

CHILDREN IN DHAKA

Study shows dismal picture of lifestyle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A large number of children in Dhaka city do not maintain a healthy, discipline lifestyle, which affects their physical and mental development, researchers said in a new survey.

Seventy four percent of the surveyed children aged between 7 and 15 years do not eat timely while 59 percent do not do any physical exercise.

Besides, 18 percent children do not want to cooperate with their parents in household chores, and interestingly, 8 percent children prefer loneliness, according to the survey.

Also, 59 percent children do not wash their clothes on their own, while 22 percent do not keep their study tables and books organised.

Paribesh Bachao Andolon (Poba), Pallima Green Sangsad and Martial Art Foundation conducted the month-long survey on daily lifestyle and surroundings of 1,451 students of two private and two public schools in Dhaka city in March this year.

Poba Joint General Secretary Lelin Chowdhury presented the findings at a press conference at Pallima Sangsad office in the city yesterday.

The survey also found that 25 percent of the children are underweight and 8 percent are overweight, while 20 percent suffered from various diseases including allergy, kidney, liver and other diseases, he said.

Child psychologist Sadia Sharmin Urmee, who was involved in the survey, said the findings indicate how the children in urban areas maintain an indiscipline life.

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"The possible factors behind these are familial conflicts, family food habits, lack of playgrounds in the schools or open spaces and a lack of community life," Sadia, who runs a private counselling firm, told this correspondent.

Majority of the urban students spend time watching television, playing video games, using computers or mobile phones and browsing social media sites via Internet, she said.

"Such a lifestyle is not helpful for children's proper mental and physical growth," she said.

Often times, Sadia said, there are conflicts between parents in a family, and if that continues, it has huge a negative psychological impact on children.

If children remain mostly at homes and under pressure of studies, they do not become social, rather become self-centred, she noted.

The study recommended that the authorities formulate policies so that schools and residential areas have playgrounds. It also suggested that communities take initiatives to make sure that children can socialise.

"Children are our future leaders. They need to have scopes so that they can grow physically, mentally and intellectually. Therefore, there should be initiatives from the state, communities, social organisations and families to create scopes for their proper development," the study said.