

COMBATING CYBER SEXUAL HARASSMENT AGAINST WOMEN: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATIVE REFORMS IN BANGLADESH

*Nasir Ahmad**

ABSTRACT

With the proliferation of digital technologies and the ubiquity of social media, a new form of sexual violence, known as cyber sexual violence has become an uncomfortable headache for the peace-loving people of Bangladesh. Although these technologies and communication systems are expected to be used for the welfare of society, some deviant persons occasionally use them to commit various types of cyber-crimes, especially cyber sexual harassment (CSH) against women, an unwanted sexual behaviour demonstrated through using digital communication technologies that makes the victims feel threatened, exploited, humiliated and upset. To regulate the unexpected behaviour of these deviant people and to prevent CSH, the Government of Bangladesh has enacted several laws and made several reforms in the cyber laws. Nevertheless, the occurrence of CSH against women is increasing almost every year, which gives rise to a reasonable question as to the appropriateness of the relevant laws. The purpose of this study is twofold, namely, firstly, to critically analyze the relevant cyber laws; and secondly, to explore the ways to be followed to end this harassment. Following the doctrinal research methodology, this study assesses the appropriateness of relevant laws; and addresses the gaps in the legal provisions. It asserts that although Bangladesh has made several changes in the legislative measures addressing CSH, many more initiatives should be taken both within and beyond the laws. This paper also emphasises the need for paying considerable attention to policies and practices of educational institutions, law enforcement agencies, service providers, online communities and social media networks to stop CSH against women.

Keywords: Cyber Law, Cyber Sexual Harassment (CSH), women, digital technology, information and communication system

* PhD Candidate, Department of Law, University of Dhaka; and Associate Professor, Department of Law, Dhaka International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.