.37
No	76	47.5
May Be	69	43.13
Total:	160	100

Table 11 shows that, 15 respondents think that during cultural program female students face gender violence randomly. Another 76 think that, female students don't face violence during cultural programs randomly. Another 69 answered that “May be”. Majority of the interviewees also said that they have never hear on violence during cultural program in their university. P₂FGD₂ said that *“There is no record on violence during cultural program in NSTU. Both boys and girls together attend in the cultural program arranged by their respective department and the university”*.

4.6 Environment for Co-Curricular Activities:

Table 12: Equal Participation in Sports and Clubs

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Yes	118	73.75
No	42	26.25
Total:	160	100

Among 160 respondents, 118 said that, there is equal participation of both genders in sports and various clubs. Another 42 said that, there do not exist equal participation. So, in percentages, 73.75% said that, equal participation is available and 26.25% said that this is not available

4.7 Educational Development of both genders:

Table 13: Opinion about equal scholarship facilities

	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage(%)
Yes	12	7.5
No	11	6.9
Merit Based	137	85.6
Total:	160	100

Among 160 respondents, the prime portion of the respondents (12) said that, sometimes scholarship facilities become gender biased. 11 respondents said that there is no discrimination. It is so good that among 160 respondents 137 said that, scholarship is merit based, not gender based. So, in total, 85.6% said that, scholarship is merit based, there is no gender biasness. Most of the interviewee described that, support for Educational Development is positively related because they argued that there are several positive aspects such as Scholarships are merit based, not gender biased, equal scholarship facility from both male and female halls.

V. Quantitative Analysis with Reference to Analytical Framework (Assumption: A score out of 20)

Explanatory Variables (Each Value-20)	Positive Value from Respondents (%)	Positive Value from Respondents (Out of 20)	Average of the Positive Values (Out of 20)	Negative Values (Out of 20)
Physical Facility	33.33%	6.67	$(6.67+10.54+ 9.25+ 16.63+ 11.08+14.75+ 18.62)/ 7$	20-12.50
Psychosocial Environment	52.70%	10.54		
Political Environment	46.25%	9.25		
Residential Environment	83.13%	16.63		
Cultural environment	55.42%	11.08		
Extracurricular facility for both genders	73.75%	14.75		
Educational Development of both genders	93.10%	18.62		
Total Result			= 12.50	=7.50

Table - Quantitative Analysis with Reference to Analytical Framework

And finally of the quantitative Analysis it can be mentioned that "A score of 12.50 (Out of 20) does not overwhelmingly indicate any specific level of gender friendliness. But it is hopeful that, this value as well as this gender friendliness is more than fifty percentages. It is not good for any campus. But without this 12.50, there is another value which is $(20-12.50) = 7.50$ and this value indicates negative result that means gender unfriendly. So, it can be described that, the campus of NSTU is not fully gender friendly. But the level is above average in current situation.

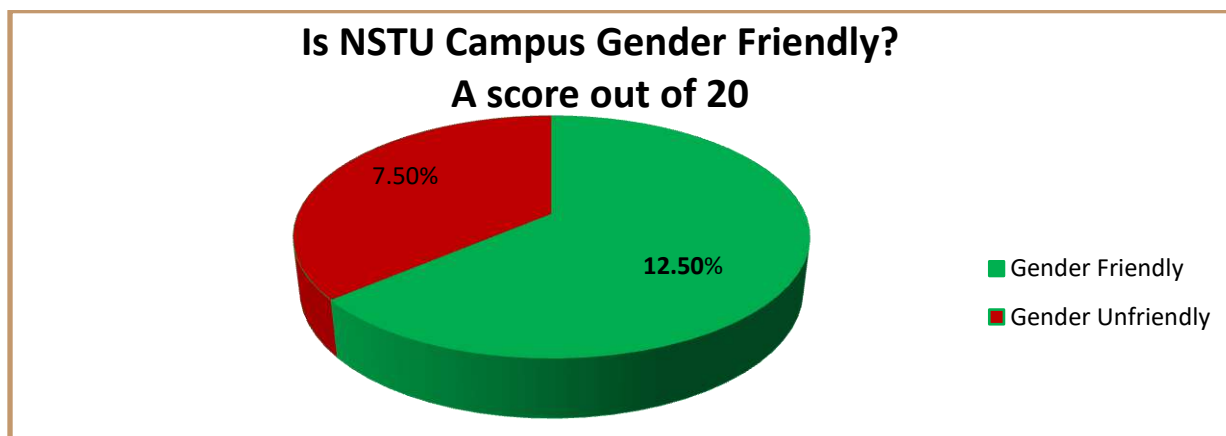


Figure 3- Overall Outcome at a Glance, A score out of 20

VI. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The students are the future of the country; especially the students of the Noakhali Science and Technology University (NSTU) are an important part of the future leaders of the nation. It is the responsibility of the University authority as well as the government to provide a suitable condition for their proper development of physical and mental ability so that they can lead and serve the nation to the way of prosperity and glory. The research is a little effort to describe and assess the current situation of gender friendliness of NSTU. To solve the existing problem and to improve the present situation for attaining a suitable environment in NSTU both the university authorities and students need to be cautious about the current deterioration of the ambience of university premises and status. On the basis of findings of the following initiatives can be made to improve the gender friendliness in NSTU. These are-

- University authority should monitor the staffs who are responsible for cleaning and ensure that they are performing their duty properly that will improve the hygienic condition in washroom
- University authority has to ensure separate common room for male students;
- A Child Care Center should be established immediately that will increase the attention of mothers (teachers' and students' having baby) in their study and research;
- University authority should need to be more sincere during the cultural program because all the female students responded that as in very occasion university remains over crowded with huge population so they do not feel comfortable to roam around the campus on that special occasion.
- University authority should make a separate arrangement for female students in university gymnasium.

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