



#PERSPECTIVE

# Skinny shaming

## The bullying we pretend doesn't exist

### Confession of a skinny person

Body positivity never really caught up in Bangladesh. It's shocking how even in 2024, body shaming not only exists in our society, but also is taken for granted. In recent times, there has been some awareness against fat shaming. Yet, the same cannot be said about skinny shaming. Being a person in his late 20s and still weighing less than 50 kilograms, I have experienced body shaming throughout my life.

### What do I call you?

Chicken wings, Patlu, Skull, Deadman walking, Little friend — I have been called many other names that I do not even remember, nor do I want to. Yes, I know my arms look like a skeleton. And yes, I know I look like a skull if I get a haircut. I weigh less than I should but that's hardly a reason to constantly call me by these names.

You may mean well, but no skinny person enjoys being called 'my little friend.' It may not tantamount to be bullying, but it's still a mockery.

Questions like — "What do I call you? Patlu? Or Rugno (my name is Rudro and it sort of rhymes)" — might seem funny to you and while it's okay to be humorous every once in a while, I do not find it amusing when people say the same thing every day.

### Are we invisible? Hello!

Perhaps the biggest drawback of being skinny is that people do not seem to take our existence seriously. Everywhere we go, people act like we are an apparition, something to acknowledge only if it makes a noise, otherwise just pretend that it does



not exist.

Finding clothes that will fit is a big challenge. And if skinny people manage to find something that they like, it's either too large or too small to give the perfect fit. And then there's the question of what would seem presentable and what would not make us look as if we were on our deathbeds!

I, myself, have been wearing nothing but full sleeves for the last decade because it's the only thing that prevents people from staring at my arms, something that makes me very uncomfortable.

How people act around us on public



transport is another disturbing experience. It's like we do not occupy any place in the space-time continuum. If we are on a bus, the person next to us acts like we do not exist. So, they do the most (not) logical thing — grab as much space as they can, practically pushing us out of the seat.

This happens on every single public transport, and unless we are vocal and call people out, we have to suffer during the commute.

For those unlucky skinny people who cannot find a seat and are forced to stand, they suffer even more because the constant push from both sides makes it difficult to

stand. And because we lack in mass and strength, very little can be done while being pushed around.

### Trust me, we are fine

"Don't you eat?" is the question I get asked regularly. "You don't have to diet control, you know," — I get that you are trying to be funny, but I do not appreciate the same joke every day. Being a skinny person feels like we have committed some heinous crime and now, society must shame us at every opportunity they get.

"Are you addicted to some sort of serious drug?" I was asked by someone when I was only 18. As someone who did not even smoke and spent all his time in his room reading books, it was a devastatingly insulting comment.

Some of my teachers asked me if I had any serious illness, which was sweet of them and I did not mind because they seemed to care. But when someone randomly assumes that you are a substance abuser just because you are skinny, it's very insulting. Almost every skinny person likely had to face this at one time or another.

### Whatever happened to being sensitive?

Just like calling someone fat is rude, it is also rude to mock someone for being skinny. These two actions are the same and, in their essence, body shaming! It's something that is prevalent in our culture and should be driven out.

Please be sensitive and polite. The change can start with you!

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**Photo: Collected**