

Cyberbullying targeted towards women

Sheila Ahmed, a lively girl in her early teens, stays busy most of the day doing online classes and chatting with her friends over social media. Her parents complain that online dependence has increased tenfold because of the pandemic and they could not do much about it as there was no other alternative to keep the young mind busy.

“We didn’t even know that the world wide web could be a harmful place for our daughter,” said Shahabuddin Ahmed, the father of the young girl. He continued to elaborate on the harrowing experience: “Unknown people crept into her life with a blatant offer to obscenity. We consider ourselves when Sheila came to us directly with complaints and hence, we could immediately cut her off from the perpetrators.”

Not many are as lucky as Shahabuddin. Most youngsters do not share their traumatic experience, especially with their parents, worrying about admonition and reproach.

A recent census on cyberbullying shared by Additional Deputy Police Commissioner, Nazmul Alam of Cyber Crime Division states that Bangladesh has a very high rate of cyberbullying where 80 percent of the victims are teenage girls and young women aged between 14 and 22 years. The

majority of the cybercriminals and hackers are within 16-17 age bracket.

As more and more people are joining social media every day, cyberbullying is also on the rise to an alarming level.

Barrister Omar Khan Joy, Advocate of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh, provides suggestions to counter the menace. According to the lawyer, cyberbullying is an offense punishable under the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act 2006. Victims can lodge complaints to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) on enlisted numbers given on the Internet or mail them directly at btrc@btrc.gov.bd.

Cyberbullying is an offensive crime, even though the delinquency occurs behind the screen, it does not mean it is any less of a crime. Our children and young adults need

to be educated regarding the negatives of the world wide web. They need to be informed that perpetrators may look for ways to intrude from anywhere in the world. They must be taught how to recognise these perpetrators and how to place complaints or when to share with a trusted person when faced with the misbehaviour. It can be anyone, the victims have complete confidence on, a person who also has the capacity to do something about the misdemeanour — older siblings, parents, older cousins, etc.

United we can counter cyberbullying. Awareness is most crucial to handle this menace and we should bring up our children and girls in such a way that they can be alert to cyberbullying before becoming a victim to it.

— LS Desk



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