

**FROM SHAME TO STRENGTH: YOUNG ADULT'S REACTION TO BODY
SHAMING IN ADOLESCENCE**

*A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Kerala in the
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts
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SUBMITTED BY

Name : **MEERA JASMIN L**
Exam Code : 56018405
Candidate Code : 56022115015
Subject Code : SO 245

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

Dr. VINUMOL DEVASSY



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
LOYOLA COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
SREEKARIYAM, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
UNIVERSITY OF KERALA
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DECLARATION

I, **MEERA JASMIN L**, do hereby declare that the Dissertation Titled **FROM SHAME TO STRENGTH: YOUNG ADULT'S REACTION TO BODY SHAMING IN ADOLESCENCE** is based on the original work carried out by me and submitted to the University of Kerala during the year 2022-2024 towards partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree Examination in Sociology. It has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or other similar title of recognition before any University or anywhere else.

Place: Thiruvananthapuram

Date: 9/09/2024

Ms. MEERA JASMIN L

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **FROM SHAME TO STRENGTH: YOUNG ADULT'S REACTION TO BODY SHAMING IN ADOLESCENCE** is a record of genuine work done by **MS.MEERA JASMIN L**, Fourth semester Master of Sociology student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that it is hereby approved for submission.

Dr. Vinumol Devassy

Research Guide

Department of Sociology

Loyola College of Social Sciences
Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram.

Recommended for forwarding to the University of Kerala

Dr. Nisha Jolly Nelson

Head, Department of Sociology

Loyola College of Social sciences
Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram.

Forwarded to the University of Kerala

Dr. Sabu P Thomas S J

Principal

Loyola College of Social Sciences
Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram.

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the transformative journey of young adults who have experienced body shaming during adolescence, focusing on the psychological, emotional, and social responses to such experiences. Body shaming, a form of social stigma, can lead to significant negative impacts, including low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression. However, this research aims to highlight the potential for positive outcomes, including resilience, self-acceptance, and personal growth.

The study examines the coping mechanisms and strategies that young adults employ to turn the shame associated with body criticism into strength. Through qualitative interviews and surveys, participants will share their experiences, revealing the factors that helped them develop self-confidence, foster body positivity, and cultivate a stronger sense of identity. The research also investigates the role of support systems such as family, friends, and social media, as well as personal introspection, in reshaping self-perception.

By focusing on the shift from vulnerability to empowerment, this project contributes to a broader understanding of the long-term effects of body shaming and highlights the potential for adolescents to develop resilience and strength from their experiences. This knowledge can inform interventions aimed at helping young people navigate and overcome body shaming, fostering a more supportive and body-positive culture.

CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Body shaming refers to the act of making negative or cruel remarks about someone's body shape, weight, size, or body image. This form of bullying is intended to humiliate a person who is perceived as physically unattractive or does not fit into a societal beauty standard.

Body shaming can target people of all ages, genders and for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, being overweight (aka fat-shaming), too thin, too tall, having skin issues and more.

The scope of body shaming is wide, and includes, although is not limited to fat shaming, shaming for thinness, height-shaming, shaming of hairiness (or lack thereof), of hair colour, body shape, one's muscularity (or lack thereof), shaming of breast size, shaming of looks (facial features), shaming of skin color, and in its broadest sense may even include shaming of tattoos and piercings, or diseases that leave a physical, mark such as psoriasis.

Sometimes body shaming can extend to a perception that one does not sufficiently display masculinity or femininity. For example, men with wide hips, prominent breasts, or lack of facial hair are sometimes shamed for appearing feminine. Similarly, women can be body shamed for appearing to have a man-bulge, or for having broad shoulders, physical traits that are typically associated with men. Extensive levels of body shaming can have negative emotional effects, including lowered self-esteem and the development of issues such as eating disorders, anxiety, body image disturbance, body dysmorphic disorder and depression. These depressive effects can worsen especially when people feel their body can not meet social criteria.

Body shaming can lead to mental health issues including eating disorders, depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and body dysmorphia, as well as the general feeling of hating one's body. Children are also victims of body shaming as parents also perpetuate this form of emotional abuse. Body shaming is not just between strangers but can also be perpetuated by family members and close friends. This has adverse psychological effects on a child. Their confidence and self-esteem can be dented for life.

Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to body shaming, weight shaming, and appearance-based shaming. In the teen years, your attitudes and beliefs about body image and self-esteem are largely influenced by your family members, peers, and social media. Mothers can often be role models for their daughters, for example. If your mother is continually complaining about her own shape or weight, or pointing out problems in how you look or eat, it's bound to have an impact on how you view yourself.

As you develop during adolescence, it's normal to be highly sensitive to comments about body shape, weight, and appearance. Weight-related bullying during adolescence contributes to negative body perceptions and preoccupations with specific body parts. Adolescents who are overweight are particularly vulnerable, and this can often lead to depression.

1.2 Social media

Social media can affect body shaming. Spending too much time on social media can add to your anxiety, loneliness, and body dissatisfaction, reinforce unrealistic expectations of yourself, and expose you to body shaming and cyberbullying.

Social media often emphasizes physical appearance and makes it easy to post hurtful comments about others. The overall message is often that you should strive for the perfect body and find ways to hide your flaws. This can have a huge influence on your body image.

Social media can have a significant influence on body shaming, both as a platform for body shaming and as a way people engage with body image. Social media can promote unrealistic beauty standards, encourage self-critique, and make it easy to compare oneself to others. The anonymity of social media can also make it easier for people to engage in body shaming without facing consequences.

Here are some ways social media can influence body shaming:

- Promoting unrealistic standards:

Social media can promote unattainable body image standards and emphasize physical appearance.

- Encouraging self-critique:

People may spend time online engaging in appearance-related activities like liking and commenting on pictures, which can amplify negative self-evaluation.

- Providing constant points of comparison:

Social media can expose people to quickly changing trends and make it easy to compare themselves to others.

- Anonymity

The anonymity of social media can make it easier for people to engage in body shaming without facing consequences. For example, people may use photo editing apps to change their appearance or others' appearances.

Social media can also have negative consequences for physical health. For example, people may cut out food groups to try to meet unrealistic standards, which can lead to an unbalanced diet and deficiencies in vitamins and minerals.

Social media creates so many impacts on body image. Social media can have a significant impact on body image, both positive and negative. On one hand, social media can provide a platform for body positivity, community support, and health and fitness inspiration. But it can also contribute to unrealistic beauty standards and unhealthy comparisons.

1.3 Body shaming in children:

Body shaming can have a significant impact on a child's mental health, leading to low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, and body dysmorphia. Here are some ways to help prevent body shaming in children:

- Avoid negative comments

Don't talk negatively about your child's body, or about other people's bodies, in a neutral tone. Avoid suggesting that thin is good and fat is bad, and don't link eating to weight.

- Teach body positivity

Help your child learn to love, respect, and accept their body. You can do this by focusing on healthy eating, rather than dieting, and by helping them demystify social media fads. You can also encourage them to appreciate their strengths instead of comparing themselves to others.

- Talk about body shaming

Let your child know that body shaming is unacceptable and that people can be cruel to each other. You can also teach them to value and respect themselves and others. If your child is experiencing body shaming at school, you can talk to their teachers or school administrators.

- Be aware of your own words Consider how your family and peers feel and speak about bodies and appearance, and how your relationships with them may affect your child's body image.

-

1.4 Body shaming in Teenagers

Body shaming in teenagers can lead to low self-esteem, which can cause a variety of mental health issues. These issues include:

- Body dysmorphic disorder
- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Social isolation
- Anxiety
- Higher risk of self-harm or suicide
- Poorer quality of life
- Psychological distress

Body shaming is criticism of someone's body size, shape, or appearance, and can happen in person or on social media. According to a study, 94% of teenage girls and 64% of teenagers have experienced some form of body shaming.

Some types of body shaming that teenagers face include:

- Pressure to look a certain way: Teenagers may feel pressure to match an "ideal" body type.

- Exposure to unrealistic images: Media and social media can expose teenagers to images of unrealistic or idealized bodies.
- Family and friends: How family and friends feel and speak about bodies and appearance can impact body image concerns.

Body shaming can also affect a teenager's social well-being. For example, 32% of adolescents avoid certain places where they have been body-shamed, including school, family functions, and relatives' houses. This can lead to dropout and have a lifelong impact.

1.5 Body shaming in youngsters

Body shaming is any verbal or nonverbal behavior that can negatively impact a person's perception of their body. It can include negative words, judgmental looks, or disapproving comments on social media. Body shaming can have long-term psychological effects on youngsters, including:

- Mental health issues

Body shaming can lead to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and body dysmorphia. It can also cause people to internalize feelings of worthlessness and engage in negative self-talk, which can escalate into loneliness and extreme depression.

- Eating disorders

In extreme cases, body shaming can lead to eating disorders like anorexia and bulimia.

- Unhealthy eating habits

Body shaming comments can lead to deteriorating nutrition and other health issues that can have a lifelong impact.

- Risk-taking behaviors

Body dissatisfaction has been linked to risk-taking behaviors.

- Social well-being

Body shaming can affect a person's social well-being, causing them to avoid places where they've been body-shamed, such as school, family functions, or their home. This can sometimes lead to dropping out of school.

1.6 Causes of body shaming

Insecurity: When a person feels self-conscious about their own body, they may talk badly about another person's body to make themselves feel better.

Societal norms: For so long, joking about the way people look has just been something that many people were brought up thinking is okay. This is learned bias.

1.7 How to Handle Body Shaming

- Recognize the Importance of Body Positivity.
- Accept Yourself and Stop Hiding.
- Take Responsibility and Be Accountable.
- Practice Self-Love By Being Kind to Yourself.
- Take Control of Your Social Media Platforms.
- Be Grateful for Your Body.

1.8 Body shaming in Disabled peoples

Disability affects body image in various ways. People with disabilities still face the daily challenges of being perceived as "different" and even inferior. Such experiences can have profoundly negative effects on self-esteem and body image. Body shaming, which is the act of making negative comments about a person's body, can have a negative impact on people with disabilities. For example, disabled men may internalize perceptions that they are undesirable and asexual. Body shaming can also lead to a lack of representation of disabled bodies in mainstream media, which can make it difficult for people with disabilities to find role models they can identify with.

Here are some ways that body shaming can affect people with disabilities:

- Mental health

Body shaming can lead to mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and body dysmorphia. It can also increase the risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

- Physical health

Body shaming can lead to a reduction in physical activity, which can increase the risk of weight gain and obesity. Obesity can then increase the risk of other physical health problems such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease, and type-2 diabetes.

- Body image

Body shaming can have a negative impact on body image, and exposure to a broader representation of body shapes and types can have a positive effect.

Body shaming can harm people's physical, mental, and emotional health, and no one should have to accept it as the norm. Here are some ways to overcome body shaming:

- Educate others:

When someone body shames you, you can talk to them about it and let them know that their comments are unpleasant and can disturb someone's mental health. You can also explain the harmful effects of body shaming.

- Love yourself:

Try to accept yourself as you are, and feel content with your appearance. You can be grateful for what you have, and appreciate your body despite its flaws. You can also try to let go of perfectionism, and remind yourself that nobody is perfect.

- Practice body positivity:

Try to embrace body positivity, which is the idea that all bodies are good bodies and that we should embrace the body we have. You can try to be more accepting and confident about your body, and do things to improve your appearance because you want to feel good about yourself, not because of what others say.

- Stop talking about other people's bodies:

You can try to notice your thoughts and acknowledge your own bias and judgments. You can also try to make an effort to notice what you like about others, and practice this with yourself to develop respect, care, and compassion for yourself and others.

- Focus on conversations other than weight and appearance:

When you meet people, you can try to focus on conversations other than their weight or appearance. For example, you can try asking “How have you been?” instead of making a comment about their appearance.

- Practice positive affirmations:

You can try to remind yourself of all the constructive things you accomplished during the day, and make a list of positive tasks you want to do in the morning.

1.9 Background of this study

In recent years, body shaming has become a pervasive issue, particularly impacting adolescents who are in the throes of developing their self-identity and self-worth. Defined as the act of disparaging or criticizing individuals based on their physical appearance, body shaming often manifests in various forms, from verbal insults to online harassment. During adolescence, a time marked by heightened sensitivity and self-consciousness, these experiences can be especially damaging, leaving lasting scars that influence an individual’s mental health and self-esteem.

The teenage years are a critical developmental period during which individuals are most vulnerable to external judgments and pressures regarding their bodies. The impact of body shaming during this time is profound, often resulting in emotional distress, diminished self-esteem, and a range of psychological issues such as anxiety, depression, and eating disorders. The immediate effects of body shaming are well-documented, but the long-term consequences as individuals transition into young adulthood remain less explored. Understanding how these early experiences shape young adults’ reactions and self-perceptions is crucial for addressing the enduring impact of body shaming.

Amidst these challenges, the concept of body positivity has emerged as a powerful counter-narrative to body shaming. Body positivity advocates for the acceptance and celebration of diverse body types, challenging harmful beauty standards and promoting self-love and self-acceptance. This movement encourages individuals to embrace their bodies and reject unrealistic societal expectations, offering a hopeful and empowering framework for those affected by body shaming.

This study, titled “From Shame to Strength: Young Adults’ Reaction to Body Shaming in Adolescence,” seeks to explore how young adults who have experienced body shaming during their teenage years react to these past experiences in their present lives. By examining their current self-perceptions, coping mechanisms, and the influence of body positivity on their personal development, the research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how body shaming affects individuals over time. The study will investigate how these individuals transform their experiences of shame into sources of strength, leveraging body positivity to overcome the lasting effects of body shaming. The insights gained will contribute to a broader comprehension of the interplay between body shaming and body positivity, informing more effective strategies for support and intervention.

1.10 Statement of the problem

Body shaming during adolescence is a pervasive issue that has far-reaching emotional and psychological consequences. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable to body shaming as they are in a critical phase of developing their self-identity and self-esteem. While the immediate effects of body shaming—such as anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem—are well-documented, there remains a significant gap in understanding how these early experiences affect individuals as they transition into young adulthood.

The core problem lies in the lack of comprehensive research on how young adults react to body shaming they endured during their teenage years. Specifically, how these past experiences shape their current emotional and psychological state, self-perception, and social interactions. Additionally, little is known about the coping mechanisms that young adults develop in response to these experiences, and how the body positivity movement has influenced their ability to transform feelings of shame into personal strength and resilience.

This research seeks to explore:

- 1) How young adults emotionally and psychologically respond to the body shaming they experienced during adolescence.
- 2) The coping strategies they have developed to deal with the long-term impact of body shaming.

- 3) The role of the body positivity movement in reshaping their self-perception and aiding in their healing process.
- 4) The long-term effects of adolescent body shaming on mental health, self-esteem, and social relationships in young adulthood.

1.11 Significance of the study

This study on young adults' reactions to body shaming during adolescence holds significant importance for several key areas of social research, mental health, and public awareness. Understanding the long-term impact of adolescent body shaming on young adults' self-perception, mental well-being, and social interactions can provide valuable insights into both individual and societal-level interventions.

- 1) **Mental Health Awareness and Support:** The research will shed light on the long-lasting emotional and psychological effects of body shaming. By exploring how young adults react to these past experiences, this study can help mental health professionals better understand the specific challenges faced by individuals who have been body shamed. This knowledge can guide the development of targeted mental health interventions, therapy approaches, and support systems designed to assist individuals in overcoming the emotional scars of body shaming.
- 2) **Contribution to Body Image and Self-Esteem Studies:** The findings from this study will contribute to the broader body of research on body image and self-esteem, particularly in understanding how early experiences of body shaming continue to shape an individual's self-concept in adulthood. The insights gained can inform future studies and serve as a foundation for addressing the psychological aspects of body image issues in social and psychological research.
- 3) **Influence of Body Positivity Movement:** By examining the role of the body positivity movement in helping young adults cope with and overcome body shaming, the study will highlight the potential of social movements in transforming negative experiences into

sources of resilience and personal growth. This understanding can be used to advocate for broader societal adoption of body positivity, promoting inclusivity and acceptance of diverse body types.

- 4) Empowerment and Healing for Individuals: For individuals who have experienced body shaming, this study may serve as a source of validation and empowerment. Understanding that their reactions and coping mechanisms are part of a broader experience can encourage personal healing and foster resilience. Moreover, by highlighting examples of how body positivity has helped others, this research can inspire individuals to embrace self acceptance and build a healthier relationship with their bodies.
- 5) Body shaming is a significant social issue that aims to explore how societal stigma related to body shaming can impact young adults' mental health, academic performance, and career development.
- 6) This study focuses on understanding the major effects of body shaming on young adults' lives and examines whether these impacts weaken or strengthen them.
- 7) This investigation explores which age groups are most affected by body shaming and the situations that trigger their reactions.
- 8) This study investigates the positive changes that body shaming has brought to people's lives and how these changes have occurred.
- 9) This study aims to support individuals who have experienced body shaming in overcoming it.

CHAPTER – 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Body shaming is the action of expressing humiliation about another individual's body shape or size which can result in severe emotional trauma, especially at a young age. Body shaming is serious and gives huge negative effects on the physical and mental health of a person. This study aims to investigate the effects of body shaming on individuals in society.

In the “The impact of Body shaming on Female High school students in china”. Ruolin Gan, Shengnan Jiang. This is a quantitative study. This article is define Body shaming has become a major public concern in recent years. This paper aims to consider the adverse effects that follow the criticism of female bodies while they are attending high school. This paper concluded that There were three major consequences that followed from this Body shaming : Increasing rates of self-harm, heightened eating disorders, and increased rates of anxiety.

*Second is “A sense of pride over my size: A Qualitative study of women of size who consider themselves body positive”. Ruth Anne Salen

This is a qualitative study. This study investigated how women who self identify as a person of size and who have a positive body image developed their positive body identity. This study has use interview method. The study explored the personal experience of the participants from their youth into adulthood regarding the message they received about their bodies and how they responded and resisted the impact of those messages.

Sixteen female participants participated in the study and shared what they believed contributed to their body positive identity. Major findings were that all of the participants had significant memories of receiving and internalizing negative messages about their bodies and most participants responded to these messages with shame, dieting, anger, and over achievement.

*Third is “Body Shaming: Ramifications on an Individual”: Shah Alan

This study has used Quantitative method where a set of questionnaires. Regarding body shaming was distributed to members of the public randomly through social media. A total of 101 respondents respond to the questionnaires and it was further analyzed by using SPSS software to find mean and standard deviation values. The findings show that respondents agreed that being fat, being skinny, and having body weight that is not in harmony with their height are the reasons why people body shamed others.

*Fourth is “The effect of Body shaming on the existence of Generation Z confidence “. Natasya Diwina Sukoco.

Body shaming affects the self confidence of a person. Both male and female, This study is Focuses on teenagers (13 Years to 19).This means body shaming affects teenagers and adult ages. The purpose of this study is to describe the forms of body shaming experience by generation Z adolescents in Salatiga city and how to affect the self confidence of generation Z adolescents in salatiga city. This study has use quantitative method with exploratory research.

*Final one is “Contemporary society and the Act of Body shaming: A Critical Discourse on Perceptions of Beauty and Shame within the Indian Society”.

This Paper is explores and reports the findings of qualitative study. This is related to contemporary society's body perspectives. Society has already created a beauty type. If a person chubby or skinny, our society will criticise him. They make bad comments on that body. This affect badly on people's mental, Physical and emotional health. The study employed the use of analysis on 1034 comments in social media.

*Sixth is “The impact of social media on Body shame “.: Siyu wan

This is a qualitative study. The media plays a very important role in today's society. It not only provides information and news, but also plays a role in guiding and shaping public opinion with the popularity of the media and the abundance of content, more and more young people pay attention to the topic of body shame. Using the method of literature review, this paper analyzes the content of the research topic of body shame. Research has found that media may induce body shame, which can lead to more and more serious physical and psychological problems, because biased reporting and discriminatory remarks can also bring body shame to people; Other studies have also explored the differences in how men and

women treat body shame, and the reasons for their differences. Therefore, the negative influence of the media on body shame cannot be ignored, and the difference in the treatment of body shame between men and women is inevitable.

Body shame is one of the hottest topics around and it can't happen without the help of the media. And with the help of these media, such as advertising, will bring unnecessary anxiety to many people, and even suffer from some mental illness. Moreover, gender differences can also exert an influence on the treatment of body shame. It is true that body shame has caused many problems for most young people, but it is important that young people should pay more attention to their physical health and inner beauty, and not just strive for physical perfection. And by improving body shame, the social environment will also become more understanding and inclusive.

*Seventh is "Improving self acceptance of Body shaming using Gratitude journal metho.

:FentiHikmawati, NurainiAzizah, AisyahcikalPutriBasyai, ZulmiRamdani.

This is a quantitative research. The primary objective of this study is to address the issue of low self-acceptance caused by Body Shaming. In order to promote positive aspects of human beings, such as engaging in Gratitude Journal activities, the Gratitude Journal was utilized. The study is a Pretest-Posttest Random Group Design that focuses on early adult female victims of Body Shaming. The sample consists of 20 participants, 10 in the Treatment Group and 10 in the Control Group. These participants were selected using a non-probability incidental sampling technique, and they all shared similar initial conditions, including awareness of the psychological effects of Body Shaming and the desire to overcome the problem. Regarding the Treatment Group, the intervention was a 21-day Gratitude Journal activity, which involved writing down the good things obtained in life. The measuring tools used included the Self Acceptance Scale and the Gratitude Scale. The results showed that Gratitude Journal were effective in improving both self-acceptance ($p=.004$) and gratitude ($p=.005$). This study concluded that victims of Body Shaming can improve their self acceptance and overcome the psychological effects they experience.

This study Explore the Gratitude Journal method as a form of intervention for victims of body shaming. This type of intervention is more relevant when the affected people feel depressed, helpless, pessimistic and give rise to other psychological disorders.

*Eighth is “ The unspoken emotions : The Body shaming experiences of senior high school students. :Frederick Heinrich F. Escoton, Jeanne M. Baliad and Norman R. Galabo, EdDMintel Comprehensive High School, Davao City

This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to describe body shaming experiences among senior high school students at Mintel Comprehensive Senior High School in Davao City, Philippines. Fifteen students with a BMI range of 25-30 or greater were chosen through purposive sampling. Data collection involved in-depth interviews, observations, and field notes, conducted with ethical considerations. The study ensured trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, dependability. And confirmability. Findings revealed that victims experienced name-calling, body shaming at school, home, and family, and body shaming as jokes, Coping mechanisms included nonchalance, self-distraction, and peer support. The study highlighted the impact of body shaming on self-esteem, the need to combat body shaming, and the importance of preventive measures in educational institutions. A call is being made to address this issue for the creation of a supportive learning environment.

2.1 Research Gap

This study addresses several research gaps by focusing on young people who have experienced body shaming. While most existing research on body shaming centers on adolescents, this study specifically examines youth. This research explores how these individuals reacted to body shaming, the positive outcomes they experienced, and the beneficial changes it brought to their lives. Additionally, this study investigates the social, physical and psychological challenges they faced. It also aims to explore the role of social media in reinforcing beauty standards, a topic not thoroughly addressed in previous research. This study seeks to expand understanding in these areas. This also aims to explore how they work to foster body positivity.

CHAPTER – 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains various methodologies that used in gathering data and analysis which are relevant to the research. This methodologies will include area such as the research design, Data analysis, Sampling.

Title of the study :From Shame to Strength : Young Adults’ Reaction to Body Shaming in Adolescence

3.2 Research question

General questions:

What psychological and social challenges did young adults face during their teenage years.

Specific research questions:

- *What social issues are caused by body shaming, and which group of people engages in body shaming more frequently?
- *How does body shaming impact self-confidence and mental health?
- *How did you try to create body positivity?
- *How have negative comments affected you?

3.3 Objectives

*Recognize the emotional and psychological harm that body shaming can cause in adolescence, including feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and mental health challenges and trying to identify how all these affect the individual.

*Empower young adults to reframe their experiences of body shaming as challenges that can be overcome, rather than as definitive judgments on their worth. *Create awareness in schools, colleges and other public spaces to combat body shaming and promote body positivity.

*To explore the effects of body shaming on the individual's personal experiences.

*It examines how young people respond to body shaming, highlighting both positive and negative reactions.

*Exploring the potential for positive transformation in young people as a result of experiencing body shaming.

*This research seeks to understand the issues of body shaming in society, particularly through social media, and overall impact these have on the community.

*To identify the relationship between body shaming and the victim's desire to alter their appearance.

3.4 Research Design:

Research design serves as a framework for data collection and analysis, reflecting the researcher's priorities throughout the research process. In this study, a case study design was chosen to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Young Adult's Reaction to Body Shaming In Adolescence.

The case study design involves an in-depth exploration of a single social phenomenon. This phenomenon could be an individual, a group, an event, a community, or any other social unit. By focusing on a single case, this research approach allows for a thorough examination of intricate details that might be overlooked by other research methods. Central to the case study research is the emphasis on the complexity and uniqueness of the chosen case. Through a detailed analysis, this method aims to unveil the distinct qualities that make each case individual. In the context of this study, To explore the lived experiences of young adults who encountered body shaming during adolescence. This approach will allow for in-depth understanding of the personal and emotional narratives of the participants, focusing on how they transformed negative experiences into sources of strength and resilience.

3.5 SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION

Primary and secondary data were collected using appropriate methods and techniques. Primary sources include first-hand information from the participants. Secondary sources include journal articles, documents, newspaper reports, and records.

3.6 PILOT STUDY

Pilot study was conducted in the Alappuzha district to understanding the feasibility of the study.

3.7 AREA OF THE STUDY

Alappuzha district was chosen as the study area.

3.8 RESEARCH METHOD

The present research employs a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research focuses on obtaining a deep understanding of complex, subjective experiences by exploring the nuances and intricacies of the participants' lives. In this study, the objective is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how young adults react to and process experiences of body shaming during adolescence, with an emphasis on the transformation from shame to strength.

To gather data, the interview method was selected, using a semi-structured interview schedule. This approach allows flexibility in probing participants' experiences while ensuring that key themes related to body shaming, selfperception, coping mechanisms, and personal growth are addressed. The semistructured interviews provide an opportunity for participants to narrate their personal stories, insights, and emotional responses in their own words, facilitating a more detailed exploration of how they navigated these experiences.

By engaging participants in conversations, the research seeks to capture the narratives, thoughts, and reflections of young adults who have experienced body shaming, examining how they have transformed negative experiences into sources of resilience and self-confidence. Purposeful sampling will be employed to select individuals who have encountered body shaming during adolescence and have demonstrated a shift toward body positivity or empowerment.

This qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews and semistructured schedules, provides a platform for participants to openly discuss their emotions and journeys, enabling the research to uncover the unique paths through which young adults turn shame into strength. By focusing on personal experiences and interpretations, this method allows for a nuanced understanding of the individual and collective strategies of resilience among young adults.

Sampling technique: 15 respondents

Sample: Purposive sampling and snowball sampling

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Data was examined thematically. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within data. When applied to body shaming, this method helps researchers understand how individuals experience and respond to body-related criticism, societal pressures, and their overall body image. Body shaming refers to criticizing or mocking someone's physical appearance, often leading to negative psychological and emotional effects.

3.10 Data Collection :

Primary data Was collected from victims Of body shaming and secondary data got from articles. Telephone interview Was conducted for the purpose of data collection. Data collection was initially done in Malayalam. And use of a voice recorder as a tool to document the voices of the victims throughout the interview, after taking verbal consent from the participants. And was later translated into English.

During the interview researcher made use of voice recorder as a tool to document the voices of the victims throughout the interview, after taking verbal consent from the participants.

3.11 Limitation Of this study

1)Lack of Visual Cues: Without face-to-face interaction, researchers miss out on non-verbal cues such as body language and facial expressions, which can be important for understanding emotional responses.

2)Limited Depth of Interaction: Telephonic interviews might limit the depth of interaction compared to in-person interviews, as participants may be less open or engaged over the phone.

3)Technical Issues: Poor call quality, dropped calls, or other technical problems can disrupt the interview process and affect data reliability.

4)Potential for Miscommunication: The absence of visual context can lead to misunderstandings or misinterpretations of responses.

5)Privacy Concerns: Participants might feel less comfortable discussing sensitive topics like body shaming over the phone, potentially impacting the openness and honesty of their responses.

CHAPTER – 4

CASE PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Social Issues

- Avoiding
- Social isolation
- Law of self esteem
- Cyber bullying
- Body image dissatisfaction
- Social anxiety and depression
- Eating Disorders
- Body comparison
- Body dysmorphia

Physiological Issues

- Tension
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Law of self confidence
- Self harm
- Fear
- Eating disorder
- Angry
- Emotional distress

- Body dysmorphia
- Body comparison

Negative contributions of social media in body shaming

- Cyber bullying
- Spiral of silence
- Exposure to trends
- Weight shaming
- Unattainable standards

(1) Challenges Faced by Individuals Who Have Experienced Body Shaming and Its Impacts

Case – 1

The researcher was personally involved as an interviewer. The first case is , a 22-year-old who has experienced body shaming since childhood, with the intensity increasing during her teenage years. She faced body shaming due to being overweight, particularly from friends, family, relatives, and peers during her adolescence. As a result, she developed fear and discomfort around those who shamed her. During her school years, she often felt isolated and avoided by friends and classmates, leading to deep feelings of loneliness in various social settings. She frequently endured hurtful comments about her weight, with people mocking her by calling her “Elephant.” This labeling caused her to lose self-confidence, and she became afraid to face those who had ridiculed her, resulting in increased stress and social anxiety. While choosing clothes, she often faced difficulties. She had to give up her favorite fashion choices due to her weight and the fear of judgment. She endured these struggles as a teenager.

Case-2

The second case is , a 26-year-old who has been subjected to body shaming since her teenage years. She experienced this due to her weight, short height, facial hair, and teeth. She faced body shaming from family, friends, and peer groups, particularly during her school and

college years. This led to social anxiety, constant stress, and overthinking. She often feared being around those who shamed her and tried to avoid them. The hurtful comments deeply affected her, and she was called names like 'Meeshakari' and 'Undiya Palli.' She also struggled with choosing clothes, feeling afraid to wear certain outfits, and often avoided them, remembering the hurtful remarks from others.

Case-3

23-year-old who has been experiencing body shaming since childhood. She has faced it due to her low weight, dark skin, and short height, primarily from friends, relatives, and peer groups. This has made her fearful of being around such people, and the negative comments have taken a toll on her self-confidence. She constantly remembers the hurtful remarks, especially those targeting her skin color, with people calling her names like 'crow.' This led to anxiety, depression, and overthinking. She also struggled with choosing clothes, feeling that she wouldn't look good because of her dark skin, and often avoided wearing clothes she liked, fearing more shaming. Body shaming was a significant issue during her teenage years, and she often felt afraid to go out into society.

Case -4

23, experienced body shaming primarily related to her short height and teeth, often from her friends and siblings. She also endured hurtful comments from her peers. During her school years, she refrained from participating in competitions. The body shaming became a significant issue during her teenage years, causing her to feel self-conscious and afraid to laugh or talk around friends, which greatly impacted her self-confidence.

Case-5

A 23-year-old experienced body shaming due to overweight, often from family, friends, and teachers. The most painful comments came from his parents, which severely impacted his self-confidence. His experience with body shaming began in childhood and became a significant issue during his teenage years. He avoided wearing many of the clothes he liked, fearing people's remarks, and even stopped wearing his favorite outfits. This caused him considerable stress and overthinking. He also faced rejection from girls, and the situation took a toll on his mental health. He avoided his favorite foods, and his social anxiety worsened during adolescence.

Case -6

A 23 years experienced body shaming because of her acne, dark spots, and thinness, which led to a loss of self-confidence. She struggled with overthinking, social anxiety, and tension. Her lack of body fat made her reluctant to wear her favorite clothes, and her acne and dark spots caused her to avoid many social functions. This led to severe depression, and she spent most of her time at home, even fearing to look at herself in the mirror. She was often teased for being thin and avoided participating in any competitions as a result.

Case- 7

A of , 22, experienced body shaming due to her weight loss, which caused many difficulties for her. The body shaming became particularly problematic during her teenage years. She avoided wearing her favorite clothes, which led to overthinking and stress. She was also anxious about not being able to participate in many competitions and felt like others were distancing themselves from her. This made her feel emotionally detached and it was a challenging experience. Many people teased her, calling her names for being underweight, which was mentally exhausting. Hurtful comments about her body, like being called “skin and bones”.

Case- 8

A 23, has experienced body shaming due to his weight loss and dark skin. This has led to a loss of self-confidence, with most of the shaming coming from friends and peers. He often struggled with choosing clothes and was afraid to wear his favorite black outfits. This caused issues like overthinking and stress. He also endured many hurtful comments about his appearance.

Case- 9

Case Nine A age 26, has faced ridicule due to his short height and slim build. He has experienced body shaming from friends, relatives, and peers, with hurtful comments such as being called ‘Ellum tholum.’ These remarks have significantly lowered his self-confidence, and he still remembers them vividly. Most of this shaming occurred during his teenage years, particularly in school, and it led to overthinking, tension, and self-doubt. He continues to struggle with social anxiety and has difficulty choosing clothes, as the body shaming has left a lasting impact on his confidence.

Case- 10

Case Ten: A respondent of , age 23, has been teased for his tall height and slim build. His height has caused significant insecurity, and at times he feels that people avoid him because of it. He recalls hurtful comments like being called ‘Giraffe’ and ‘Eerkil,’ which have diminished his self-confidence. These remarks have led him to feel tense and overthink his appearance.

Case- 11

Case Eleven: A respondent of age 23, has been body shamed due to his tooth decay, often becoming the subject of jokes. This constant teasing lowered his self-confidence and led to overthinking, tension, and social anxiety. He became afraid to laugh in front of others, which resulted in many insecurities.

Case- 12

Case Twelve: A respondent age 23, experienced body shaming due to his weight loss, which caused him to lose self-confidence. He was ridiculed by friends, peers, and relatives for being underweight, making him too insecure to wear the clothes he liked. This led to feelings of tension, fear, and mental exhaustion as he faced numerous hurtful comments.

Case- 13

Case Thirteen: Respondents age 19, has experienced body shaming due to his weight and dark skin, starting in childhood and continuing through his teenage years. Hurtful comments from friends, family, and peers significantly lowered his self-confidence. This also led to social anxiety, often making him afraid to attend public events. Emotionally, it was very exhausting, and he avoided wearing many of his favorite clothes because of his appearance. The ongoing shaming resulted in tension and overthinking.

Case- 14

Case Fourteen: Respondent has been body shamed for being slim and tall, an experience that began in her teenage years. Constant comments from friends, relatives, and peers have led to significant psychological issues. She struggles to choose clothes, which has caused tension, social anxiety, and overthinking. At times, the mental exhaustion from this overthinking, fear,

and tension has even affected her ability to focus on learning, severely damaging her selfconfidence.

Case-15

Case Fifteen: respondent age 26, has experienced body shaming due to being slim and tall, particularly during her teenage years. Hurtful comments from friends, family, and peers diminished her self-confidence. This led to tension, overthinking, fear, and social anxiety. She became afraid to visit places where she had been teased and also struggled with choosing clothes.

(2)Coping strategies used by individuals who have faced body shaming

Case- 1

(Bhavana Krishna)

In her young adult years, she began to resist this pressure and focused on promoting body positivity. She took control of her own diet and lost a significant amount of weight. As a result, the negative comments began to decrease, and her self- confidence grew. She started wearing the clothes she loved again. People's negative comments helped her positive change. Her anxiety, along with feelings of sinking and fear, began to shift. There was happiness and peace in her life again. She became more confident in her body.

Case- 2

(Anjana Vijayan)

In her young adulthood, she began to push back against body shaming. It was during this time that she started embracing body positivity, driven by the hurtful remarks of others. To address these, she got a clip placed on her teeth to lower them and began using facial hair removers to manage facial hair growth. She also started dieting in an effort to lose weight, and as she began to shed pounds, the negative comments from others gradually decreased.

Case- 3

(Taniya Sebastian)

In her young adulthood, she began actively fighting against body shaming, with the primary issue being her skin color. To address this, she focused on home remedies and used various creams. She also improved her diet to gain weight, made sure to eat regularly, and started taking Ayurvedic medicines to manage her weight. Additionally, she wore heeled sandals to appear taller. As a result of these efforts, the negative comments diminished.

Case- 4(Aleena Clettus)

In her young adulthood, she began to actively challenge body shaming and promote body positivity in response to negative comments from others. She faced issues related to height and dental problems, so she had braces fitted to correct protruding teeth and started wearing heeled sandals to appear taller. These changes helped her achieve self-acceptance, allowing her to speak and laugh freely in front of others.

Case- 5

(Vishnu V.R)

In her young adulthood, she began advocating against body shaming and working towards body positivity. To counter negative comments, she started exercising at home and going to the gym. She also made dietary adjustments, eating more moderately and incorporating jogging into her routine. These changes led to a shift in her lifestyle and resulted in weight loss.

Case- 6

(Parvathi V. S)

In her young adulthood, she began addressing body shaming and working towards body positivity in response to negative comments. She used creams to treat facial pimples and dark marks. As she started eating more to gain weight, her weight increased, which led to a decrease in negative comments.

Case- 7

(Selma. T)

In her young adulthood, she began to confront body shaming and work towards body positivity. To address negative comments, she took various Ayurvedic medicines to aid weight loss and began eating on a regular schedule. Despite initially looking slim, her weight eventually started to increase after making these changes. This led to a positive shift in her life, including increased exercise, which further transformed her lifestyle.

Case- 8

(Akash James)

In young adulthood, he began to address body shaming and worked towards body positivity. To reduce negative comments, particularly those related to his skin color, he focused on improving his complexion by using more creams and applying sunscreen. Although he noticed some changes, they were not as significant as he had hoped. He continues to strive for the results he desires.

Case-9

(Binoy. K.T)

In young adulthood, he began to address body shaming and promote body positivity. To counter negative comments, particularly those about his weight, he started going to the gym and made changes to his diet. He quickly noticed improvements, but he was only able to maintain these changes for a few days. He is now working to regain his progress. However, he has successfully made strides in improving his height.

Case- 10

(Augustin Alosious)

In his young adulthood, he began to push back against body shaming, which is when his efforts to promote body positivity started. To gain weight, he joined the gym, increased his protein intake, and began eating on a regular schedule.

Case-11

(Abhishek Mohandas)

In young adulthood, she began responding to body shaming and worked to build body positivity. To reduce negative comments, she addressed her protruding teeth by getting braces, which helped bring them back to normal. This allowed her to overcome her hesitation and express herself more freely, smiling and laughing openly.

Case-12

(Ansal Das)

In young adulthood, he began responding to body shaming and worked to create body positivity. Negative comments about his weight loss prompted him to make changes. He started eating more and ensured he ate on time. After that, he joined the gym and maintained a healthy diet, which transformed his body composition. He continues to maintain these changes.

Case-13

(Yassin)

It is in young adulthood that the body begins to react against shaming. For this he started going to the gym. Started doing regular workout.

Case-14

(Jinsha Mary V. S)

In her young adulthood, she began pushing back against body shaming and worked to foster body positivity. She faced criticism for being thin, not having fair skin, and for her height. To combat the negative comments, she started eating properly, which helped her gain weight, and began wearing heels to appear taller. As a result, her situation improved.

Case- 15

Flinta Jinu

In her young adulthood, she began responding to body shaming and worked to build body positivity. She often faced negative comments about her weight loss, so she started eating

well to gain weight and followed a regular schedule. After incorporating exercise into her routine, she managed to lose weight, and the negative comments lessened.

(3) Their current self-confidence

case- 1

(Bhavana Krishna)

Slim at first though after she also encountered new challenges. In an effort to lose weight, she adopted an unhealthy diet, frequently starving herself, skipping meals, and eating very little food. All of this was caused by malnutrition. Her periods became irregular due to PCOD, and she didn't have them for six months. She experienced excessive hair loss, along with many other issues related to hormonal imbalance and thyroid problems. When she started eating normally again, she gained weight. After two years, she became overweight, and the negative comments began to increase once more. This caused her to lose her self-confidence It led to even more stress than before, resulting in depression, anxiety, fear, and constant worry. She became afraid to even go out in public. Due to time and financial constraints, she struggled to follow a healthy diet. She also started comparing her body to others. She is still working on developing body positivity, but continues to face these challenges due to her weight.

Case-2

(Anjana Vijayan)

She exercised to lose weight, reduced her food intake, and started jogging, but didn't see much weight loss. She wore heels to appear taller and used braces to correct her protruding teeth. Creams were applied to remove facial hair, but with little effect. However, her self-confidence grew stronger than ever, and through self-acceptance, she no longer feared others' comments.

She now has the courage to face anything.

Case- 3

(Taniya Sebastian)

Despite using various beauty products, there has been no change in her skin tone, and she still lacks self-confidence because she hasn't gained weight despite eating properly. Self acceptance has not yet been achieved.

Case-4

(Aleena Clettus)

Since her tooth was protruding, she had braces put on, which boosted her confidence in that area. However, due to her height, she isn't completely confident. Nevertheless, she has achieved self-acceptance.

Case-5

(Vishnu V. R)

Due to being overweight, he started exercising to shed the extra pounds. By controlling his diet and practicing yoga, he successfully lost weight, gained self-confidence, and improved his self acceptance.

Case- 6

(Parvathi V. S)

She used creams to remove facial pimples and dark marks, which are now gone, leaving her face clear. As she was skinny, she gained weight by eating more, and now feels self-confident.

Case- 7

(Selma. T)

Being underweight, she focused on eating well and on time to gain weight. As a result, she put on more weight than before, which boosted her self-confidence somewhat. While she isn't completely confident, she has achieved a level of self-acceptance.

Case-8

(Akash James)

Due to his lack of skin color, he used various creams, which brought some improvements to his complexion. However, he cannot claim to be fully self-confident because he has not been able to gain weight in a healthy manner. Despite this, he has achieved self-acceptance.

Case- 9

(Binoy K. T)

He has not over weight and then started going to the gym and eating high-protein foods. This led to some weight gain, but because he couldn't maintain the routine consistently, he returned to his previous condition, so he cannot claim full confidence about his weight. However, he has gained confidence in his height and achieved self-acceptance.

Case-10

(Augustin Alosious)

He was thin, so he started going to the gym to get in shape, which helped him achieve a better physique. This led to a decrease in negative comments. He is now working as a gym trainer, has his own income, and has gained self-confidence. He has developed a sense of purpose and achieved consistency in his life.

Case- 11

(Abhishek Mohan das)

Due to a loose tooth, He got braces to correct it, so I no longer have to worry about it. This has increased his self-confidence and enhanced his self-acceptance.

Case-12

(Ansal Das)

He was not overweight, so he began going to the gym and working out, which brought about positive changes. This led to increased self-confidence and a greater sense of self-acceptance.

Case-13

(Yassin)

Unable to tolerate negative comments about his weight, he started going to the gym. Now, he has lost weight, improved his physique, and is able to foster body positivity, resulting in increased self-confidence.

Case-14

(Jinsha Mary)

Since she was underweight, she began eating well and at regular times, which helped her gain weight. As a result, she feels very confident about her physique. Additionally, she is confident about her height and has achieved self-acceptance.

Case-15

(Flinta Jinu)

Since she was mostly underweight, she increased her food intake and ate on a regular schedule. This helped her gain weight in a healthy way. As a result, her lost self-confidence returned, and she achieved self-acceptance.

Body shaming has led to numerous issues for individuals, including significant psychological problems. It often results in social anxiety, depression, tension, and fear. Body shaming is a

prevalent issue in today's society, and individuals who experience it themselves may sometimes engage in body shaming others. Essentially, one person's negative comments about another's body can cause substantial mental distress.

The case presentations of Bhavana Krishna, Anjana Vijayan, and the other individuals reveal a shared set of psychological, social, and emotional challenges associated with body shaming, especially during their formative years. These cases illustrate that the effects of body shaming begin in childhood or adolescence and can have a long-lasting impact on mental health, self-confidence, and social functioning.

Body shaming can be analysed from several perspectives, including:

- 1) The psychological Aspect
- 2) Social Aspects
- 3) The impact of Social media

- 1) The psychological Aspect

Body shaming can lead to a range of psychological issues. Negative comments from others, especially when they target those who don't conform to societal beauty standards, can cause significant mental distress. This distress often manifests as tension, fear of social interaction, overthinking, depression, insomnia, low self-confidence, self-harm, and social anxiety.

Body shaming often begins in childhood, but its effects become more pronounced during adolescence when individuals experience both physical and psychological changes. Research indicates that most of the 15 people I studied experienced body shaming during their teenage years, which had a severe impact on their mental well-being. However, as they transitioned into young adulthood (ages 18-26), many began to confront these issues more effectively. They started to counteract negative comments, build self-confidence, and embrace body positivity. Of those studied, three-quarters who encountered body shaming have become self-accepting, and over half are self-confident. However, there are still some who struggle with self-acceptance and confidence. Depression is also a concern for a few, with half of those affected feeling significant pressure. Approximately 90% of people experience body shaming

in some form within society, indicating its widespread nature. Those who have managed to overcome body shaming often become more confident and better equipped to handle psychological issues. Many young men, in particular, have turned to the gym as a way to address these challenges, with some even becoming gym trainers as a result. Thus, while body shaming is a significant issue, it has also led to positive changes for some individuals.

Psychological Impact

Body shaming has caused psychological distress for all the individuals in the cases. Some of the key psychological challenges they face include:

Social Anxiety and Fear: Bhavana, Anjana, Tania, and others experienced fear and discomfort when facing those who shamed them. They avoided social interactions, leading to isolation.

Low Self-Confidence: Many cases, like that of Vishnu and Parvathi, demonstrate how body shaming diminished self-confidence. Hurtful comments about weight, skin color, and physical features eroded their belief in themselves.

Over thinking and Depression: A recurring issue in these cases is over thinking, often leading to stress and depression. For example, Selma and Aleena frequently overanalyzed their physical appearances, which contributed to emotional fatigue.

Body Dysmorphia and Mental Health Decline: Bhavana's case, in particular, highlights body dysmorphia, where she excessively focused on her body weight, leading to unhealthy dieting habits and ↓ medical is like PCOD, hormonal imbalances, and even more stress.

2) Social Aspects

Body shaming leads to numerous social issues. Negative comments from society can cause individuals to experience social anxiety, making them hesitant to engage with others. Those who face body shaming often suffer from depression, emotional distress, and other related problems. People of all ages are affected by body shaming, including children, adolescents, young adults, and the elderly.

In adulthood, individuals often react by trying to challenge societal beauty standards in positive ways. Some people adjust their diet, join gyms, or engage in exercises and jogging to improve their body image. Those who embrace body positivity tend to become more selfconfident. However, individuals who struggle with laziness, lack of time, financial constraints, or health issues may find it difficult to achieve body positivity, which can be discouraging.

Moreover, body shaming impacts various groups, including those who are thin, overweight, short, have facial hair, or are women with larger breast sizes. These individuals also strive for body positivity, but a major social problem they face is isolation and loneliness. Society often excludes those who are body shamed, especially in schools and colleges, leading to missed opportunities and further exacerbating the issues caused by body shaming.

The social ramifications of body shaming are just as severe. The cases show:

Exclusion and Isolation: Bhavana and others faced exclusion from friends and classmates, which intensified their feelings of loneliness. Social isolation was prevalent, particularly during their school and college years.

Impact on Clothing Choices: A recurring theme across all cases was the avoidance of preferred clothing styles. Fear of judgment and negative comments led individuals like Tania and Selma to wear clothing that hid what they perceived as flaws.

Rejection and Social Pressure: The impact of body shaming extended to romantic relationships and peer acceptance. Vishnu's rejection by girls and his fear of judgment over his appearance are examples of how body shaming leads to heightened social pressure.

3) Impact on Social Media

Social media has a significant impact on body shaming, both positively and negatively:

1. Negative Impact:

*Unrealistic Beauty Standards: Social media platforms often promote unrealistic body ideals through heavily edited photos and filters, leading to unhealthy comparisons.

*Cyberbullying: Body shaming is common in comment sections and posts, where users may receive hurtful comments about their appearance.

*Pressure to Conform: The constant exposure to idealized body types can create pressure to conform, resulting in anxiety, low self-esteem, and eating disorders.

2. Positive Impact:

*Body Positivity Movements: Social media has also become a platform for body positivity and self-acceptance movements, encouraging diversity in beauty standards and promoting inclusivity.

*Support Communities: Many users find support groups and communities that help them ↓ embrace their bodies and resist

Negative comments toward them diminish, and their mental health improves. In my study, two individuals who experienced body shaming began going to the gym and developed body positivity. They are now gym trainers, having become both mentally and physically strong. Pricey and Augustine are individuals with a positive mind-set, and they love what they do. Their work provides them with good earnings as well. They have turned their experiences with body shaming into a profession, which has contributed to positive changes in their lives. Many people, through activities like going to the gym and dieting, have developed body positivity and become physically and mentally stronger. Vishnu, Yassin, and Ansal Das are examples of those who have overcome body shaming caused by various physical issues. Likewise, Abhishek and Parvathy V. S. Are also examples of individuals who have successfully dealt with body shaming. About 80% of people who have experienced body shaming can achieve self acceptance by young adulthood, allowing them to maintain a positive self-image despite negative comments. However, the remaining individuals struggle

with self-acceptance and confidence. These individuals often attempt to promote body positivity but face difficulties due to various factors, which can exacerbate psychological and social problems. Negative comments from friends, family, peers, and relatives can deepen their depression, even as they try to embrace body positivity. In contrast, individuals who are not depressed tend to strive for body positivity. Social media significantly influences societal beauty standards, showcasing predominantly masculine, tall, and clear-skinned individuals as ideal. Although there are exceptions, people often strive to emulate the body types seen in media portrayals. Almost 95% of society adheres to these standards, despite the fact that heroines often have fair skin and ideal physical features. Consequently, people try to promote body positivity by following these standards, and those who don't conform may face body shaming. However, social media has reduced the emphasis on skin tone and blemishes. Actresses with darker skin tones and pimples are increasingly seen walking confidently and have their own fan base, which helps boost their confidence and acceptance in society. Thus, social media can have a positive impact in this regard.

Coping Strategies

As the individuals matured, many developed strategies to cope with and resist the effects of body shaming. This indicates a turning point in their psychological journey:

Embracing Body Positivity: Many individuals, such as Bhavana and Anjana, adopted body positivity as a way to reclaim self-worth. They actively rejected societal beauty standards and began working on self-acceptance.

Exercise and Lifestyle Changes: Cases like Vishnu, Yassin, and Augustine show that physical activity, such as joining a gym, became an outlet for individuals to regain control over their bodies and improve their self-esteem.

Health Interventions: Several cases highlight the use of diet modifications, creams, or even braces to address physical features that were the source of ridicule. Anjana used braces for her teeth and facial hair removal creams, while Tania resorted to Ayurvedic treatments for her skin tone and weight.

Current Self-Confidence

The current levels of self-confidence among the individuals vary:

Improved Confidence through Body Positivity: Many of the individuals, like Vishnu and Augustine, have made significant strides in building self-confidence by improving their body image through exercise and lifestyle adjustments.

Challenges with Self-Acceptance: Despite some efforts, individuals like Bhavana and Akash still struggle with self-confidence due to persistent societal pressure and ongoing physical insecurities.

Mixed Success: While cases like Abhishek and Aleena have seen improvements in their confidence (due to braces or other interventions), others, such as Tania, still grapple with self-acceptance because the physical changes they sought did not materialize.

“Names are pseudonyms”

CHAPTER – 5

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS, CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings

Ninety percent of people in society experience some form of body shaming, though the extent varies from person to person. Some individuals face excessive body shaming, while for others, it is less severe. Body shaming can take many forms and can target various aspects of a person's appearance, including height, weight, and skin color. People experience body shaming for being taller, shorter, heavier, or lighter than societal norms. Physical characteristics and beauty standards set by society play a significant role in why body shaming occurs. Society often targets individuals whose body types do not conform to established beauty standards, subjecting them to body shaming through negative comments. This leads to various psychological issues, including stress, social anxiety, fear of social interaction and judgment, depression, insomnia, and even eating disorders. As a result, their self-confidence decreases. Many people experience body shaming from childhood, but its impact intensifies during the teenage years due to the significant physical and mental changes that occur during this stage of life. In their teenage years, many tolerate body shaming, but it is during young adulthood that they begin to push back against negative comments. At this stage, they actively work to promote body positivity within society. Most men turn to the gym—those who are overweight focus on losing fat, while others aim to build muscle. However, women are more likely to rely on dieting, with only a few, around 2-3, opting for the gym. There are several reasons why some are unable to go to the gym, including financial constraints, lack of time, or work obligations. Unfortunately, the diets many follow to achieve body positivity often lead to other health issues. Unhealthy diets can lead to numerous health problems, often due to starvation and skipping meals. However, healthy diets can be effective in promoting body positivity. There are various ways young adults try to overcome body shaming, and those who achieve body positivity through these efforts tend to be very confident.

Negative comments toward them diminish, and their mental health improves. In my study, two individuals who experienced body shaming began going to the gym and developed body positivity. They are now gym trainers, having become both mentally and physically strong. Pricey and Augustine are individuals with a positive mind-set, and they love what they do. Their work provides them with good earnings as well. They have turned their experiences with body shaming into a profession, which has contributed to positive changes in their lives. Many people, through activities like going to the gym and dieting, have developed body positivity and become physically and mentally stronger. Vishnu, Yassin, and Ansal Das are examples of those who have overcome body shaming caused by various physical issues. Likewise, Abhishek and Parvathy V. S. Are also examples of individuals who have successfully dealt with body shaming. About 80% of people who have experienced body shaming can achieve self-acceptance by young adulthood, allowing them to maintain a positive self-image despite negative comments. However, the remaining individuals struggle with self-acceptance and confidence. These individuals often attempt to promote body positivity but face difficulties due to various factors, which can exacerbate psychological and social problems. Negative comments from friends, family, peers, and relatives can deepen their depression, even as they try to embrace body positivity. In contrast, individuals who are not depressed tend to strive for body positivity. Social media significantly influences societal beauty standards, showcasing predominantly masculine, tall, and clear-skinned individuals as ideal. Although there are exceptions, people often strive to emulate the body types seen in media portrayals. Almost 95% of society adheres to these standards, despite the fact that heroines often have fair skin and ideal physical features. Consequently, people try to promote body positivity by following these standards, and those who don't conform may face body shaming. However, social media has reduced the emphasis on skin tone and blemishes. Actresses with darker skin tones and pimples are increasingly seen walking confidently and have their own fan base, which helps boost their confidence and acceptance in society. Thus, social media can have a positive impact in this regard.

5.2 Suggestions

Body shaming leads to numerous social and psychological issues, making it crucial to address these problems. The root of the issue lies in the unrealistic beauty standards set by society. Negative comments from others cause significant stress for individuals who

experience body shaming, leading to tension, fear of judgment, insomnia, overthinking, depression, social anxiety, and more. As a result, many are hesitant to engage in social interactions. If these harmful trends continue unchecked, they will exacerbate mental health and social issues. The main problem is that many people are unaware of the impact of body shaming, highlighting the need for greater public awareness.

Here are some suggestions

*1. Education and Awareness Campaigns:

Promote body positivity in schools and on social media to help adolescents build self-esteem and resilience. Encourage campaigns that challenge societal standards of beauty.

2. Support Systems:

Peer and professional support networks should be made available for adolescents dealing with body shaming. This could involve counseling service, support groups or even mentors who can share similar experiences.

3. Parental Guidance:

Educate parents on the impact of body shaming and encourage them to foster positive body image and emotional support at home. Workshops and resources for parents can be helpful.

4. School Programs:

Schools can create anti-bullying programs that specifically address body sham offering a safe space for students to express concerns and learn how to respond to negative comments.

5. Mental Health Interventions:

Integrating mental health awareness into educational curricula to help students cope with the psychological effects of body shaming, such as depression, anxiety, and eating disorders.

6. Media Literacy:

Encourage adolescents to become critical consumers of media by incorporating media literacy education that helps them understand and resist unrealistic beauty standards portrayed in advertisements, films, and social media.

Body shaming is a significant social issue in today's society, leading to numerous social, psychological, and health problems for individuals. Those who experience body shaming often face neglect and isolation from others, which can severely damage their confidence. The impact of body shaming is particularly intense during the teenage years, but as individuals reach young adulthood, they begin to push back against it. Many try to foster body positivity, aligning with societal beauty standards. Some succeed, gaining confidence, while others continue to struggle, leading to further body shaming and psychological and social challenges.

Self-acceptance is key to overcoming body shaming, as those who lack it often feel overwhelmed. Social media plays a major role in shaping beauty standards, with both positive and negative effects on society. To combat body shaming, education and awareness are crucial. It's important to support those affected by body shaming and guide parents on how to address the issue. Raising awareness about the mental health impact of body shaming, along with understanding the influence of media, can help reduce its prevalence.

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level of high school graduates and above where they realize that appearance is very necessary for them related to self-confidence and career.

The form of body shaming that makes them insecure is the condition of a body shape that is not ideal such as a fat body posture. In addition, the presence of excess hair on the body such as the presence of fine hair above the lips (mustache) in women, the amount of bladder around the hands and feet area for both women and men. This is a significant parameter in making a person’s self-confidence decrease.

Skin color is also a very influential parameter. The average dark skin tone can be one of the things that makes them feel insecure. Meanwhile, brighter and cleaner skin increases self-confidence.

Each parameter, both obesity (fat shaming), skinny body size (skinny shaming), body hair (excess hair), and skin color have a positive effect on self-confidence. This means that the higher the parameter value, the greater the distrust.

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Appendix

Semi structured Questionnaires

Social, Emotional, Media Aspects

Emotional Aspects

- Is social anxiety caused by body shaming?
- How does body shaming affect self-confidence?
- Have things like tension fear of judgement, depression?

Social aspect

- Has there been avoidance and loneliness in the society due to body shaming
- Have you been afraid to go to public events due to body shaming?
- Ever felt afraid to go around body shaming people?

Social Media

- Ever felt like promoting beauty standards on social media?
- What impact has the media made?