

"How old are you?"

How old are you? The very moment you ask this question to a lady, she would feel extremely uncomfortable. From age-old courtesy calls, we have learned that it is extremely rude to ask a woman anything regarding her age. Even research has revealed that majority of women refuse to answer questions related to their date of birth. Today's world though has seen numerous social and religious taboos being shattered to bits and pieces. When people are fighting against serious issues like abortion and child labour, it is strange that a silly and disapproved outlook regarding a woman's age still persists. We had to find out what caused such inefficacies and why women felt uncomfortable talking about their age. Our interview panel consisted of eminent female personalities, from social media stars to bankers, of our nation to get an in depth understanding of the issue and understand their thoughts regarding the subject-matter.



SHAHTAJ MONIRA HASHEM

VIVACIOUS AND FREE-SPIRITED

If vibrancy could be quantified, this bright young star of Dhaka would get full marks. Shahtaj is a widespread name amongst the young and the old. She has captured everyone's heart with her bubbly charm and on-screen charisma. The young star has worked in numerous TV series and telefilms. Her fame grew ten-folds after appearing in 'Chinigura – Prem' with the celebrated singer and actor Tahsan Khan.

Shahtaj is also a very busy social celebrity with thousands of followers on social media who regard her as their idol. We reckoned, this constant pressure to be available to fans and provide them with meaningful content should be hectic and take a toll. Shahtaj seemed to disagree, "Well, if you want my opinion, there's always a good and a bad side to everything. I choose to 'always' look at the positives. Continuous online presence means revealing much more about me than what is necessary, a severe breach of privacy to some. However, when you realise how the social media world works and you summon-up how many people actually look up to you, the negatives can be easily forgone. I enjoy this attention and I feel privileged that people like my work and they regard me as someone to 'follow'".

A young girl like Shahtaj who has achieved so much at such a short time, needed to have some focus and goals for the future, to become more successful and illustrious. "I will take life as it comes. My plans are to represent my country in the international arena. Something much bigger than what I have achieved till today. Keeping my fingers crossed for all these, though".

At her prime and forced to act older sometimes, we asked Shahtaj whether she enjoyed this kind of aberrant behaviour. "No, it's absolutely wrong! I don't like it at all. That is why probably I don't act older than my age at any place. I don't see my friends do it either. We all understand that lives are short and 'time', once gone, never returns."

ELITA KARIM

SHINING THROUGH HARD WORK

Journalist, Singer, Actress, nothing seems to impede

this talented individual who wishes to excel at everything. Elita Karim is definitely an outstanding example of a confident, goal oriented and secure person. When most people are struggling with their career, she dared to pursue her passion, which is singing, alongside her demanding profession as a member of the press.

With three successful music albums in the market and a strong fan base, Elita Karim definitely has set an example for everyone. We had many questions to ask this diva and it began with the following lines; 'Dare to wear your age well', what these lines meant to her. Elita sneered, "I have never hidden my age! It's a concept I am not familiar with. My age is there, all over the Internet and social media. If you dig into my past you'd know that I was born in the Middle East and did much of my schooling over there. We were issued birth certificates instantly and had to submit our original certificates for schooling purposes and there was just no 'other' way in-between. Upon returning to Bangladesh, I was introduced to the concept of 'certificate age' and 'original age', which was hilarious. I don't know if I wear my age well or not! I try to be as comfortable, as possible, in it. I definitely don't try to look younger or older; I just try to look more like myself."

"There is an age-old tradition of women hiding their real age from the rest of the world! Elita Karim had tips to add to these lines "I think the circumstances have certainly changed over the years. Women are more confident nowadays and have learnt to appreciate themselves more, no longer feeling the unnecessary need to look 'out of the ordinary' for the rest of the world".

When inquired whether she ever felt the pressure from the media or other places to act or look younger, Elita had interesting things to say, "I wouldn't deny it, the close mindedness is still there! There were occasions when people chose younger artistes over me for shows but then at the end decided to stick with me because I was more experienced. At the end of the day, if you are good at doing your job, there is nobody in the world that can belittle you. The struggles will always be there but it can never be the reason to bog you down. Understand your priorities and work towards them regardless of any pressure".