

The great divide and its sickening aftermath

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While a large chunk of the population has taken to the streets to protest against the growing number of sexual assault cases, an even larger group insists on voicing their opinions against the victims of these assaults. What seems like a typical case of ignorance backed by an illogical thought process now has the population divided over an issue that has plagued this country for years. The question is, why does this divide exist, and how is it only adding to the problem at hand?



Victim blaming is perhaps the easiest way to remain ignorant of an existing problem. It gives you the impression that these issues can be resolved, simply by putting certain restrictions on those who fall victim to it, while giving you the ability to act as if you were not supporting the crime itself. However, the divide we are talking about reaches far deeper than just pointing fingers at the victims. It may start at this very place but ultimately intertwines with a lot of other ideologies that fuel this divide, and drives the nation away from a more logical, and necessary solution to the problem.

At the very top, the entire population is divided into two groups – one demanding proper justice, and punishment for the victims, while the other is seen trying to justify the crime, or putting the blame on the victims. The latter group is further divided into a few sub-groups, which include people straight up talking in favour of the criminals and blaming victims, people who say that they are against such acts of sexual harassment, but still insist on putting the blame on the victims, people with a hyper-conservative mindset, people who blame feminism for the degradation of moral values, and so on.

This divide mainly exists due to the conflicting opinions of why sexual assault takes place, and its possible solutions. The more logical opinion is provided by the group who seeks proper justice for the victims irrespective of their culture or belief. In contrast, the other group puts forward an opinion that is devoid of logic, and adds no value to the conversation. Yet, their voices are the ones that echo louder, simply because a perceived majority thinks that an ideal society is one where the victims need to restrict themselves in order for the criminals to stay at bay.

But recent and past events say otherwise.

Despite staying indoors, or maintaining “modesty”, it still seems that girls are not safe. How do the victim blaming groups try to justify this? Well, this is where they put the blame on “feminism”, not knowing what it means, or how it really works. As far as they are concerned, you can stay locked up in your own home, and still be sexually harassed, yet it is not the criminal who is to be blamed, rather the rising number of feminists should take the blame for this one. It is absurd how these people try to manipulate the facts by bending the narrative to their favour.

In addition to encouraging assaulters,

and motivating their actions, this divide is also acting as the driving force behind another issue, one that requires our immediate attention—juvenile rape cases.

As enraged and heartbroken as I am to see the growing number of assault cases over the past few months, I am even more devastated learning that the assaulter in a few of those cases were under the age of 18, with the youngest of them being just 11 years old. And it may just be the case that our great societal divide is what has led to this.

Kids this young find amusement in a lot of things, and one of those things is to act

like a goon, on or off social media. When many of these kids see adults, especially people who like to boast about their power on social media, openly justify sexual assault, and often use it as a threat against those who question their logic and reasoning, they think that it is just another way to showcase their might. Not having proper knowledge regarding sex education, ethical thinking, and gender equality also adds to this problem. They then imitate what they see, and use similar kinds of threats against others.

You are bound to come across a few of these delinquents while scrolling through the comments on a post talking about recent issues. Unlike adults who can be tried at a court, minors can walk free after facing a fine or a minimum sentence.

Back in 2015, India introduced the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, which allowed it to treat citizens aged between 16 and 18 as adults while prosecuting them for crimes related to sexual assault and murder. This was a controversial decision given that India is part of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which forbids member states to impose capital punishment on citizens below the age of 18. Bangladesh too is a signatory to this convention, and trying to work out a similar level of punishment will cause a lot of backlash. Hence, there remains a question over a suitable way to punish minors who are guilty of these crimes.

However, all is not lost yet, and there may still be time to educate them. While we continue to raise our voices against these crimes, and the ones who motivate them, we must also be concerned about the generation which is now deciding for themselves as they grow up what is morally right, and wrong.

