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PHOTO: MIZAN RAHMAN

"Today I choose life. Every morning when I wake up I can choose joy, happiness, negativity, pain... To feel the freedom that comes from being able to continue to make mistakes and choices - today I choose to feel life, not to deny my humanity but embrace it."

— Kevyn Aucoin, American make-up artist, photographer and author.

SNAPSHOT

| SEXUAL HARASSMENT |

We all say and know that sexual harassment has, unfortunately, become a part of our daily lives. Everyday, women out on the streets of Dhaka face harassment in some form or the other. What is shocking is that many women don't know when they are being harassed, and end up keeping mute. The definition of sexual harassment is now believed to be being inappropriately touched only. To be able to fight against sexual harassment, we really need to know what to address.

According to Stop Street Harassment (SSH), an American nonprofit organisation dedicated to documenting and ending gender-based street harassment, gender-based street harassment is unwanted comments, gestures, and actions forced on a stranger in a public place without their consent and is directed at them because of their actual or perceived sex, gender, gender expression, or sexual orientation. Street harassment includes unwanted whistling, leering, sexist, homophobic or transphobic slurs, persistent requests for someone's name, number or destination after they've said no, sexual names, comments and demands, following, flashing, public masturbation, groping, sexual assault, and rape. A lot of these actions are also often belittled by being termed as 'eve-teasing'.

Other instances of sexual harassment can include sending email, messages or leaving repeated phone messages for someone who has clearly indicated no interest. Making regular sexually evocative comments to a person who has

READY TO FIGHT BACK!

NAZIBA BASHER

PHOTOS: KAZI TAHSSIN AGAZ APURBO
(STAGED PHOTOS)



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PHOTO: AFP

"Tortured, Killed and Abandoned"

Thousands of Rohingya Muslims and Bangladeshis are drifting at sea near the coastlines of Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. The ordeal they have suffered during the voyage and in the detention camps is indescribable. It reminds me of the Nazi holocaust during the Second World War. Bangladesh has done nothing to rehabilitate these poor people and yet again Myanmar showed their inhuman arrogance by refusing to take back the Rohingya Muslims to their homeland. I think both Bangladesh and Myanmar are committing crimes against humanity by pushing these oppressed people toward an uncertain future, misery and death. I would like to thank the Star Weekend for its spotlight on this significant issue (Published on May 29, 2015).

Sadequr Rahman
IER, University of Dhaka

Shutterstories

When I open the pages of the Star Weekend, one of the first things I notice is the photo feature section called Shutterstories. I really like the carefully selected photos of this section that show the many features of our society. The art of conceptual photography is not very popular in our country as it requires hard earned photography skills. It is really encouraging that the Star Weekend is promoting conceptual photography by publishing exquisite photo features regularly.

Arnab Ray
Tikatuli, Dhaka

"The Change We Want"

It is quite appreciable that the Imams, many of whom spread obnoxious statements against women's rights and preach impractical theories during their Friday sermons, are being taught something useful. I really like the initiative taken by Asia Foundation. However, I am not quite sure whether this effort will make any impact in the society. The fact is these Imams have a very little role to play in the society. In most of the places, their sole duty is just to conduct the prayer and Friday sermon, they are allowed to tell only what the local leaders want to hear from them. They are nothing more than a paid employee. However, this faith based approach can be effective if these imams can apply this training to their practical work.

Arka Islam
Dhanmondi, Dhaka



PHOTO COURTESY: ASIA FOUNDATION

The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the Star Weekend.



not displayed interest and requested that you stop the activities is considered sexual harassment. Finally, sending unwelcome pornographic material or obscene messages to someone is considered sexual harassment.

According to a 1992 study conducted by the International Labor Organization (ILO), "Sexual harassment is inextricably linked with power and takes place in societies which often treat women as sex objects and second-class citizens." As much as many men and women think that sexual harassment occurs because of the deprivation of sexual contact, it has been proven time and again that, that is in fact not the case.

In the Bangladeshi context, where women are treated as a minority, a lot of the times that sexual harassment takes place is because the men think that is what is needed to shame them enough to 'put them in their place', which goes to

show that sexual harassment is more of a power-play than anything.

The notion that harassment can only be done by men to a woman is also incorrect. When a woman blames another woman's attire for being harassed, she is harassing the victim. When a woman catcalls another woman for her clothes, it is also considered harassment. As a matter of fact, a lot of women don't know when they are harassing other women.

Taking such information into account is very important for young women all across the country to be prepared when they are being faced with sexual harassment on the streets or elsewhere. The moment any of these actions are recognised, we can address it as sexual harassment and take appropriate actions against it. We can now be ready for whatever comes for us. We can now be ready to fight back!