

Chapter 11

Struggle against ICT– Based Violence: Locating Socialization Process of Young Men as a Hidden Cause of Women’s Vulnerability

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ABSTRACT

Construction of masculinity through socialization process is traditionally related with the enactment of violence. Through various norms, cultural practices and given standards young boys are taught to become masculine. The social factors, family, peer group, technology and educational institutions also play a vital role in shaping the gender identity of a boy. Socialization process of young boys thus shapes their personality and creates an environment to become masculine and enact violence. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is one such factor that influences the socialization process among young men. Technological advancement influences the mindset of young men who are always affiliated with various technological products. These factors influence them to practice dominant behavior which they learn from society and internalize it. In most of the cases these behaviors lead young men to get involved in committing Violence against Women (VAW) by using ICT.

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INTRODUCTION

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become an integral part of our daily way of living. We cannot think of passing a day without the blessings of ICT. It has brought the world around us much closer than we ever imagined. The blessings of ICT are used by many for performing evil purposes. Nowadays new forms of violence are being perpetrated by young men using ICT and commonly women and girls are the primary targets of such violence. These evil acts can be coined as technological violence. In this era of technological advancement, the mindset of young men and boys are always being influenced by various technological products like TV, mobile phone, computer and internet. So these factors influence young men to practice dominant behavior which they learn from society and internalize it as a day to day life activity. In Bangladesh we can also see young men behaving in a dominant manner.

Society assigns different tasks and allocates particular roles and responsibilities between the two particular sexes- men and women. Society anticipates this allocation in the socialization of children and young people. Children learn about their gender identities from the culture in which they live and they adjust their behavior to fit in with the gender norms and expectations of their culture (Cherry, 2011). Boys and girls are expected to acquire sex-specific skills, self-concepts, personality and attributes. Society also expects from them to be masculine and feminine according to their sexual identity which is defined by particular culture, tradition and norms. Socially constructed masculine attributes always attract young men to exhibit their power over others. One of the common perceptions in our society about boys and young men are that they are brute oppressors, dominant individuals and perpetrators of almost all forms of violence. So, these social norms, beliefs create greater psycho-social impacts on the mindset of young men and boys about masculinities, which they exercise and support in their life. The attributes of masculinities become visible in both public and private lives of these young people by socialization process.

Young men in Bangladesh enjoy easy and uncontrollable access to ICT. No monitoring of the websites is there in home or cyber centers and the access pattern is also easy. Most of the porn videos, explicit pictures in these websites and some social networking sites are being uploaded mainly by boys. Young men are being engaged with violence by using ICT; unwanted phone calls, taking photographs without consent, posting abusive comments on social networking sites and even death threats are most common violent acts performed by young men. The victims of these explosive exhibitions are mainly women. Free porn sites, free access to use web, easy and low price of multimedia mobile phones and no punishment for such violent acts are responsible for influencing young men to get more involved in technological violence.

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