

“Pilot Study: Social Media Literacy of Madrasa Students in Bangladesh”

MOVE Foundation

Key Findings

Social media literacy refers to the knowledge and ability to competently, appropriately and responsibly handle digital content, including online posts, texts, images and audio-visual content, produced or published on social media platforms. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter etc. are popular social media tools amongst the youths of Bangladesh. Though many young people are increasingly using social media, their level of social media literacy varies.

This pilot study focuses on the social media literacy of madrasa students belonging to both Qawmi and Alia streams, who are aged 16 to 22 years and studying in the higher secondary level and above. **MOVE Foundation** carried out a survey of 825 students, both male and female, from 36 madrassas (23 Qawmi and 13 Alia) spreading over 12 districts in the country (Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Brahmanbaria, Cumilla, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Habiganj, Barishal, Bhola, Gaibandha and Panchagarh). The study aimed to understand the respondents' medium of access for social media, daily usage habits, preferred types of content, trends of posting or sharing content, and understanding of digital crime and legal frameworks.

Overview of the findings:

- 75% respondents have **access to ICT devices** (63% mobiles or tablets and 12% computers) primarily at home or educational institutions. Only 5% use Union Digital Centers (UDCs) or are aware of it and the rest rely on cybercafés (5%) and devices belongs to friends or relatives.
- 42% male Qawmi and 58% Alia respondents use **mobiles or tablets with internet**, while 5% Qawmi and 10% Alia respondents use computers with internet connection for their primary access to ICT.
- Interestingly, none of the female Qawmi respondents have access to computers and almost 70% of them have access to mobiles or tablets (only 1.4% with internet).
- Female respondents' **use** social media mostly at night and after midnight, whereas male respondents reported more frequency in morning and noon. Daily maximum social media usage **duration** for largest number of male respondents (38%) is 0-30 minutes and female (35%) is 1 to 2 hours.
- Majority (65%) prefers to **browse** social media to satisfy their curiosity without engaging in debates or raising questions. More than two third respondents (67%) look for religious education or religion-related content, 11% entertainment, 15% sports and 7% political. Female Qawmi respondents show more interest in religious educational content (96%), whereas male Qawmi and Alia respondents find more interest in religion-related contents (66% and 54% respectively).

- Respondents mostly **share** contents related to religious education or religion (70%), social issues (15%), sports or entertainment (10%) and political (5%).
- Male Qawmi respondents **share** more religion related contents (60%), while female Qawmi respondents share more on religious education (50%) and social issues (50%). Alia male and female respondents **share** mostly religious education contents (59%), followed by religion (20%), social issues (17%), sports and entertainment (15%) and political (7%).
- As the **preferred source** of sharing content, 39% males mentioned their friends compared to 31% female referring to relatives. Some respondents (35% male and 29% female) also share contents from subject-specific writers or celebrities.
- Tendency to **verify content** before sharing is relatively high amongst male and female Alia (76%) respondents, followed by male Qawmi (51%) and female Qawmi (33%) respondents. Amongst male qawmi respondents, 7% 'do not' verify contents at all, 21% 'sometimes' do it and 21% 'think' about the content but 'do not' cross check it. 33% female Qawmi respondent 'never' cross check content before sharing and another 33% 'think' about the content but 'do not' verify it.
- 62% respondents have heard of the term **cybercrime** (including **misinformation, extremist propaganda, defamation** etc.) and the rest have little to no knowledge about it.
- Understanding of **cybercrimes and legal penalties** is very poor amongst female Qawmi respondents (1.4% and 2.7% respectively) in comparison to male Qawmi (57% and 48% respectively) and Alia (79% and 68% respectively).
- With regard to **legal penalties for cyber-crimes**, 47% respondents remotely know, 22% have no idea, 3% do not consider online activities as punishable at all and 4% think cybercrime laws and legal penalties are meant to 'restrict' people's freedom of speech.

