

**Social Media and the Culture of Online Public Opinion: A Study on the Bloggers  
of Bangla Blogosphere**

**MSS 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester**

**Registration No: H- 5103**

**Exam Roll No: 3979**

**Session:2012-13**

**This advanced research thesis is submitted to the department of Sociology as the  
partial fulfillment of the requirements of MSS.**

**University of Dhaka**

**December 2014**

## **Acknowledgements**

To submit this thesis, I would like to show my gratitude to everyone who contributed to carry me close to the deep root of understanding sociology.

My heartiest gratefulness and gratitude goes to my honorable supervisor for his sincere advice, proper guidance, encouragement and impartial judgment. I also like to thank my department to allow me to conduct the study.

Finally, I gratefully recall my debt to all my respondents integrated with this study because without their help and cooperation in providing me with data and information, it would have been difficult for me to write down this thesis paper in organized way.



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## **Abstract**

The context of the study has emerged in the bangle online space of social media where Bangla blogosphere and Facebook are linked to create a culture of online public opinion. The study aims to draw the nature of online public opinion in social media by tracing the experiences of bloggers of Bangla blogosphere. For that purpose, the study also seeks to compare the theories of public sphere and public space with the theories of public opinion. The scope and problems of democratic participation of bloggers in social media are considered as bridge between the social media and online public opinion. The findings of the study show that with the advanced features and with some limit of networked of communication, the culture of online public opinion in the cyberspace of Social media is having a fragmentary look.

## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The utopian vision of Internet assumed the accessibility and availability of freedom of expression through Internet. Being a popular feature of Internet, social media, which is synonymously called as alternative media and new media, has eased the virtual connectivity of people in the networks of Internet and thus has claimed its position as a networked public sphere since the formation of public opinion with the use of social media tools played a major role in Arab Spring, Wall Street movement, Shahabag Uprising and other ongoing new movements.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Blog is the most rudimentary form of social media but the broad genre of communication in social media also includes social networking sites, videos sharing sites, online discussion forums, online bulletin boards etc. Because of its advantageous features of communication with the application of web 2.0, Facebook has become the most popular social networking sites around the World.

Bangla Blogosphere is more oriented toward community blogging sites than the 'journal type' individualistic blogging. Within a community blogging site, bloggers are connected with each other through a virtual network under specific rules and regulations and they have to share a common home page. Somewherein blog is the pioneer community blogging site in Bangla Blogosphere but there also exist significant other Bangla Blogging sites as well. Bloggers of bangle Blogosphere have engaged themselves in public discourses regarding many public issues and have played their role in formatting online public opinion for demanding war criminal punishment, for criticizing BSF for killing Bangladeshis in Borders, for raising awareness against eve teasing, rape and other forms sexual harassment and sexual violence, for making concerns about government policies, and so on. Such formation of public opinion has been lead by citizen journalisms, online discussions, literature, and other kinds of activities of bloggers. But in community blog sites, discussions

among Bloggers have also lead to hate speech, tagging, and grouping among bloggers which had caused a significant number of bloggers leaving blogs.

On the one hand, new blogging sites emerged with homogeneous minded bloggers who left other blogs and on the other hand, most of the bloggers, online activists and online writers have started to choose Facebook to express their opinions because of its popularity and advanced features. Those features not just have drugged bloggers, online activists and general individuals into Facebook, but also they have attracted media houses and media agencies to open their Facebook pages for commercial purposes. As a result, there has been a change in the opinion formation with the change of climate in Facebook and as well as in whole online community.

Shahbag uprising started on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2013 on demand of death penalty of war criminal Quader Mullah and bloggers and online activists were on the front lines of that movement. Several media and religious groups had accused bloggers as atheists with the reference of previous hate speech in blogs regarding religion and protested for severe punishment of the bloggers. On their demand, government had introduced the section 57 of ICT act 2006 and several bloggers were arrested under such law on the accusation of writing anti-religious content in the blog.

Social media has blurred the lines between private and public life of individuals. With the association of mainstream media, there has been a media mediated culture at Blogs and Facebook of placing opinion in public issues. By engaging into that culture, bloggers of Bangla Blogosphere have played and still playing a significant role both in blogs and Facebook in the formation of online public opinion. But the disproportionate participation in social media has led to greater subjectivities and increased polarization among its participants. The effects of such resulting consequences in online public opinion are needed to be studied.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To understand the nature of online public opinion in Social media.
2. To analyze the control over online public opinion in social media.
3. To assess the significant part Bloggers of Bangla Blogosphere have played in the formation of online public opinion in social media.
4. To examine the process how social media mediates the culture of online public opinion.



5. To identify the role of traditional media in the interaction between social media and the culture of online public opinion.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study deals with only one research question which is: What is the nature of culture of online public opinion?

#### **1.5 Operationalization of the Terms**

**Social Media:** Social media is the composite platforms of internet based applications where individuals by going online interact with one another through virtual communities and networks, and thus they get access to create, share and exchange ideas, information and other contents.

**Public Opinion:** Public opinion is the form of collective behavior in which individual directly or indirectly seeks live concerns by supporting or opposing any definite condition, people, proposal or issues through collaborative discussion and communication.

**Cyberculture:** Cyberculture is a cognitive and a social culture that has emerged or emerging from the manifestations of various human interactions within cyberspace mediated by computer networks including set of technologies (both material and technological), practices, attitudes, modes of thought and values.

**Cyberspace:** Cyberspace is an imaginary and notional space for virtual world that exists in, on and between computational devices and in which communication over computer networks occurs. It consists of both public and private space.

**Blog:** A blog (Short for web-log) is an Internet web page or a website with minimal or no external editing, maintained by individuals or a collaborative group, providing online commentary on any events, incidents, news, pictures, literature and others which are periodically updated and presented in reverse chronological order.

**Bangla Blogosphere:** Blogosphere refers to the universe of weblogs, bloggers and their interconnections. Bangla blogosphere is made up of all blogs which are written in Bengali language. The unique feature of Bangla blogosphere is that blogs exist together as connected community or as a collection of connected community and each of community blogging sites may have rules and regulations of their own. The bloggers of community blogging sites are connected with each other in a social networking service which provides them the opportunity not only of publishing their own content but also reading of and commenting in the contents of other bloggers.

**Citizen Journalism:** Citizen Journalism is a self-driven alternative participatory activist form of journalistic practices by public citizens when they play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information. New media technologies are to be believed in making citizen journalism accessible among the people worldwide.

### **1.6 The Significance of the Study:**

1. The study aims to conduct a cybercultural study relating the online space shared by both blog and Facebook.
2. The study attempts to link the between political and communication theories using both qualitative and quantative data.

### **1.7 The Limitation of the Study**

1. The study deals with online survey which can provide misleading data as the researcher has no control on respondents.

2. Because of the nature of its methodological framework, it is difficult for the the study to deal with specific sampling techniques.
3. Social media is a rapidly changing tool. Because of its velocity of change, the studies on social media quickly lose their validity.

### **1.8 Scope of the study**

Chapter one of the study is devoted to the background of the study, significance of study, objectives of the study, and research question. It also discusses the key concepts such as social media, blog, blogosphere, cyberspace etc.

Chapter Two deals with different online issues in Bangla online space which has created from the linkage of Bangla blogosphere and Facebook.

Chapter Three deals with literature review providing the scenario of worldwide blogosphere and Bangla blog community. The chapter adds the previous study regarding Bangla blog community and also includes difference characteristics of Bangla blogosphere such as blog culture, blog politics, and so on.

Chapter Four covers theoretical background. The chapter offers a detail discussion of Habermasian theory of public sphere and its implication in Blogosphere comparing with other theories of public sphere and public opinion.

Chapter Five includes research methodology. The chapter portrays different research methods applied in the study including online survey, case studies, and FGD.

Chapter Six deals with findings of the study from the filed and graphical presentations of the results.

Chapter Seven offers the discussion of the research dealing with findings from field works and their relations with the theories.

Chapter Eight is the conclusion of the study which also carries the further recommendations of the cybercultural studies.

## Chapter Two: Issues in Bangla Online Space

What has happened in Bangla online space that bloggers are writing about different issues not only in their blogs, but also they are using Facebook.

### 2.1 Contribution of Facebook in Online Issues

From 2012, the issues related to Bangladesh have been being more oriented to Facebook rather than blog. The following features of Facebook have contributed to make this happen:

**a) Follow Option:** In September 2011, Facebook has introduced ‘subscribe’ option (Two, 2011) which later has been converted into ‘follow’ option. By following option, being friend is not necessary as one can simply see any other’s Facebook updates just following hem or her but the followed person won’t see his or her follower’s updates.

**b) Extension of Word Limit:** At first, the word limit for a Facebook status was only 160. In November, 2011, Facebook has extended their word limit of status to 60000.

By these two options including other options like ‘event’, ‘mention’, ‘share’, ‘timeline’, ‘page’, etc. Facebook had provided greater opportunities for connectivity.

### 2.2 Issues in Bangla Online Space from Febraury to July

Since 2012, a trend has been observed that bloggers of Bangla blogosphere are increasingly writing at Facebook about public and political matters. As a result a connection between blog and Facebook has been created and this connection root of Bengali online space, which is the part of total cyberspace where public issues related to the cultural and political issues of Bangladesh are formulated.

For this study, 23 issues had selected to observe from February to July of 2014. Those issues are as following:

**1. Bangladesh Cricket Team's Recent Performance:** In 2014, Bangladesh hosted Asia Cup in February and T20 World Cup in March. Bangladesh also played with India in their home ground in June and had West Indies tour in July. Regarding to the poor performances of Bangladesh cricket team in those series and tournaments, there was a human chain in front of Mirpur cricket Stadium at June 18. The Facebook event for that human chain was created by blogger Hasan Mahbub, a popular literary bloggers of Somewhereinblog; Megh Rouddur, the admin of a Facebook group 'Cricket Freak' and Raziur Rahman.



**2. Protesting for Shakib's Ban:** 43.3 % respondents have given opinions on the issue of banning cricketer Shakib. Being the no.1 cricket all-rounder, Shakib Al Hasan is the most popular player in Bangladesh cricket team. But He was all over in news from February because of his controversial acts. During Asia cup in February, he was

banned for three matches for his uncivil behavior looking toward a TV camera from dressing room in a running game against Sri Lanka. In July, the disciplinary committee of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) banned him from any type of cricket as he was accused to beat a spectator who teased his wife in the VIP lounge and He was also accused for behaving badly with the coach on the phone. Regarding Shakib issues, the conversation in Facebook was seen to be divided in two sides. One side cheered him for beating the spectator as he was 'eve teaser', and the punishment was also heavy for them. While another side says that BCB is doing ok because Shakib is becoming rude. An event was held and according to event organizers Shakib received hard punishment for feather sin. But they also requested not to take any banner against BCB. They cleared that their aim was to request BCB rather accusing it.



**3. Foreign Flags in the Gallery:** During the Asia Cup and T20 world cup, it was seen in the galleries that many Bangladeshi's were carrying flags for foreign teams especially supporting for India and Pakistan. Bloggers and online activists protested

against the trend and a Facebook group called 'CP Gang' organized proclamation not to carry foreign countries' flags on galleries.

**Sushanta Das Gupta**  
2 hrs · 🌐

খেলার মাঠে বাংলাদেশিদের হাতে অন্য দেশের পতাকা প্রদর্শনের বিরুদ্ধে সচেতনতা বাড়াতে প্রচার শুরু করেছে সিপি গ্যাং (ক্র্যাক প্রাট্টন) নামে ফেইসবুকভিত্তিক একটি দল।

<http://bangla.bdnews24.com/bangladesh/article760435.bdnews>



**মাঠে ভিনদেশি পতাকা ওড়ানোর বিরুদ্ধে ফেইসবুক প্রচারণা - bdnews24.com**

খেলার মাঠে বাংলাদেশিদের হাতে অন্য দেশের পতাকা প্রদর্শনের বিরুদ্ধে সচেতনতা বাড়াতে প্রচার শুরু করেছে সিপি গ্যাং (ক্র্যাক প্রাট্টন) নামে ফেইসবুকভিত্তিক একটি দল।

BANGLA.BDNEWS24.COM

Like · Comment · Share

👍 31 people like this.

The administrator of Amar blog is sharing the news published in bdnews24 about CP Gang. Some bloggers of Amarblog was also involved with cp gang.

**4. T20 Flash Mob and Theme Song:** Bangladesh hosted T20 Cricket World cup from March to April. The theme song and its music video were released in February. After the release, it was vastly shared in social media like Youtube and Facebook. At first, for many, the music video had not portrayed Bengali culture rather it was kind of western. But soon organized 'flash mob' from different educational institutions across the country started their entry in social media and it has turned into a popular issue.

## টি টুয়েন্টি-১৪ এর ফ্ল্যাশ মব গুলো, অল্প বিশ্লেষণ সহ (ভিডিও ব্লগ)

লিখেছেন চটপট ক, ১৪ ই মার্চ, ২০১৪ সন্ধ্যা ৭:৪১

ফ্ল্যাশ মবের যেই মজাটা—প্রতি মুহুর্তে অবাক হওয়া, তা কোন টা থেকেই সেভাবে পাই নাই। তারপরেও ৩ টা ভার্শিটির চেষ্টা আসলেই প্রশংসার দাবিদার। আর ২ টা ভার্শিটির ফ্ল্যাশ মব দেখে, আমি টাক্ষি খাইছি, মূলত এদেরি ভালো পারফর্ম করার কথা ছিল, কিন্তু হয়েছে ঠিক এর উল্টোটা!

ফ্ল্যাশ মব...

বাকিটুকু পড়ুন ৮৫টি মন্তব্য ১০৭১বার পাঠিত ১👍


Blogger Mahfuzul Islam (nick: chotpot Ka) posted a blog with the compilation of flash mobs (for him those were street dance because flash mob can't be organized) and blog was read 1071 times with 85 comments. Many commented that the Flash mob of Dhaka University was the worst.

**5. World Cup Football:** The greatest show on earth, the world cup football was held on Brazil in July of this year. The football fans in Bangladesh are usually divided into supporters of Brazil and Argentina. These divide also appeared in social media. Both group of fans trolled one against another reviewing the results of their team. During the big matches, virtual world has turned onto virtual commentary box. Facebook events were made from different supporters group. During world cup football, Somewhereinblog for the first time, added world cup tab and by clicking the tab, anyone could see other bloggers' post about world cup football.

**6. Public Opinion against the Indian Film Gunday:** Directed by Abbas Ali Jafar and produced by Yash Raj Films, Gunday, a Bollywood action film was released in 14 February 2014. The Indian movies are not allowed to show or distribute in Bangladesh. But the cable line in this country contains a huge number of Indian channels and Indian movie stars are very popular in Bangladesh. The pirated video cds are illegally distributed for sell, cable operators show Indian movies in their own channels, and even people (especially youth) download Indian movies form Internet. So few days after the release of Gunday, the news spread out over Facebook that the movie has the manipulated narration of Bangladesh's history. Popular online activist and once a blogger inSomewhereinblog, Sedative Hypnotics gave a status at February 16. He says that "I have received some inbox who gave me the camrip of the movie. The accusation is the movie has manipulated the history of our war of liberation. I also gave a look. The movie contains a voice narration at the beginning which says "16 December, 1971, the 3<sup>rd</sup> war between Pakistan and India has ended. Almost 90 thousands Pakistani Force surrendered to Indian Army. This was the second biggest surrender after the Second World War. As a result of this war, a new nation is created Bangladesh. When the Indian Army started to leave Bangladesh..." Sedative finishes here, and after expressing his anger he says "Nobody points the finger at our



liberation war. No one can manipulate our history”. Sedative demanded strong protest from the state (Bangladesh). Mentioning that Bangladesh fought against Pakistan for nine months, he compares such manipulation as the rape of history.



**সিডাটিভ হিপনোটিক্স**

February 16 · Edited ·

ভারতে আজ একটি চলচ্চিত্র মুক্তি পেয়েছে। চলচ্চিত্রটির নাম 'গুন্ডে।' ঐ যে গান টা, তুনে মারি এন্ট্রিয়ারে দিল মে বাজি যানটিয়া... টাং টাং টাং। যাই হোক, গান টা না আমি ছবিটির জন্য উৎসুক ছিলাম এর পটভূমি তে বাংলাদেশের ইতিহাস আছে বলে।

কিছু ইনবক্স পেয়েছি যারা ছবিটির ক্যামরিপ দিলো। অভিযোগ- এখানে আমাদের মুক্তিযুদ্ধের ইতিহাস বিকৃতি করা হয়েছে। এটা শুনে চু মারলাম আমিও ছবি টি দেখতে।

ছবি টার শুরু তেই ভয়েস ন্যারেশন, যার বাংলা টা এরকম-

'১৬ ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৭১, শেষ হলো ভারত পাকিস্তানের তৃতীয় যুদ্ধ। প্রায় নব্বই হাজার পাকিস্তানী ফৌজ আত্মসমর্পণ করলো ভারতীয় সেনাবাহিনীর কাছে সেদিন। এটা ছিলো দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধের পর সবচেয়ে বড় আত্মসমর্পণ। এই যুদ্ধের ফলে জন্ম নিলো একটি নতুন দেশ, বাংলাদেশ। ভারতীয় সৈন্য রা যখন ঢাকা ছাড়ছিলো..... '

তো এতটুকু শুনে আর বাকিটা শোনার আগ্রহ পেলাম না। চলচ্চিত্র টির পরিচালক একজন ভালো মাপের লোক। তিনি কোন পূর্ব পড়াশুনা ছাড়া এই লাইন গুলো দিয়ে 'গুন্ডে' মুক্তি শুরু করেছেন তা আমি মানতে পারছি না। তাই আপাতত রাগ টা গায়ে মজাচ্ছি।

নোবডি পয়েন্টস দ্য ফিঙ্গার এট আওয়ার লিবারেশন ওয়ার। কেউ ম্যানিপুলেশন করতে পারে না আমাদের ইতিহাস। কড়া প্রতিবাদ চাই রাষ্ট্রের পক্ষ থেকে। নয় মাস পাকিস্তানের বিরুদ্ধে যুদ্ধ করার পর বলিউড যখন প্রচার করবে এটা ভারত পাকিস্তানের যুদ্ধ, আমার মনে হয় না আর মিন মিন করার কোন উপায় আছে। ইতিহাস বর্গা দেই নাই, যে যার খুশী মত তা বদলাবে।

ব্যক্তি পর্যায় থেকে প্রতিবাদ করলাম এই ইতিহাস ধর্ষনের। আমরা হতে পারি খুব ছোট্ট একটা দেশ, কিন্তু আমাদের অহম তোমাদের ভূমির আয়তনের থেকেও বড়।

👍 Sabbir Hossain, Muhammad Anwar, Shaiful Islam and 7,259 others like this.

➦ 1,880 shares

💬 View previous comments

42 of 430

Facebook event was created where event organizers offered the guideline how to email Yash Raj officials and to comment and inbox the official pages of Gunday film to protest the manipulation of Bangladesh liberation war in Gunday movie.

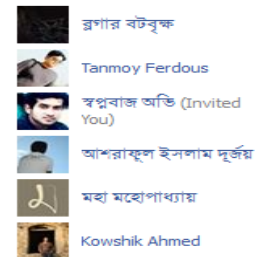
## ক্ষমা চাইবার দাবীতে যশরাজ ফিল্মসের কাছে প্রতিবাদলিপি প্রেরন

Public · By আসিফুল্লাহমান পুখিল, একজন নিষ্ঠাবান দেশপ্রেমিক and 4 others

[Events](#)
[Join](#)
[Maybe](#)
[Decline](#)

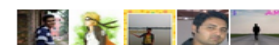
স্বপ্নবাজ অভি invited you.

### Going (3,600)



Recent guests (20+ new)

### Maybe (189)



### Invited (28,130)



Export · Share · Report

Tuesday, February 25, 2014

গুড্ডে.....

যশরাজ ফিল্মস প্রযোজিত একটি হিন্দী সিনেমা।

এই মুভিতে আমরা কি শিখলাম.....

আমরা নতুন করে শিখলাম আমাদের দেশে মুক্তিযুদ্ধ হয় নাই। হয়েছে ইন্দো-পাক যুদ্ধ।

মুক্তিযুদ্ধের সময় সাধারণ মানুষ অস্ত্র চোরালান সহ নানামুখী অপরাধে মেতে উঠেছিল।

... See More

### PINNED POSTS



#### আসিফুল্লাহমান পুখিল

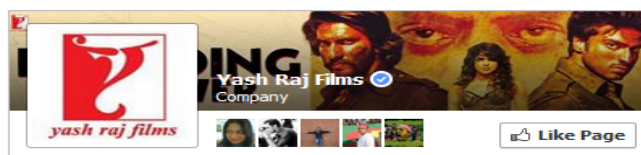
বন্ধুরা আমরা মেইল পাঠানোর দিক দিয়ে এখন পর্যন্ত বেশ সফল। টুইটারেও হাস্য ট্যাগের ব্যবহারও বেশ ভালো ভাবেই চলছে। এখন আমরা ফেসবুক পেজের দিকে নজর দিতে পারি। আমরা যশরাজের অফিশিয়াল পেজে যাবো আর গুড্ডের অফিশিয়াল পেজেও যাবো। গিয়ে ইনবক্সে আর সকল পোস্টের কমেন্ট বক্সে নিচের কমেন্ট টাইপ করবো। সেই সাথে ইউটিউবে যশরাজ ফিল্মসের চ্যানেলে গিয়ে সব ভিডিও আনলাইক করবো। আর নিচের লেখা কমেন্টে দিব।

Dear Yashraj Films Authority,

Greetings!

I would like to introduce myself as one of the Bangladeshi mo...

See More



Like · Comment · Share · 58 · 28 · 3 hours ago near Dhaka · Edited

### RECENT POSTS

Bangladeshi Internet users started to give lowest IMDb<sup>1</sup> ratings for the film. Goldenberg (2014) in his article “Story behind the Worst Movie in IMDb” wrote “Gunday” offended a huge, sensitive, organized and social-media-savvy group of people who were encouraged to mobilize to protest the movie by giving it the lowest rating possible on IMDb. Although he said that the protest was the cause célèbre of a Bangladeshi nationalist movement called Gonojagoron Moncho and credited them for creating an online alliance of bloggers focused on protecting Bangladesh’s history and promoting the country’s image, but this was not actually the cause. Gonojagoron also protested against the Gunday and called an assemblage on 24<sup>th</sup> February, but the public opinion was created long ago from individual online activists, bloggers and general Facebook users. For Haq \*cited in Goldenberg, 2014) “getting angry at Bollywood for over-representing India’s role in the 1971 war is something that even Gonojagoron Moncho’s opposition can agree on”. What was happened that the issue of Gunday film had provided a common ground among the mass people in social media including different groups like pro-liberation, pro-religious, anti Indians, anti-Pakistani, secular, progressive and others. Regarding Gunday, there have been a lot of abusive comments as well. In the status of Sedative, there were some comments

<sup>1</sup> IMDb: International Movie Database

which denotes India as *rendia* (comes from the Hindi word *randi* meaning prostitute). There were also immense trolls as well. Pointing the good relation with Awami Government with India, some commented that the government will not do anything as India is the Dada (elder brother).



The picture was commented at Sedative's status

Speaking of bloggers, they were more expressive in Facebook than in Blogosphere. Bangla Blogging is considered a very popular place for movie blogging. After releasing any Bengali movie, bloggers (not necessarily movie bloggers) try to share their experience of watching movie in cinema hall. But in case of protesting a hindi movie, the significant blogger have chosen Facebook rather than going blog for extended discussion although there were blog posts was well in. Blogger Pinaki Bhattacharya had written a post in Indian Khupri Blog on request to his Indian friend to explain why the people of Bangladesh loved to hate the movie but that did not agitate there.

Yash Raj films apologized by saying that the story portrays fiction. The press note from Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has made a formal protest on 23<sup>rd</sup> February about the film with the Indian government (Goldenberg 2014)

**7. Musa Ibrahim's Everest Victory and Bangla Channel Crossing:** Musa Ibrahim is known as the first Bangladeshi who summit Mount Everest. In this year, Musa was not listed in the publishing of Nepal Mountaineers' association ('Ibrahim not in the climbers list' 2014).

Blogger Onu (2012) had written about Musa's another false claim of summiting the mountain 'Annapurna' at Sachalayatan Blog. As Musa's claim on summiting mountains has started to be questioned in this year, the blog post of Tareq Onu started to get shares in Facebook.



উচ্চ যেথা শির

সচলয়তন

নীড়পাতা English নীতিমালা সচলে লিখতে হলে প্রোফাইল প্রবেশ

ত প্রযুক্তি যুক্তিযুক্ত আলোকচিত্র খেলাধুলা অনুবাদ বিজ্ঞান কবিতা শিক্ষা রম্যরচনা রেখাচিত্র

নীড়পাতা » ব্লগ » তারেক অণু এর ব্লগ

**অল্পপূর্ণা-৪ জয় নিয়ে মুসা ইব্রাহীম ও তৌহিদ হোসেনের মিথ্যাচার**

লিখেছেন তারেক অণু (তারিখ: বুধ, ১৭/১০/২০১২ - ১০:২৪অপরাহ্ন)

ক্যাটেগরি: সমসাময়িক অল্পপূর্ণা-৪ তৌহিদ হোসেন মুসা ইব্রাহীম

একশ বছরেরও বেশী সময় আগে ১৯০৮ সালের ২১ এপ্রিল মার্কিন অভিযাত্রী ফ্রেডেরিক কুক প্রথম মানুষ হিসেবে উত্তর মেরু বিন্দু জয়ের দাবী করেন। ঠিক এক বছর পরে আরেক মার্কিন অভিযাত্রী রবার্ট পিয়েরি ১৯০৯ সালের ৬ এপ্রিল একই দাবী করেন। তাহলে উত্তর মেরু বিন্দুতে আসলে কে আগে পৌঁছেছেন?

**8. Pakhi Dress:** Pakhi dress was named after the character of pakhi from the TV serial of Kolkata's channel Star Zalsha. Te dress came as a special dress into the Eid market. Its picture was all over the Facebook. A class II girl who took her own life as her father did not, or possibly could not afford to buy a Pakhi costume for her (Feroze 2014).

**9. Naila Nayeem:** Naila Nayem is a Bangladeshi model who gained spotlight in social media when she started to post her bold photos at her Facebook page.

[একজন নায়লা নাইম - হেল কিচেন এর বাংলা ব্লগ | bangla blog | সামহোয়্যার ...](#)  
 একটা মেয়ে একটা চা এর দোকানে পাশে বসে বসে তার টনি(কুকুর) কে খাবার দিচ্ছিলো, হঠাৎ করে একটা মোটর সাইকেল এসে থামলে, ওই মোটর সাইকেল থেকে একটা ছেলে নামলো, মেয়েটা ছেলেটার দিকে বড় বড় চোখ করে দিকে তাকিয়ে রইলো। মনে মনে চিন্তা করলো এই এরিয়াতে এতো ফিট এন্ড স্মার্ট ছেলেটা...

[www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/tanmoymomo/29995145](http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/tanmoymomo/29995145) - [Similar](#)

[নায়লা নাইমের কিছু আলোচিত ছবি - িজলশান্তি এর বাংলা ব্লগ | bangla ...](#)

শুরুটা যেভাবেছোটবেলা থেকেই মিডিয়ায় কাজ করতে আগ্রহী ছিলেন নায়লা। ডেটাল কলেজে পড়ার সময় নিজের মেধা ও সৌন্দর্যকে কাজে লাগিয়ে ভালো কিছু করার ইচ্ছা প্রবল হয়। শুরুটা এভাবেই। বর্তমান সময়ের আলোচিত মডেল **নায়লা** নাইম সম্পর্কে আরো জানতে দেখুন পরের ছবিগুলো।পরিপূর্ণ স্বাভাবিক মানুষ**নায়লা** নাইম...

[www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/jilonshanti/29962436](http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/jilonshanti/29962436) - [Similar](#)

[আমাদের আধুনিকতা এবং কয়েকজন নায়লা নাইম - মেহেদি হাসান রাজু এর ...](#)

আমরা এক সৃষ্টিশীল জাতি। যত ব্রকমের উল্টো-পাল্টা জিনিস আছে সেগুলোকে অনুকরণের অনেক ব্রকম বাহ্যনা আমরা সৃষ্টি করতে পারি। যত বা-ই হোক , আধুনিক হত হবে। আর আধুনিক হতে হলে আমাদের অন্তত সেই পথে অগ্রদেবের পদাঙ্ক ( নাকি পদ-কলঙ্ক!! ) অনুসরণ করতেই হবে। এজন্যে আমরা বেছে নিতে পারি সুদূর হলিউডের সালমা হায়েক...

[www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/mhasanbest/29987992](http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/mhasanbest/29987992) - [Similar](#)

The search Result of Somewhereinblog about Naila Nayem



A Photo of Naila Nayem from her Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/artist.nailanayem>

## 10. Teesta water Sharing Agreement

Teesta is the most important river in northeast of Bangladesh. India has built a barrage at Gozoldoba as a result 85% of water flow is diverted from Teesta River without the consent of Bangladesh. Therefore Bangladesh gets no water at summer when it is needed and gets more it monsoon when water is not needed. Bangladesh proposed equal share of water keeping 20% as free flow water (Rashid 204). From March this



year, severe drop of water flow was reported ('Teesta faces severe drop' 2014). Blogger Polash (2014) has given a post at Somwherein which was made sticky.

### টাইম মেশিনে চড়ে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ভর্তির সময়টিতে চলে যেতে পারতাম তবে যে বিষয়টিতে ভর্তি হতাম তা হলো **Water Resource Management/Engineering**

লিখেছেন মোস্তফা কামাল পলাশ, ২৭ শে এপ্রিল, ২০১৪ সকাল ৯:৫২



শিল্পী তপন চৌধুরির জনপ্রিয় গান "পৃথিবীর ৩ ভাগ জল, ১ ভাগ হল  
আর আমার হৃদয়ে আছে শুধু তুমি" এর কথা মনে আছে? না, আমরা  
আপাতত, হৃদয় ঘটিত ব্যপার নিয়ে আলোচনা করবো না করবো  
বাংলাদেশের জল বা পানি সম্পদ গবেষণা ও পানি সম্পদ ব্যবস্থাপনার  
প্রয়োজনীয়তা নিয়ে।

কয়েক দিন পূর্বে আন্সার সাথে...

বাকিটুকু পড়ুন ২১৬ টি মন্তব্য ২৪৪১ বার পঠিত ৪২

## 11. War Criminal Trial:

War criminal trial is a continuous issue of Bangla online space. The detail of the issue is given on chapter three.

## 12. Seven Murders at Narayanganj

NarayanGanj city panel mayor Nazrul Islam, his driver, 3 associates, senior lawyer Chandan Sarker and his drivers were abducted separately but around the same time on April 27 from Dhaka-Narayanganj link road. Their bodies were found floating in the Shiatalakkhya River a few days later. Both in blog and Facebook, there were concerns regarding the state's security.

## 13. Arrangement of National Anthem for World Record

'Lakho Konthe Sonar bangla' was an event arranged by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh Government on 26<sup>th</sup> March in the Independence Day of Bangladesh. The aim of the event was to make world record by singing national

anthem in the Parade ground gathering lacks of people. There were heavy reactions on social media when government received donation for the event from Islami Bank which is known as a Pro-Jamaat bank. During the event on 26<sup>th</sup> March, news spread in Facebook that many participants threw national flag and trampled them.

**14. Eradication on Chobir Haat:** Settlements of Chobir Haat were eradicated by the Public Work department of the government and it had resulted heavy reactions in social media. Kajal Das wrote a blog post on IShtishonblog giving the headline “why police control can’t be allowed in Chobir Haat” (Das 2014) which was made sticky. But there were not many responses from other blogsites although bloggers of other blogsites also reacted in Facebook.

ছবির হটকে কেন পুলিশি নিয়ন্ত্রণ হতে দেয়া যাবে না।

লিখেছেন: কাজল দাস >> সময়: বুধ, 11/06/2014 - 2:59 অপরাহ্ন



বিভাগ: ইতিহাস সমসাময়িক

>> 20 টি মন্তব্য বাকিটুকু পড়ুন>> 1391 বার পড়া হয়েছে

### 15. Withdrawl of Avijit Roy’s Book

Rokomari.com, a leading online book selling company of Bangladesh stopped selling books by Avijit Roy in March. Roy is a naturalized American from Bangladesh who writes about science and philosophy He is also the administrator of Muktomona blog. IPT News (Bangladeshi-American Writer Censored, Threatened by Radical Islamist 2014) covered the whole story as following:

The move followed threats by Farabi Shafiur Rahman that were posted on Facebook. Mentioning Avijit Roy as an atheist, the posting gave Rokomari.com's address and said the company's chairman would end up like a blogger Rajib Haidar was hacked to death by Islamists at February. In addition to threatening Rokomari, Rahman put a target on Roy, too. "Avijit Roy lives in America and so, it is not possible to kill him right now," he wrote.

Rokomari's owner had posted several comments in Rahman's status claiming that he says his regular prayer and Rokomari would withdraw the book of Avijit Roy. After the move, group of bloggers mostly from Sachalayatn and Muktomona, took side with Avijit roy. A Facebook page was created requesting to abandon Rokomari.com.

## **16. Toba Garments**

The works of Toba Garments started hunger strike and demonstrations demanding full payment of their salaries and bonuses on 29<sup>th</sup> July.

## **17. Question Paper Leak in HSC Exam:**

The higher secondary exam started in April of this year. There were heavy reactions on Facebook when the question papers of the exam started to be leaked from different Facebook pages. Professor Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, a popular writer and a teacher of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, wrote an article on priyo.com showing the screenshot of an email he received before the HSC physics exam. Iqbal (2014) received the email with an attached scan copy of physic questions which was totally matched with the actual question of the exam.

Sajib (2014) posted a blog on CCN Inews giving the headline 'In Bangladesh Facebook is the ultimate book that student consult to pass exam'. After few hours he removed the post from CNN and posted on his own blog. He explains the reason for removal:



A few hours ago, I posted an opinion piece on CNN iReport detailing the question paper leak matter which would generally fall under the category of current affairs. Quickly after the link hit the social media, all hells began to break loose. Suddenly I'm the traitor damaging the country's image more than anyone else. I'm under fire (not criticism, but hatred) for penning about this on CNN's citizen journalism platform.

**18. Issues Related to Educational Institution:** Students of Jagannath University have organized demonstration to rescue their University's Tibbat Hall which was occupied as a shopping mall. Police fired on their protest on 23 February. Northern University authority canceled a student's studentship. In a press briefing, the student claimed that he protested against one of his teacher in the class who said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as Feraun and atheist in his lecture (Studentship canceled for protesting teacher's political statement, 2014) . Bloggers and Online Activist Network (BOAN) organized a human chain at Shahbag on 1<sup>st</sup> July to support the student.

**19. ICT ACT:** According to Global Voice Online (2014), Rahi and Ullash, both students of Chittagong College, went to their college on March 30 to collect admission cards for upcoming HSC exam. They were then attacked by mob activists. They were dragged on the street where they were beaten. Police intervened to rescue them but later arrested the two teenage bloggers as attackers handed to police some screenshots of their Facebook accounts where there derogatory comments against Islam and Prophet Mohammad. They were sent to Jail following day without bail under Article 57 of the ICT act. Rahi was also the blogger of Ishtishon blog. Jatiyo Sarthey Blogger and Activist Forum had organized a human chain for the release of Ullash and Rahi in April 11 at Shahbag.

**20. Israel Attack on Gaza:** Israel attacked Gaza on July. In Socila media there has been a hashtag campaign posting #saveGaza which was started from Twitter and then spread to Facebook at the end of the July.



Anonymous blogger Durjodhon giving ‘hash tag status’ to support Gaza

**21. Attack on Biharis, Tribals and Religious Minorities:** Within February to July, several cases of attack appeared to minority people in Bangladesh. Among them attack on Biharis at Mirpur had generated huge debate in Bengali online space. Nine people including eight members of a family were burnt alive as locals set several houses on fire at Kalshi Bihari camp in Mirpur after the Fazr prayers following arguments over exploding firecrackers in front of a mosque on the occasion of Shab-e-Barat (‘9 burnt another gunned down’ 2014). Some people reacted that they should be burnt down because Biharis helped Pakistani Army during the War of Liberation in 1971 while some others protested them for being fascists.

Issues can be generated in social media at any day any time and thus are turning the online space a place for endless discussion. But public opinion does not necessarily originate on every issue. There are issues which produce popular opinions while there is other type as well which produce public opinion. Again, in some cases, popular issues can also be turned into a public concern and thus can produce public opinion along with popular opinion.

## **Chapter Three: Review of Literature**

For any research investigation, the review of literature is considered as an essential component which gives necessary input to the investigator to frame the research study on the selected topic. Identifying knowledge gap is the main purpose of literature review in the field of proposed research

### **3.1 Blog and Blogosphere**

Galily and Tamir (2012, p.1) states that “ from a historical linguistic sense, the literature claim s that the term “blog” was coined in September, 1997 by Jorn Barger, who combined the terms “web” and “log””. Blog originated from the concept of online diary, where the writer used to call themselves as ‘diarist’, ‘journalist’ or ‘joomalars’. Justin Hall started blogging in the form of online diary during 1994. In 1997, a group of persons started community blogging. They named themselves as ‘zine’ but they did not get that much popularity (Shamim 2012).

Bernardis (2010) considers the blogosphere as a supranational environment that is organized into transversal communities where people confront each other on all possible themes according to their interests and known languages. He sees the blogosphere as a democratic environment where everyone can publish, express an opinion, share, and participate. It is a democracy of access where merit earns attention.

Galily and Tamir (2012) reviews the PEW Internet research 2005 according to which, blog writing was initiated in 1997, although its great awakening occurred towards the end of 2002 when it became a significant part of online culture. The research of PEW in 2011 says that in 2010 almost 30% of the American population was reading someone else’s blog, while 9% were working on creating of their own (Galily and Tamir 2012).

But not everyone is that much optimistic about blogging. Although blog has initiated social media, but the after the launching social networking site of Facebook in 2004, blogging practices is being displaced. For Dean (2010, p.28), “history of networked

communications is filled with displaced mediators...”. He considers commercial social network like Facebook as ‘blog killers’.

### **3.2 Blogging in Arab World**

The inventors of social networking sites never thought that their non-political networking would be used to bring a political change in several countries. The forum of causal friendship can be turned into a group of protesters.

It is people’s creativity by which they picked up these sites as the platform sharing opinion, designing programme, and updating and broadcasting the movement for ousting repressive regimes in the North Africa and the Middle East. This movement of establishing democratic rights is known as Arab spring (Haq 2011, p.5).

The Arab Spring maybe contaminated by the involvement of foreign imperialist forces meanwhile, but the eagerness of the Middle Eastern people for democracy is very much significance in the contemporary global political history. The movement started when a vegetable merchant Mohammad Bouzizi set himself on fire in protest of unemployment and corruption of Tunisian government. After analyzing 3 million tweets, content of You Tube, and thousands of blog posts, a study of University of Washinton found that social media played a central role in shaping political debates in The Arab Spring. Bloggers used the internet to publish information against the government in Egypt and Tunisia while the activists used social media to connect with others outside the country (Haq 2011).

In both Tunisia and Egypt, there was na attempt to block Facebook and other social media sites and bloggers ad activists are arrested who used the social media to spread cititical news about the government.

### **3.3 Previous Study on Bangla Blogosphere**

The study on the Bangla Blog community was pioneered by Fahmidul Haq, assistant professor of Departmenet of Mass communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka. In the article named “Bangla blog community: the hunger of expressing

opinions, virtual resistance or building community of isolated people” (বাঙলা ব্লগ কমিউনিটি: মতপ্রকাশ, ভার্চুয়াল প্রতিরোধ ও বিচ্ছিন্ন ম কমিউনিটি স্রুধা), Haq (2011) acknowledged the tendency of building community among bloggers.

Chowdury (2012) presented “Liberation war vs Jamaat” as the main issue in Somewhereinblog. In his survey, Shajahan (2013) sought different characteristics of bloggers of Somewhereinblog.

Two books can be considered as significant to understand the Bangla Blog. One is “The Chronicles of Bangla Blog” ( ব্লগের ইতিবৃত্ত) by blogger Ekramul Haq Shamim (2012) who has described the stories behind the building of Bangla blog community and its breaking and the other one is “From Shahbag to Hefazat: Approver’s Statement” ( থেকে হেফাজত:রাজসাক্ষীর জবানবন্দ) by blogger Zia Hasan (2014) who has discussed the conditions of bloggers of Bangla Blogosphere before Shahbag and how they have organized the Shahbag uprising.

### **3.4 Bangla Blogosphere: What’s The Difference?**

While the other blogosphere worldwide are mostly individual in nature, the larger portion of Bangla blogosphere is mostly based on community blogging. In an individual blog, the blog is designed and the content is produce by the blogger himself. But in the community blog, a collective number of blogs exist in one blog site. Bloggers have their own profile to post and at the same time, they have to share a common page (called as “home page”) with other bloggers. The site is designed and developed by the administrators and bloggers have to follow rules and regulations of the site. The post written by bloggers can be selected to different category by the moderators. Even the moderators can delete blog posts and ban bloggers on behalf of anything against the community guidelines of the site.

Somewherein is the first Bangla blog community which was started in 2005. Syeda Gulshan Ferdous is the co-founder of the blog with Arild Klokkehaug. She is now the acting managing director of the site. In her claim, the no. of registered bloggers in Somewhereinblog is one lac fifty five thousand (তথ্য যোগাযোগ প্রস্তুতি ও মুক্তচিন্তার অন্তরায়? 2013). After Somewherein, Schalayatana, AmARBLOG and Prothom Alo

blog started their journey. For Shamin (2012) there are around 40 Bangla blogs sites exists but for Haq (2011), while the other remains second grade blog sites, the 4 blog sites stated above mentioned are the most popular among the users. For Shamim (2012), Somewherein blog started to get popular during the mid of 2006. In 2007 and 2008 several other community blog sites (mentioned above) included themselves into Bangla Blogosphere and thus community blogging started to get popular in Bangla Blogosphere.

The image shows the homepage of 'Somewhereinblog' on October 21st. The page layout includes a header with the site name and language options (বাংলা and English). A navigation menu on the left lists 'সকল পোস্ট', 'নির্বাচিত পোস্ট', and 'লোচিন বোর্ড'. The main content area features an advertisement for 'closep' Samsung Galaxy Core 2, followed by a post titled 'MIST ভর্তি সম্পর্কিত হেয়..... শ্লিঙ্ক হেলান'. Below this is another post titled 'আলোকিত মুক্তাপাহার রাজবাড়ী'. The right sidebar contains sections for 'বাংলা লেখা কুল দেখাচ্ছে?', 'ইমন জুবায়েরের ব্রপসমগ্র', 'ইতিহাসিক', 'বিশেষ প্রসঙ্গ', and 'সাম্প্রতিক মন্তব্য'.

Image 3.1: The Home page of Somewhereinblog in 21<sup>st</sup> October



Image 3.2 of some Bangla Blog sites in Alphabetic order .<sup>1</sup>

### 3.5 Blog Culture

“Blog culture is the way of practice blogging. The characteristics implicitly or explicitly are seen in blog writing, commenting, blog centered social activity etc can be considered as blog culture” (Shamim 2014:30). For Chowdhury (2012: 14) “blog culture refers to openness of the platform and common practices surrounding with it”.

The three types of blog cultures that were mentioned by (Haq 2011) are described as following with adding the condition of present scenario.

**1. Writing whatever one wants:** For Haq, it is the anonymous nature of the blogger which gives him or her chance to write in the blog whatever he or she wants. For this reason, on the one hand, a number of daring and sensational posts have been observed in community blog sites and on the other hand, ordinary and below standard post were also seen. Again, bloggers who are just intended to increase the number of their posts

<sup>1</sup> <http://banglanewslink.com/bangla-blog.html> accessed in 21st october

rather than making a point write about their meaningless non-serious activities or opinions which are not even the category of online journals. In the survey of Haq (2011), 11.1 % of the respondents detect such non serious activities as the limitation for blogging.

**2. Anonymity:** Although in print media, it is not unusual to use a pseudonym, it not regular either. A large number of bloggers keep them anonymous and maintain a pseudonym. In the survey of Haque, 50% of the respondents had pseudonym.

But pseudonym doesn't necessarily speak for the anonymity. There are many bloggers who are using a pseudo name but not anonymous as they have mentioned their name in the elsewhere of their profile or people came to know his or her real name from the Facebook. In the survey of Shajahan (2013), 21% of the respondents have said that they did not express their names and occupations anywhere in the blog while 24% have said that although they had revealed their profession, they did not reveal their real name. Facebook is also full with pseudo names. Many bloggers name their Facebook profile after the nick of the blog. Mahabub Morshed (2014), once the editor of the prothom alo blog, believes that before blogging, Bengali porn websites were very popular and those have settled the trend that one needs to use his real name to come to public sphere.

**3. Activism:** Haq metioned the activism among bloggers especially bloggers of somewhereinblog between 2008 to 2011. But the more bloggers get fragmented into multiple blog sites and different Facebook Clusters, the more the activism has been dispersed as well. Shahbag uprising can be considered the last collective activism of bloggers. But as the war crime issue has been diverted into many positions, the collectivity among bloggers has lost connectivity.

Shamim (2012) has elaborated the discussion on blog cultures and mentioned 11 types of blog cultures.

**1. The popularity of Community Blogging:** To write in Bengali, a blogger generally selects community blog. In community blogging, bloggers write in multiple blog sites.



After writing in community blog for long time and gathering a significant number of regular readers, some bloggers were seen to start writing in individual blog (Shamim 2012). But this tendency has a recent move toward Facebook.

**2. The Freedom of Expression:** For Shamim (2012), this is the most important characteristics of Bangla Blog. But bloggers also keep in mind about other bloggers in case of writing in community blogging. If someone writes any type of indecent post, others come to protest that.

**3. Awareness on Liberation War:** Not only the bloggers but also most of the blog authorities are very sensitive about liberation war of 1971. Somewherein, Sachalayatan, and Amarblog have strict policy that they will not tolerate any propaganda about liberation war. Sonar Bangla used to be the pro-Jamaat blog but it was shut down during Shahbag uprising by the demand of Gonojagoron Manch.

**4. Social Responsibility:** The activism of bloggers is mostly based on their social responsibility. Shamim mentioned about bloggers campaign to distribute clothes to the poor during winter, their human bond against the breaking of Baul sculpture, fund raising for sick people etc.

**5. Attempt for Citizen Journalism:** Pilkhana Tragedy occurred in 2009 where many officers were killed by the revolting group of BDR jawans. The first news of the incident came into blog and then the mainstream media used the blog news to make their reports.

**6. Velocity:** the velocity of blog is very high. New posts are coming minutes later. Many bloggers couldn't catch the motion and left blogging.

Because of the advanced features, the velocity of Facebook is more higher than blog. Thousands of posts and comments are occurring at the same time. The more one gets friends and followers, the more he feels the vibe of velocity.

**7. Mutual Communication:** Interaction among bloggers in Blog Adda, picnic, and in campaign has leaded them to build mutual communication with each other. Such communication was also backed by Social networking sites like Facebook. There is incident on marriage among bloggers as well.



Image 3.3: Some Facebook Groups of the Bloggers

**8. Grouping:** There were groupings among the bloggers (also known as syndicate) and such groupings were mostly ideological. For Shamim, it is like ideological warfare.

**9. Immediate Reactions:** Blog cultures have eased the way to know other comments. Any post gets immediate reactions just after being posted at blog.

**10. Nick:** The name by which a blogger is known is called as nick. This is not necessarily need to be the bloggers real name. Shamim quotes Haque “the bloggers of hidden nick are kind of underground revolutionaries”. The hidden identity gives them the courage to write anything dare and sensitive. But such scope also used by many bloggers for bullying and flaming other bloggers.

**11. Nickname:** While the bloggers are known by their nicks, they may have the nicknames of their nicks as well. For example, the celebrity blogger “Fusion Five” ( ) is shortly known as “FIFA” ( ).

### 3.6 Blog Politics

Haq (201) identified 3 types of blog politics in Bangla blogosphere which are

- a) Bengali nationalism based on ant-jamat ideology
- b) Struggle for power within blog
- c) Activism for democracy

Over the passage of time, these blog politics not just has limited themselves within the blog community rather they are being scattered in whole social media having changes among themselves.

**a) Bengali Nationalism based on Anti-Jamat ideology:** In the survey conducted by Haq, 73.3% bloggers responded that they think “liberation war vs Jamaat” as the biggest issue of blog community. For Haq, blog community seemed to have just one politics- criticizing Jamaat-E-Islam. Such criticism is based on the activity in 1971 liberation war of Bangladesh where Jamaat-E-Islam as a political party supported and helped the invading Pakistani army in Bangladesh because they wanted this region to be the part of Pakistan. The pro-jamaati bloggers always raised questions about the number of deaths caused in liberation war, rejected war crime accusations of Jamaat leaders, and regarded freedom fighters as contemptible. Many bloggers resisted them by counter arguments while many others think that argument is not enough to resist such propoganda and they started to use slang words. Such similar minded bloggers had built a syndicate which is known as “A team”. The aim of A-team is to use slang words whenever they see any Jamaati bloggers and obviously whenever they used

slang words, they also received similar comments from their rival groups. The word chagu (meaning is goat) is the popular slang which is used for pro-jamati bloggers although for Haq all types of Bengali slang words used to be used in blog community. For Hasan (2014) because of the moderation, it was difficult for bloggers to use any type of slangs and as a result ‘chagu’ became a legitimized slang. Those who support Jamat-E-Islami are generally tagged as chagu while those who support indirectly tagged as chupa-chagu (Hidden goat).

**বুকে শুধু পুষে রাখি কোথ...রাজাকারদের হত্যা**

আমার এই ব্লগের কোনো লেখা বা লেখার কোনো অংশ আমার লিখিত অনুমতি ছাড়া যে কোনো প্কার মিডিয়াতেই প্রকাশ করা যাবে না। যদি তা করা হয়, তাহলে আমি আইনগত এবং অবস্থান্তরে ব্লগের আইন/প্রসিদ্ধির অনুযায়ী ব্যবস্থা নিতে বাধ্য হব

**ভূয়া সাক্ষী নিয়ে এসে হাতেনাতে ধরা খেলো নিজামীর আইনজীবী**

২১ শে অক্টোবর, ২০১৩ রাত ১৩:৩৫

১৯৭১ সালের মুক্তিযুদ্ধে নানাবিধ আন্তর্জাতিক অপরাধে অভিযুক্ত জামাতের প্রাক্তন আর্মির মতিউর রহমান নিজামীর আইনজীবী নিজামুল ইসলাম নিজামীর পক্ষে ভূয়া সাক্ষী, যিনি কিনা এনলিস্টেড সাক্ষী নন, সেরফন একজন সাক্ষীকে নিয়ে এসে হাতে হাতে ধরা পড়েছেন। এই সাক্ষীর নাম কে এন আলিহুর রহমান। তিনি পাবনার একজন আইনজীবীও বটে!! একজন আইনজীবী হয়ে তিনিও...

বাকিটুকু পড়ুন ৮টি মন্তব্য ৭৫৭বার পঠিত ২৫

**৭১-এর অপরাধের বিচার কি আওয়ামীলীগের রাজনৈতিক আক্রোশ?**

২৬ শে সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০১৩ সকাল ৯:০৩

একটা কথা অসংখ্যবার বলেছি বিভিন্ন যায়গায় তারপরেও বার বার সেই একই পনের সামনে ছাড়া ফেলে দেয়। সার্বদী, কাদের মোল্লা, মুজাহিদ, গোলান, সাকা, আলীম, নিজামী পনদের বিরুদ্ধে রাজাকারির অভিযোগ আজকের নয় একেবারেই। আওয়ামীলীগ হঠাৎ করে এদের আবিষ্কার করেনি।

১৯৮১ সালে কাজী নুরজ্জামানের নেতৃত্বে মুক্তিযোদ্ধা কমান্ড কাউন্সিল একটি দুর্বীর আন্দোলন পড়ে তোলেন এবং...

বাকিটুকু পড়ুন ৪টি মন্তব্য ২২৭বার পঠিত ০

**নিজুম মজুমদার**

আর এস এস ফিড

**ব্লগের পরিসংখ্যান**

পোস্ট করেছেন: ৫১টি  
মতব্য করেছেন: ১২,৫৬৭টি  
মন্তব্য পেয়েছেন: ২,১৬৪টি  
ব্লগ লিখেছেন: ৬ বছর ১০ মাস  
ব্লগটি মোট ৯০৭৯১ বার দেখা হয়েছে

**সাম্প্রতিক মন্তব্য**

দেইল্লা রাজাকারের সকল অবৈধ কর্মকাণ্ডের কাহিনী - েফরারী এই মনটা আমার

দেইল্লা রাজাকারের সকল অবৈধ কর্মকাণ্ডের কাহিনী - এই আমি রবীন

দেইল্লা রাজাকারের সকল অবৈধ কর্মকাণ্ডের কাহিনী ডাইরেক্ট টু দ্যা হার্ট

দেইল্লা রাজাকারের সকল অবৈধ কর্মকাণ্ডের কাহিনী - ডাইরেক্ট টু দ্যা হার্ট

দেইল্লা রাজাকারের সকল অবৈধ কর্মকাণ্ডের কাহিনী - েবনিটপ

দেইল্লা রাজাকারের সকল অবৈধ কর্মকাণ্ডের কাহিনী - নাইম

Image 3.4: Nijhoon Majumder's blog where most of the posts are written against the war criminals<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/ghaghuBabublog> accessed in 21st October



### বারো রকম ছাণ্ড - একটি গবেষণা ধর্মী পোস্ট। | আমরা বন্ধু

[www.amrabondhu.com/raihansayeed/1814](http://www.amrabondhu.com/raihansayeed/1814) Translate this page

বাংলা ব্লগ ইতিহাসে "ছাণ্ড" সম্প্রদায় একটি বিশাল স্থান লইয়া রইয়াছে। ইহাদের বংশবৃদ্ধি যাহাতে না হয়, সেইজন্য অনেক উদ্যোগ লওয়া হইয়াছে পূর্বে। সকলের সেই উদ্যোগ ব্যর্থ করিয়া ইহারা শুধু বংশবৃদ্ধিই করে নাই, ইহাদের রকমভেদ বাহির হইয়াছে। অধুনা বাংলা ব্লগ গবেষণা করিয়া বারো রকমের ছাণ্ড সম্প্রদায় চিহ্নিত হইয়াছে। সেই গবেষণা যানি আজ ...

### ছাণ্ড কে এবং কি? - সামথেরিন ব্লগ

[www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/advocate/29047492](http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/advocate/29047492) Translate this page

আমার বেশি দিন হয়নি ব্লগে এসেছি। কিন্তু যা দেখলাম, ছাণ্ড নামে শব্দটার সাথে যতটা পরিচয় আর কারও নামের সাথেও এতটা পরিচয় নেই। এটা কি, খায় নাকি পড়ে, বিখ্যাত কেও নাকি কুখ্যাত কেও, আমার মনে হয় না ওনি বিশেষ কোন ব্যক্তিত্ব। যা বড় ধরনের কোন ফুখ্যাত লোক।

### ছাণ্ড | সচলায়তন

[www.sachalayatan.com/taxonomy/term/8437](http://www.sachalayatan.com/taxonomy/term/8437) Translate this page

Dec 13, 2013 - বিগত কয়েকদিন ধরে কাদের মোল্লার ফাঁসি কার্যকর এবং অন্যান্য ঘটনাপ্রবাহে আবারও একদম মানুষের ব্যাপক গাভ্রদাহ আশা করি সবাই লক্ষ্য করেছেন। আমাদের তথাকথিত জাতিয়তাবাদী শক্তির ধারক বাহকেরা এখন বালসানো নরমাংস দিয়ে নেশভোজ করে স্তম্ভ নন, তারা নানা ভাবে ও নানা আঙ্গিকে কাদের মোল্লা তথা যুদ্ধাপরাধীদের ফাঁসির ...

### বাংলাব্লগারভে "ছাণ্ড" শব্দের উৎপত্তি | সচলায়তন

[www.sachalayatan.com/suman/47877](http://www.sachalayatan.com/suman/47877) Translate this page

Feb 11, 2013 - অনেক কথা বলে ফেলাছি। কিন্তু ছাণ্ড আগমনের প্রেক্ষিতটা বোঝাতে কিছুটা অন্তত ইতিহাস জানতেই হবে। এর মধ্যে জামাতিস্বপ্নায়দের মধ্যে আবির্ভাব হয় ভিত্তিজের। শুরুতে ওয়ালি, আঙ্গনেয়ে, খুত ইত্যাদির দিকে মনোযোগ বেশি থাকায় সে তেমন নজরে পড়েনি। কিন্তু মার্চের শেষ থেকে সেই ক্রমশ সকলের নজর কেড়ে নিলো এই ব্রগারের লেখালেখি ...

### ছুপা ছাণ্ড চেনার ১০টি উপায়... | নাগরিকব্লগ

[www.nagorikblog.com](http://www.nagorikblog.com) ... > অঘন -এর ব্লগ Translate this page

Jun 29, 2012 > ১ প্রসংগঃ নারীমুক্তি সংক্রান্ত যে কোন আলোচনা, ছুপা ছাণ্ডঃ আপনার বোন করলে কেমন লাগব?? আপনার মা করলে কেমন লাগবো?? প্রমাণঃ নারী মানেই মা, বোন, স্ত্রী...নারীর কোন ব্যক্তিগত সত্তা নাই। ২। প্রসংগঃ বোয়ফা বা হিজাব নিয়ে আলোচনা, ছুপা ছাণ্ড মতব্যঃ "আইচ্ছা আপনার বউরে আপনি ন্যাচা রইছেন, সবার সামনে বুক খোলা ...

### ছাণ্ডের পূর্টাক রাখবো ব্যঙঃ ছাণ্ড বিষয়ক দুইটি পল্ল

[saguponda.blogspot.com/2007/08/blog-post\\_06.html](http://saguponda.blogspot.com/2007/08/blog-post_06.html) Translate this page

Aug 6, 2007 - ১ম পল্ল একদা এক ছাণ্ড বেহেশতে গমন করিল। সেখান খুরিণে খুরিণে এক খুরে দেখিতে পাইল ছাণ্ড। ইহা দেখিয়া তাহার কামভাব হঠাতই জাগ্রত হইয়া উঠিল এবং সৃষ্টিকর্তার কাছে আন্দারকরণে তাহাকে কাম-কর্ম সম্পাদনের অনুমতি প্রদান করা হইল। তাহার কিছুক্ষণ পরেই ছাণ্ডের আরও একটি হয়-রে দেখিয়া পুনরায় কামভাব জাগিয়া উঠে এবং সে ...

### ফেসবুক ছাণ্ড মুক্ত করবে অ্যাপস - The Public Post

[www.public-post.com](http://www.public-post.com) ... > আইসিটি Translate this page

Sep 8, 2013 - আপনার ফেসবুক প্রোফাইলকে ছাণ্ডমুক্ত করতে এবং ছাণ্ডদের খোয়াড়ে বন্দী রাখতে তৈরি করা হয়েছে ফেসবুক অ্যাপস। অ্যাপসটি ব্যবহার করে খুব সহজে এবং দক্ষতার সাথে ছাণ্ড নিহিত করা সম্ভব। অ্যাপসটিতে প্রবেশ করার জন্য ফেসবুকে লগ ইন করে এই লিংকে প্রবেশ করুন। এর মাধ্যমে খুব সহজেই আপনার ফেসবুক লিঙ্কের তিতরে ঘাণটি মেয়ে লুকিয়ে ...

Image 3.5: Google search result of chagu shows different results from Bangla Blogsites<sup>3</sup>

Because of their excessive use of slangs, many bloggers of A-team was banned and many others demanded for their unbanning as well. In this context, Somewherein blog added a new rule for their community that one cannot make a blog post which is against the freedom and sovereignty of Bangladesh.

It was assumed that moderation was needed for controlling the hate speech. But because of the controversial application of moderation, many bloggers left somewhereinblog and went to other blogs. For Shamim (2012) such incidents resulted

3

[https://www.google.com.bd/?gws\\_rd=cr,ssl&ei=xa2uU6TKA4KzuAT07oLoAg&q=%E0%A6%9B%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%97%E0%A7%81](https://www.google.com.bd/?gws_rd=cr,ssl&ei=xa2uU6TKA4KzuAT07oLoAg&q=%E0%A6%9B%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%97%E0%A7%81) accessed in October 24

the breaking of community rather than building the community. The first breakage was observed when Blogger “Masuda Vatti” was banned. Her post was accused as religiously offensive and regarding such position Somewhereinblog, there had been a debate among bloggers.

**b) Struggle for Power:** The two leading political parties in Bangladesh are Bangladesh Awami league and Bangladesh Nationalist party (BNP). But in Bangla blog community, Haq observed a few Pro-BNP bloggers. The major issue is carried out by the debate between pro-jamat bloggers and A-team although A-team bloggers can be considered as pro-Awami bloggers. To dominate upon others, their debate resulted hate-speech and tagging. As mentioned above, ‘chagu’ is the popular word used for tag. But tagging becomes a popular technique to resist anyone holding different opinions. **Tagging also from varies from Vada (proindian Blogger), Pada (pro Pakistani-Blogger), and susil (denotes non-argumentative, opportunist bloggers) (Chowdhury 2012).** Because of such tagging and hate speech, the discursive practice of Bangla blogging has been replaced by mere quarrel (known as ‘cachal’). Many blogger’s blog career could not develop for tagging while many others left blogging while other bloggers just limit their blogging only for resisting other opinions. . Haq paraphrases blogger hottogol for whom blogging means ‘chagu pondani’ (Fucking Goats).

As anti-jamati trend is settled in Somewherein and other pro liberation blogs like Amar blog and Sachalayatan, pro-jamat bloggers moved to other blogs. Sonar Bangla was known to be a Pro-jamat blog community. But the blog was shut down on demand of Gonojagoron Monch during Shahabag uprising when a blogger and activist ‘Thaba baba’ was brutally killed the day after a post in Sonar Bangla Blog, where ‘thaba baba’ has been introduced as atheist bloggers.

The more the bloggers move their activities in Facebook, the more the power struggle of Blog has tended to be pointing toward Facebook. A-team no longer remains, but there is a group called cp gang which was organized by pro-Awamin bloggers and online activists. A group named Z force of pro BNP bloggers and activists also has formed. While pro-jamat bloggers are now mostly limiting their activities in their

Facebook walls and pro-jamati facebook pages, the conflict is now based on CP gang and Z forces especially after the election of 1 January 2014.

**c) Activism for democracy:** For Haq, activism of bloggers is democratic because they have the freedom to criticize government. A large number of initiatives and positions of Governments has been criticized ranging from the caretaker government from 2006 to 08 to the present Awami government from 2009 to 2014 with the passing of two elections. Haq notes the microblogging, the initiative taken by somehwereinblog during 2008 election where the bloggers has shared their experience on vote centers. During that election, Amar blog provided live web TV for oversea Bangladeshi bloggers.

Haq (201) can be criticized for not conceptualizing the nature of democracy experienced through blogging. Although a number of bloggers provide- a counter arguments of government positions, there are many other bloggers who just counter the fellow bloggers who have different positions in opinion.

### **3.7 Characteristics of Bloggers of Bangla Blog**

Hasan (2014) states that Bangla blog emerged because it could offer something which was required. That something is anyone has to write anything. “To write something on newspapers you need to have unofficial brothers, relatives or known person who work on that newspaper. But to write something in blog, you do not need anything. No one going to ask how much your salary is or how good looking you are. You are to be judged by the merit of your post and for this reason many good writers came through blogging” (Hasan 2014, p. 16). For Hasan, many bloggers has lost during time-being, while other joined into the intellectual space and many still exist in Bangla Blogosphere as well He has mentioned the following characteristics of bloggers of Bangla Blog:

**a) Celebrity Blogger:** Celebrity bloggers are those who attract a lot of other bloggers and readers by his writings. People follow their posts and even if they write

something trash, their fans cheer them. For Hasan (2014) they are the trend setter because they have the ability to stir about any issue. Here lies a significant difference between Bangla Blog and the rest of other blog of the world especially those of English blog. While the celebrity bloggers have attracted so many people by entering into a virtual community (blog community), the popular English bloggers collect their fan by their own effort generally blogging in their own sites.

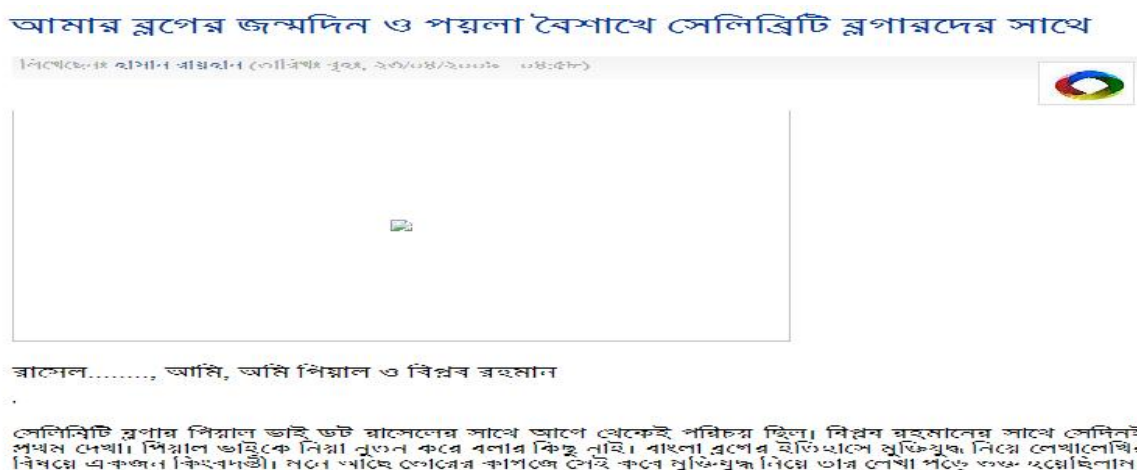


Image 3.6: Blogger Hasan Rayhan at AmARBLOG.COM describing his experience with meeting 3 celebrity bloggers of AmARBLOG.COM<sup>4</sup>



Image 3.7: Blogger Ashik Masum posted a fun post in Somewhereinblog titled as “How to be a Celebrity Blogger”. Post contains 170 comments and 1140 hits which

<sup>4</sup> Link of Hasan Raihan's post <https://www.amarblog.com/index.php?q=hasanraihan/posts/51643>



mean having the words “celebrity blogger” in the title, the post attracted many readers and other bloggers<sup>5</sup>.

**b) Involvement in Cachal:** The Bengali word cachal means quarrel. When two or more group of bloggers attack each other within the blog through hate speech, flaming and bullying then it is called as ‘cachal’. If such things occur within a post, then the post is called ‘cachal post’. Before moderation, Somewherein was an open platform and that is why it was quite impossible to stop cachals. To keep themselves safe from the attack of their rival groups, many bloggers have created blog platforms allying with the bloggers of similar mentality.

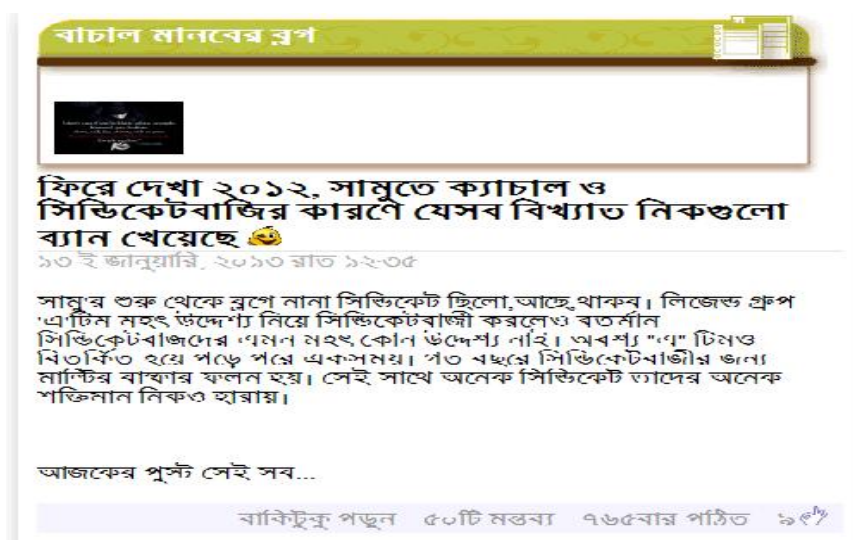


Image 3.7: Blogger “Bachal Manob” (Talkative Human) posted a compilation post about the cachals and about those nicks which were banned in omewhereinblog for syndicate blogging. The post has 765 readers and 50 comments<sup>6</sup>.

**C) Mentality of Urban Middle Class:** Hasan assumes that the old posts of Somewherein contain the most significant portion of discussion about any issues and subjects. They were more diversified than the chewing discussion of the Newspaper and include the modern and contemporary dimension of urban middle class. Hasan’s assumption supports the survey of Shajahan (2013). The 60% of Shajahan’s respondents was living in Dhaka and 54% of them are students while the rest of them

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/aashiquemasum/29805359>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/gotgoti/29747690>

were in other urban professions such as service sector (15%), Freelancer and IT sector (6%) and so on.

**d) Facebook as the Replacement of Blog:** Somewhereinblog was ranked 11<sup>th</sup> position among all the other websites of Bangladesh by Alexa.com. In the beginning of the 2012, Somewherein claims that they have more than 100000 bloggers registered in their site. But Somewherein and other blogs started to loose popularity in 2012 because they didn't do any technical advancement of their site on behalf of time demands. Again, the increasing number of bloggers lead to so many blog posts. As a result it was quite impossible for a blogger to promote his single post within the endless number of other posts. As the Facebook started the following option like Microblogging site Twitter (Follow option also exists in the Bangla Blogging sites), many celebrity bloggers of Bangla blogosphere had tended toward Facebooking. From celebrity bloggers, many of them have turned themselves as Facebook celebrity with thousands of followers and friends. Facebook gives them the scope not just to interact with other bloggers but also the nonblogger friends and followers of his and other bloggers by using a single Facebook profile. Thus they have connected themselves with a wider online network. Hasan states "in blog every idea has to be contested with other ideas. But that not the case in Facebook. If someone criticizing you, you can just block him or her". Celebrety bloggers in Facebook have too many followers that it is difficult for them to answer every comment. So in Facebook, they are not interested to make cachal. But groupings in Facebook also occurred so as did in blog and this time such groupings lead more extreme hate speech than blog.

### **3.8 Building and Breaking of Blog Community**

For Haq (2011), through blog politics and blog cultures, bloggers are using the community as an alternative media. In Shajahan's study (2013), 42% of the respondents think that it is not possible to compare between newspaper and blog because blog is very different from newspapers. For Shamim (2012), bloggers not only are building a virtual community but also they are breaking it. Blogger Kowshik in his blog mentioned three periods of community building and breaking.

**1. Pre-Sachalayatan Period:** The period ranged between 2005 to 2007 when there was only one blog community of Somewhereinblog. In 2006 bloggers had observed that bloggers who maintain anti-liberation ideology were syndicated and that is why pro-liberation blogger decided they should attack them groupwise. To control attack and counter-attack, Somewherein authority implied blog moderation. But a lot of bloggers were not satisfied with the moderation. After the establishment of Sachalayan in 2007, many bloggers had left blogging and the periods ended.

**2. Sachalayatan Period:** Sachalayatan maintained strict moderation. It is a pre moderation blog where posts are published after the examination of moderation because the site searches for quality rather than quantity.

**3. Amar Blog Period:** Because of the strict moderation of Sachalayatan, many bloggers left the site. Amar blog started in 2007 with no moderation.

### 3.9 Bangla Blogging: Recent Condition

The no of Bangla blogsites is still increasing but blog sites are losing their traffic. Somewherein was ranked 11 nin the Alexa ranking among all the websites of Bangladesh. But the recent scenari of Somehwerein including other blogs is not good enough.

Alexa Ranking<sup>7</sup> observed in different bangle blogsites at 15 August 2014:

Bangla blogsites	Alexa World Ranking	Alexa Bangladesh Ranking
Somewherein	9756	53
Amarblog	91 434	417
Ishtishon	109258	431
Sachalayatan	57102	1059
Prothom Alo	83268	353
Muktomona	12672	1323
Nokkhotro	309761	686

<sup>7</sup> Alexa Internet, Inc. is a California-based subsidiary company of Amazon.com which provides commercial web traffic data, see: [www.alexa.com](http://www.alexa.com)

## Alexa ranking for different Bangla blogsites in 30 October 2014

Bangla blogsites	Alexa World Ranking	Alexa Bangladesh Ranking
Somewherein	24,614	56
Amarblog	106225	488
Ishtishon	138718	698
Sachalayatan	53802	954
Shobdoneer	123471	466
Muktomona	74473	1231

In the list, blogs of different Bangla news portals are not added as they all get ranked in terms of their news site performance. Prothom Alo blog was the part of Prothom Alo Newspaper but it was operated as a different site. Prothom Alo authority shut down their blog in 16 September of this year. For them, blogging has lost its appeal for popularity of Facebook and online news sites. The Alexa traffic of Bangla blogsites on the two tables clearly shows that traffic rates are falling down except the Shobdoneer blog on the 2<sup>nd</sup> table.

Replacing blog, giving opinion is becoming popular. Bloggers have gathered a huge cluster of people in Facebook and now they are writing at Facebook. But it has also negative consequences. Blogger Adim Purush (2013) has posted a blog entitled as 'Political Facebook and Cheap Hypocrisy' (ফেসবুক স্বস্তা হিপোক্রেসি) about what he called 'blog version of Facebook'. According his blog, he has started Facebooking from 2005 and on the first 6 years, his Facebooking was limited in giving status, photo upload, chat and message. His news feed was the place of pure entertainment. He had not seen any political post from any political Facebook page or from any of his friends. But the environment has changed after 2011. Facebook launched like option and Page option. He liked a Facebook page and he experienced its flooding. Because of the continuous status from the page, he started to miss his old Facebook. For him, Facebook became all about like. He stated in his blog "any nook and corner of Facebook I go, I see the signboard of 'like'".

He started blogging in Somewherein, at the mid of 2012, and one day he found a Facebook link of a bloggers group in Facebook. He joined there and for him, on that moment, he consciously sent his soul to do suicide. After joining that group, he came to know another part of Facebook (the political part) which is completely different from the Facebook he used to know. He sent many bloggers friend request and gradually the news feed of his Facebook has changed. Whenever he used to open Facebook, he had seen his home page is full of political post just like an online edition of a newspaper. In political Facebook, he has seen a different kind of Facebook friend. One Facebook friend uses abusive words against another and sometimes there were group wise attack like blog. He added a celebrity blogger in Facebook who had a different political ideology than him. One day he came to know that he removed him from friend list. He says “do I really have time to care about this? Or did they think I am feeling guilty? I really laugh when I see such hypocrites?”

### **3.10 Shahbag Uprising: From Confront to Control**

The two major political parties of Bangladesh are Bangladesh Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist party (BNP). Awami League has now political allies with some of leftist political parties while BNP has allies with the Islamist party Jamaat-E-Islami Bangladesh (shortly known as Jamat). In Bangla blogosphere, as Haq (2011) observed, the politics were mostly based pro Awami League vs Pro-Jamat bloggers although there are also Pro-BNP bloggers exist.

After the victory of National election in 2008, Awami League started war criminal trial. International War Criminal Tribunal (ICT), which was formed in 2010, gave its first verdict of death penalty to Abul Kalam Azad (known as Bachchu Razakar), in January 2011 (Manik and Adhikary 2013).

New media played a crucial role to organize the protest of Shahbag as it did on Arab Spring. This movement was called by a small network of online activists and bloggers in 5<sup>th</sup> February 2013. They were not satisfied with the verdict of Quader Mullah given by International Tribunal on 5<sup>th</sup> February. For them, the life time imprisonment for war crime of Jamaat Leader Quader Mullah does not reflect the people's sentiment of Bangladesh and they demanded death penalties to all war criminals (Parvez 2013).

For Hasan (2014), because of the softness shown to Jamaat-E-Islam by the government in some events of January 2013, people had a doubt that there might be sort of secret ally for which Jamaat leader Quader Mullah's verdict was compromised. With massive campaign in Facebook and various blogs, thousands people pour into a busy intersection, namely Shahbag, of the capital city. Besides creating a provision for an appeal for state party, the massive gathering also demands for a ban on a political party- Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh- for involvement in the genocide of 1971. People from all walks of life, with students, doctors, teachers, actors and even sports personalities have been taking part in this protest (Parvez 2013).

Shahbag uprising is not happened all of a sudden as the online activists have been preparing themselves with active participation in their virtual world for a long time. As Parvez (2013) states that:

Blogs and social media saw fiery debate on issues like BDR tragedy, communal killing in Ramu, border killing by BSF or government's plan to build a new airport in Arial bil. Moreover, trial of war criminals and banning the Islamists are two hot issues those have been discussed over and over in the blogosphere for last six or seven years. So, it is not a surprise that this whole uprising is led by bloggers and they became contemporary 'national heroes' of Bangladesh.

At the beginning, there was confusion that who is the leader of Shahbag. Media of Bangladesh has created hype by calling it bloggers' movement and suddenly bloggers became national heroes. Allying with other students group and online activists, BOAN has created 'Gonojagoron Monch' (national awakening stage) to operate the movement and Imran H. Sarker was named as the speaker of the stage.

One of the members of the stage, blogger Rajib Haider was killed in 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013. Gonojagoron Monch accused 'Sonar Bangla', a pro-Jamat blogsite for provoking the murder. The blogsite was shut down in 16<sup>th</sup> February.

On the other hand, using social media and newspapers, supporters of Jamaat tried to emphasize the atheist and anti-Islam contents of bloggers. As religion is still very sensitive issue in Bangladesh, a country of majority Muslim population, they tried to brand the Shahbag uprising as an initiative of atheists. Hefajot-E-Islam, an Islamic group of Bangladesh, has organized a massive gathering in 5<sup>th</sup> May at Motijheel, Dhaka, demanding the punishment of bloggers for making vulgar comments regarding Prophet Mohammad. 4 bloggers were arrested in April although they got bailed after several months. Among them, blogger Shuvo (2014) wrote a blog post in Mukto Mona describing how they are arrested by police unexpectedly without any proper evidence.

There is also accusation on ruling parties that by entering into the Gonojagoron Monch, they have intentionally weakened the movement. Gonojagoron Monch were also criticized by many bloggers for doing insignificant activities.

After the consequences of Shahbag regarding religion, Governemnt approved ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Act in 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014 and passed it in 9<sup>th</sup> October of the same year (Barua 2014). The Act was promulgated in 2006 by the then BNP-led government.

The particular concern about the act lies on Article 57, part of which reads "...any willful release on websites or any other electronic platform of any material whci is false, vulgar, defamatory liable to cause deterioration of law and order, or tarnishes the image of the state or individual, or hurts religious sentiment is treated as a cyber crime" (Alam 2014). The section has been criticized for being vague, treating cyber crime a non-bailable offense, and for giving law enforcing agencies too much power to arrest, without issuing warrant, any person suspected of committing cyber crime.

Therefore, Shahbag experienced the confrontotaion of social media toward Bnagladesh politics at one stage and later it influenced the authority to take control over social media.

Shahbag has divided the Bengali online space into two periods: its situation before Shahbag and its situation of after Shahbag. The movement also devised the politics of Bangladesh into an extreme polarized position which also had consequences in the social media.



## **Chapter Four: Theoretical Orientation**

The studies of Blogosphere across the worldwide are mostly approached by the Habermasian theory of public sphere. Although Habermas described his theory for the Bourgeoisie public sphere of 18<sup>th</sup> century, but due to the advancement of what Castells (2007) has called the network society, the theory of public sphere is experiencing a paradigm shift.

### **4.1 Habermasian Theory of Public Sphere**

Habermas' concept of public sphere can be differentiated into two categories. One is 'the bourgeois public sphere' which he has described in his "Structural transformation of Public Sphere" and another is 'the networked public sphere' which as a concept emerged with the emergence of network society.

#### **Habermasian theory of Bourgeois Public Sphere**

With capitalist economic developments and the rise of the bourgeoisie the meaning and context of public sphere is changed once more in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is argued that the communicative use of public reason occurred within the bourgeois reading public, in response to literature, and in institutions such as salons and coffee-houses became the centre of debate (Kocan 2012). In the structural transformation of public sphere (1989), Habermas described the bourgeois public spheres of that period in England, France and Germany. The public sphere of then become to emerge out of the private institution of the family to "literary sphere", where discussion of art and literature play the most important role (Habermas 1989). These spheres arose as arenas of cultural critique often arising from reading societies of bourgeoisie. Cultural critique become political critique as these groups turned to issues of public concern fighting policies of censorship and for freedom of opinions (Sen 2012).

In "The structural Transformation of Public Sphere" (1989), Habermas' description was focused on how the public sphere evolved into and devolved from a legitimate



sphere of rational-critical debate and action among private persons to a sphere of nonpublic opinion generated mostly by mass-media. For Habermas, the best example of an effective public sphere is the bourgeois public sphere because only at this time in history, private sphere had emancipated from the directives of public authority to such an extent that the political public sphere could attain its full development (Barton 2005).

Barton (2005) describes three types of rights are preconditions for the formation of this sphere.

1. the ability to engage in discussions critical of the ruling institutions (freedom of press, right to vote, freedom of petition and so on)
2. Individual status as a free human being. This right is grounded in the intimate sphere of private conjugal family which provides a feeling of independence, ideas of love and freedom, and a desire to cultivate oneself; in short, a real private sphere. Without a proper private sphere, people are incapable of genuine human relations.
3. The rights regarding private property such as its protection

According to Habermas, the bourgeois learned the art of rational-critical debate by association with the elegant, who mingled with bourgeois, artists, and intellectuals in the salons (French), coffee houses (British), and table societies (German). In each of these environments, the first subject of rational-critical debate was literature. Habermas finds 3 criteria shared by all of these critical environments.

1. Much like online discussion boards, they preserved a kind of social inertcourses that disregarded status altogether.
2. The discussions taking place in these environments were responsible for debating previously unquestioned issues.
3. The same process that converted culture into a commodity established the public as in principle inclusive.

In the British coffeehouses, only men were allowed and powerful and influential nobility used to visit very often. British coffeehouses were the first place where rational-critical debate was extended to economic and political disputes. These debates had real consequences as people were ready to not only deliberate but act. On the contrary the French salons and the German table societies had slower pace to catch up to the political efficacy of the British coffee house mostly because of the inferior publicity available in those countries. Napoleon instituted strict censorship and “secret chanceries of the prince” was the place where the most political deliberations took place. The remarkably free press of Britain provided information necessary for a critical public sphere to become politically functional. Certain British Journals had the unprecedented freedom to play an integral role in the development of the sphere; people were allowed to criticize government and bring its actions to the eye of public criticism (Barton 2005).

The collapse of the bourgeois public sphere appeared with its integration into private life. The merging between the spheres of public and private had made it increasingly difficult for individuals to acquire the perspective necessary for engaging in rational-critical debate.

### **Public Sphere: From Structural to Transnational**

The structural conditions of nation-state based public spheres are being supplemented by transnational networks that offer the structural potential for extended forms of publicity. These are threefold: communicative networks, governmental networks, and activist networks (Khan et al 2012).

For Sen (2012), there are three criteria for Habermasian public sphere. Which are:

- a) Disregard of status
- b) Common concern
- c) Inclusivity by commercialized cultural product and information

Because of transformation of public sphere, such criteria are facing challenges.

**Transnational Public sphere as the Networked Public Sphere:** Communicative network to broad participation across the borders is a structural precondition of transnational public spheres. This prerequisite has already been met in terms of material capability. Starting from a computer then connecting them into ‘Network’, there has been being the emergence of a new public sphere (Khan et al 2012).

Friedland et al (2006, p. 8) states that “the networked public sphere is both defined and constrained by network transformation in three macrosystems that form the environment of the public sphere- the political system, functional systems, and civil society”.

**The Determinants of New Transnational Networked Public Sphere: The** paradigm shift from structural to transnational move of public sphere is backed by following determinants:

**a) ICTS:** ICT refers to computers, software, networks, satellite links and related systems that enable people to access, analyze, create, exchange and use data, information, and knowledge in ways that, were almost unimaginable hitherto. ICT is used almost interchangeably with the Internet. For Friedland (2006, p.7), “when we discuss communication networks we will refer to ICT networks, the Internet, or the world-wide-web”.

**b) Networking:** Friedland (2006, p.2) defines networks as “either to social networks or to networks of information/communication technology, particularly the Internet. Social networks, however, are not the same as networked forms of communication”. Digital social networks refer to social networks primarily realized by means of computer-mediated communication (Khan et al 2012). The first instance of a social networking platform was SixDegrees.com, launched in 1997 (Khan et al 200).

**c) Social Software:** Social software is the specie of software which helps conduct social activities and socializing process at any temporal level including the international communications. It has shaped and stimulated ‘new public sphere’ as a

backdrop of global communication for the novel ‘global society’ which never existed in a form that every member of this society can instantly interact with another member beyond the traditional limits of time and space (Khan et al 2012).

Commonly used social software includes weblogs, wikis, RSS feeds and social bookmarking. Similarly the social networking sites (SNSs) are the web-based services that allow individuals to: create a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system.

**d) Blogs:** The blogs are a class of social software often used in organizations for social networking. For Habermas (2006), the role of bloggers is just parasitic as they are echoing the mainstream media. Habermas called bloggers as ‘issue publics’.

**e) Globalization:** The process of globalization which constitutes a social system with the capacity to work as a unit on a planetary scale in real or chosen time are created and boosted by ICTS.

The Internet is a unique matrix of networks which is based on a ‘many-to-many’ model of information distribution, as opposed to the ‘one-to-many’ structure of mass media (Crack quoted in Khan et al 2012). While we are posing this network as the base of new public sphere of social media, we also need to have to accept that new public sphere is gathering new characteristics as well.

**The Characteristics of Networked Public Sphere:** The characteristics of the new public sphere are two-fold. While they challenge the traditional authority of mass media, they also in some sense mimic the traditional media as well.

**a) Increase of Communicative Reflexivity:** Communicative reflexivity is systematically increased by this new networked public sphere at every level of communication, including the political system, civil society, and the lifeworld. Its network structure erodes the authority and agenda-setting power of the traditional media (Friedman et al 2006).

**b) Replication of Mass Media Model:** From Benkler's understandings, smaller websites are linked thematically together, constituting clusters of public communication within the networked public sphere'. As he argues "A tiny number of sites are read by the vast majority of readers, while many sites are never visited by anyone (Benkler cited in Rasmussen 2007). In this regard, in Internet, there has not been any structural genuine change. What Internet doing is just the replication of the mass media model, perhaps adding a few channels (Rasmussen 2007).

**c) Overlapping Arenas:** Habermas' most recent adaptations do account for a more versatile view as the metaphor of the network is now prevalent in his conceptualization of the public sphere which he describes as "a highly complex network that branches out into a multitude of overlapping international, national, regional, local and subcultural arenas" (Habermas cited in Valtysson 2012).

**d) Fragmentation of Publics:** Furthermore, these public spheres...range from episodic publics, through occasional or arranged publics, "up to the abstract public sphere of isolated readers, listeners, and viewers scattered across large geographic areas, or even around the globe, and brought together only through the mass media (Valtysson 2012).

**e) Mass Self Communication:** The public sphere that was once anchored around the national institutions of territorially bound societies has shifted to a public sphere constituted around the media system. This media system includes "mass self communication" (Castells 2007) that connect many-to-many in the sending and receiving of messages in a multimodal shape of communication that can bypass mass media and often escape government control (Khan et al 2012).

**f) Horizontal Communication:** Unlike mainstream media, where communication is vertical in nature, Internet is offering horizontal communication. Vertical communication follows a top down model where receiver gets feed from the media but can't provide feedback. But in case of social media, users can communicate with others within the media and they can share each other feedbacks.

**g) Virtual Community:** Rheingold (1994) has defined virtual communities as social aggregations and for him, such communities merge from the Net when enough people

carry on those public discussions long enough, with sufficient human feeling, to form webs of personal relationships in cyberspace.

Therefore the characteristics of networked public suggest a transformation with varied influences of technological features. As the influences are varied in nature, they can also partly be described by other theories of public sphere as well.

#### **h) Civil Society in the New Public Sphere:**

Communication has moved online, and it is doing so at an ever growing rate among young people all over the world, but particularly in developed nations. The increasing emergence of young people's lifeworld with online space affects the secondary lifeworld which interacts systematically with the primary lifeworld of socialization. Civil society appears to be divided into two realms for Habermas-the institutional core of formal associations and the private spheres of the lifeworld (Friedland et.al 2006). The globalization of public sphere has prompted the emergence of global civil society (Khan et al 2012).

### **4.2 Other Theories of Public Sphere**

The idea of public sphere has had a long and distinguished conceptual history. Since the time of Aristotle, political philosophers have attempted to draw the relationship between citizens and political society as a whole and between citizen and state. Gurcan Kocan in his article "Models of Public Sphere in Political Philosophy" (2008) has described that although with differences, along with Jurgen Habermas, the theoretical frameworks of Aristotle, Hanna Arendt, Nancy Fraser, Charles Taylor, John Keane, Robert D. Putnam locate the public sphere in civil society stirred by exchange of meanings and points of views towards deliberative and associative democratic process of decision making.

#### **Aristotles Differentiation between Public and Private**

"Aristotle deserves to be known as the first thinker emphasizing the separation of private from public" (Kocan 2012). His idea was opposed to Plato who saw the city as

a homogeneous entity constituting unity in which everything was common to everybody. But Aristotle in his book of the “Politics” distinguished private as spheres of particular beings such as individual, slave, woman and family and the public as a sphere of citizens and polis without separating these completely. Public sphere is situated by Aristotle within city-state polis as related to the public life of the political community as opposing it to the private realm of the household (oikos). As described by Aristotle, public sphere as public life constituted in spatial-temporal setting of market place (agora) where there are equal gatherings of citizens to discuss (lexis) matters of common concern in polis.

The idea of public sphere from writings of Aristotle is transformed into publicus in the Roman ruling system. As Kocan (2012) describes, for Romans publicus was a signifying realm of a collective body of citizens or subjects in contrast to privatus which denotes the domain of the private household. Then, this distinction between publicus and privatus in Roman ruling carried to through Middle Ages where there is no sharp separation of the public from private realms. In the Middle Ages, the king or feudal lord represents himself before another people; the king or feudal lord was the only public representation, and all others were viewers. This means. Public sphere is represented by only King’s public representation.

### **Arrendt’s View of Public Space**

In the book, *The Human condition* (1958), Hanna Arendt modeled the idea of public sphere upon an Athenian city, where in principal public space was characterized, by the arena accessible to all citizens. The majority of participations of this arena formed the “public body”, comprising of private citizens (Kocan 2012).

In Arrendt’s book “*The origin of Totalitarianism*” (1968), two views of public space was found. One is ‘agonistic view’, in which the political greatness, heroism and pre-eminence were displayed and shared with others in the public realm. Benhabib (1993) draws the following characteristics of Arrendt’s view of agonal space:

- a) It is based on competition rather than collaboration. One competes for recognition, precedence and acclaim
- b) It is exclusive that it presupposes strong criteria of loyalty and belonging from its participants
- c) It individualizes those who participate in it and set them parts from others

The second view of Arrendt's public space is 'associational view' in which public space can emerge whenever and wherever men act in a concert and where freedom can appear. Associational public space doesn't need institutional sense such as town hall or city square. If the action of concert exists, then from a dining room to a forest, in any place can turn into public space. These diverse topographical locations become public space in that they become sites of power, of common action coordinated through speech and persuasion. For Arrendt, such space had recovery not just during French Revolution but also in French resistance during 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, in Hungarian uprising of 1956 and in the civil rights and anti-war move of the late 1960s of USA (Benhabib 1993).

### **Charles Taylor's Idea of Public Sphere's Status**

"The public sphere is a common space in which the members of society are deemed to meet through a variety of media: print, electronic and also face-to-face encounters; to discuss matters of common interest; thus to be able to form a common mind about these" (Taylor quoted in Kocan 2012).

Rousseauan model of politics was the influence of Taylor's unique perspective on public sphere. He describes three statuses of public sphere: extrapolitical, secular and metatopical space (Kocan 2012).



**a) Extrapolitical Status:** In the process of exchange of views and thoughts, such status of public sphere implies lack of traditional authority, partisanship or any exercise of political power. It is from the reason not from the political authority where the power of discussion for producing public opinion must be derived.

**b) Secular Status:** For Rasmussen such status refers to an absence of a transcendental idea on which public sphere is based. The public sphere is free, in that it was not shaped or legitimized by any reference to divine order other than the will of free agents that formed it.

**c) Metatopical Status:** It refers to the space which is shared as nonlocal social imaginaries or common space for understanding. The fact that public sphere is metatopical implies that it not only knits “together a plurality of spaces into one larger space of non-assembly” but it is also extended over time.

Therefore, social media supports Taylor’s metatopical status of public sphere as it has created a plurality of spaces within cyber space.

### **Kean’s Descriptive understanding of Public Sphere**

In his article “The Structural Transformation of Public Sphere” (1995), Keane offers a descriptive understanding of public sphere based on concrete and actual situations (Kocan 2012). He argues that the public sphere consists of a number of different spaces of information flows, each working according to its own structure rule. He described three spatially differentiated and multilayered notions of public spheres: micro (sub-cultural), meso (national) and macro (global).

**a) Micro Public Sphere:** For Kean, micro-Public Spheres of present days are those which are the counterpart of the coffeehouse, town-level meeting, and literacy circle,

in which early modern public spheres developed. Discussion circle, the publishing house, the church, the clinic, and a political chat over a drink with friends or acquaintances are all the examples of such micro public sphere. According to Kean, paradoxically these micro-public spheres are mostly latent. They seem to look like private acting at a distance from official public life party politics, and the glare of media publicity, they in fact display all the characteristics of small group public efforts, whose challenging the existing distribution of power. As Kean (cited in Kocan 2012) “micro public spheres are today a vital feature of all social movements”.

**b) Meso-public Sphere:** These are those spaces of controversy about power that encompass millions of people watching, listening or reading across vast distances. They are mainly co-extensive with the nation-state, but they may also extend beyond its boundaries to encompass neighbouring audiences. Meso-public spheres are mediated by large-circulation newspapers such as the New York times and by electronic media such as BBC radio and television. Although constantly pressured from below by micro-public spheres, meso-public spheres display considerable tenacity. There is no necessary zero-sum relationship between these differently sized public domains, in part because each feeds upon tensions with the other (readers of national newspapers, for instance, may consult locally produced magazines); and in part meso-public spheres thrives upon media which appeal to particular national or regional language groupings, and which have well-established and powerful production and distribution structures that sustain their proven ability to circulate to millions of people certain types of news, current affairs, films, and entertainment that daily reinforce certain styles and habits of communication about matters of public concern.

**c) Macro-public Spheres:** It contains macro publics, hundreds of millions of citizens are (unintended) consequence of the international concentration of mass media firms previously owned and operated at the nation-state level.

As Kean has pointed out, each of these public spheres feeds upon tensions of others and such statements also matches the relationship of social media with mainstream media and other public spaces.

Since Bangla blogosphere is shaped by the posts of Bengali language, and millions of people reading and writing in there, these participants are not just co-extensive to national boundaries but also beyond national boundaries. But the recent decreasing of participation in Bangla Blogosphere weakens its potential to be considered with large circulation of media. Again, the recent boom of Facebook users has made its claim to be a macro –public sphere. But unlike the global mass media firms, Facebook’s macro-publics are fragmented into meso and micro portions. For example, bloggers who have left Bangla blogosphere and now writing in Facebook with thousands of Facebook friends and followers mostly express and interact in Bengali language. As their discussions, expressions and interactions are motivated to ongoing social, politican and cultural issues of Bangladesh, the space they have created within the macro-sphere of Facebook can be considered as meso-sphere. Such sphere also includes the online news portals and other online groups. Again, in Facebook, not all the groups could enter in the wider meso-online network. For example, Facebook group ‘sahitto adda’, where literary writers and bloggers of online mostly interact is the example of micro-sphere. Therefore, Facebook being a macro sphere can also create space for micro and meso publics. An individual through Facebook can relate himself or herself with micro, meso and macro publics at a time. As a result the other counterparts of Facebook, like the blog and other meso online sites, are losing their demand.

### **Fraser’s Re-thinking of Public Sphere:**

Nancy Fraser’s conceptualization of the public sphere includes several “competing publics” constituted by competing arenas of discourse, conflicting modes of participation, and different strategies of social action (Kocan 2012:11). Fraser’s conceptualization can be summarized by following points:

**Cultural Domination:** Specific concepts of power and different types of injustice, those of misrecognition and maldistribution, rooted respectively in the cultural domination that is carried on through the status order and the economic system are emphasized in the approach of Fraser.

**Refusing Equality:** As actors cannot set aside their status and other markers of difference to meet as equals in communicative arena of the public sphere, therefore Fraser sees that public sphere did not and does not operate in a neutral field of equality because

**Multiple Public Sphere:** From Fraser's point of view, rather than conceiving of the public sphere as a single united sphere, public sphere has shifted from a more static institutional perspective to complex and fragmented multiplicities which work as communicative arenas for hermeneutical self-understanding, for recognition of new complex issues and for competitive discussions which are directed towards shaping public opinions and criticizing the state policies.

Fraser points out that there is a dominant public sphere where most cultural and political power resides where she endorses what she labels multiple "counterpublics" (Fraser 1992) but for her there is no single public sphere,

**Model of Autonomouse Public Sphere:** Nancy Fraser's approach emphasizes model of autonomus public sphere where relations between publics are always constituted by power relations and it stands in contrast to the functional and structural process of public opinion formation typified by communicative action. The bases of the public sphere are located on uncoordinated negotiation with competing arenas of discourse and conflict.

**Strong Public and Weak Public:** Fraser writes that a strong public being completely separated from the state only engages in critical deliberation and discussion-oriented

institutionalized deliberation and decision making (will formation) in the political social system while a weak public engages itself in deliberation and opinion formation without decision-making power (Fraser 1990).

Therefore, the public sphere in Nancy Fraser's approach sees is not a mean that provides a legitimization for government/political decision making but as ideal type representing the typical features of a multicultural democratic society in the theoretical framework.

### **Putnam's Explanation of Declining Public Sphere:**

For Robert Putnam, social capital, as a basis for public sphere, establishes networks, norms and social trust in society and facilitates co-ordination and cooperation for mutual benefit among individual citizens., Putnam has put forth one of the more persuasive explanations for the decline in public sphere. Putnam has argued that television and internet with their emphasis on consumption is one of the main factors responsible for the decline of public sphere in the contemporary societies (Kocan 2012).

### **Negt and Kluge's Counter Public Sphere**

Habermas' work of public sphere in the early 1960s was reworked by Sociologist Oskar Negt and filmmaker Alexander Kluge in the 1970s with their notion of a proletariat counter-public sphere. In contrast to Habermas, Negt and Kluge redefine publicity as something that is implicit within industrial-commercial public spheres of production, including for instances, spaces of commerce, leisure and consumption, and privately owned spaces such as film theatres (Legar).

A public is therefore not only constituted in its productive capacities, but also at the level of consumption practices. And so, the function of critical cultural practice, such as Kluge's avant-garde films, is to construct a public sphere that challenges the commoditization and the privatization of public concerns.

### **Mouffe's Concept of Agonistic and Antagonistic Public Space**

Mouffe's post-Gramscian work has connected the Habermasian notion of public sphere with a new prescription. Mouffe (2005) rejects the claim of ideal public sphere and termed the public sphere as 'public spaces'.

For Mouffe (2005), Antagonism is a conflict that has no possible rational solution, but this conflict can take two forms: it can express itself in the form of what we can call antagonism, strictly speaking, which is the 'friendly enemy' relation or it can take the form of what I call agonism. An agonism is also a conflict without any rational solution, but a conflict which is going to be played out in a different way because the people who are in conflict see themselves not as enemies but as adversaries. This means that, while disagreeing, they accept the legitimacy of the demands of their opponents. This is a type of tolerance which is necessary for democracy.

Aristotle, Hannah Arendt and Habermas have emphasized the public sphere as a single shared discursive sphere whereas Charles Taylor and Nancy Fraser described public sphere as a multiple segmented sphere. John Keane portrayed multiple and multilevel overlapping public spheres and Robert Putnam has revealed bases of multilayered and complex public spheres. Establishing normative framework, all of the theories saw public as a necessary condition for democracy. Due to their understanding of democracy (i.e., liberal, deliberative, agonistic, or republican model of democracy) and paradigms of individualism, communalism, multiculturalism, and pluralism, their theories on public sphere are differentiated (Kocan 2012).

### **4.3 Theories of Public Opinion**

The origins of our modern conception of public opinion are usually traced to liberal democratic theories of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with precursors reaching all the way back to ancient Greece. The concept of public opinion emerged during the Enlightenment, but the separate concepts of the public and opinion have much older histories, each with a range of meanings that continue to inform their use to the present day (Price 1992).

The compound concept of public opinion came into widespread use only in the eighteenth century and as the product of several significant historical trends, primarily the growth of the literacy, expansion of the merchant class, the Protestant Reformation, and the circulation of literature enable by the printing press. An ascendant class of literate and well-read European merchants, congregating in new popular institutions such as salons and coffee houses and emboldened by new liberal philosophies arguing for basic individual freedoms, began to articulate a critique of royal absolutism and to assert their interests in political affairs (Habermas 1989). In early usage, public opinion referred to the social customs and manners of this growing class of prosperous “men of letters” but by the close of the century it was being used in an expressly political context, often in conjunction with cousin phrases such as “common will,” and “public conscience.”

The following theorists have made a good contribution for the growth of the concept of public opinion.

**1. Habermas:** Communicative reflexivity refers to the public sphere’s capacity to provide a social space in which feedback from citizens can travel upward from civil society to the political public sphere. This specifically political public sphere is the social subsystem where elite opinion is both generated and processed (opinion-formation) and where decisions are made (will formation). To describe these communication processes, Habermas tends to use the imagery of liquid flows, with the public sphere function as a filter or sluice. Ideally, the public sphere filters information so that only “considered public opinion” will be at the centre of public debate (Friedland et al 2006).

To differentiate the public sphere from 3 macrosocial systems (political system, functional system, and civil society), Habermas identifies its two outputs- public opinion and communicative power. When the public sphere works properly and autonomously, it manages to both circulate and filter public opinions. These filtered opinions are not just any opinions but “considered” public opinions. As opposed to noise, lies, distraction, manipulation, and systematically distorted communication, considered opinions are the desired outcome of democratic deliberation. To influence the political system, considered public opinions need to be backed by a special type of

communicative power that only the public sphere can supply. Habermas' phrase "communicative power" is actually shorthand for "communicative generated power," which he distinguishes from the political systems' "administrative employed power." Public opinion can be manipulated but neither publicly bought nor publicly blackmailed. As long as opinions are backed by sufficient degrees of communicative power, the influence of administrative and social power in political communication won't lead to legitimation crises (Friedland et al 2006).

**2. Noelle-Neuman:** The spiral of silence is a mass communication theory introduced by Elizabeth Noelle Neumann (1974) to describe the process of public opinion formation. Noelle Neumann defines the "spiral of silence" as the process of an individual experiences...If the individual sees the more prevalent opinion (not his own), more and more in his social environment, he becomes less inclined to voice his own opinion publicly. Thereby, public opinion is identified, by the silenced individual as the opinion that is generally acceptable by the public and can be voiced openly with no fear.

"Public opinion always claims to be authoritative. It demands consent or at least compels silence, or abstention from contradiction" (Tonnies cited by Noelle-Neumann 1974).

Noelle Neumann developed five hypotheses on which to test the spiral of silence theory.

- a) The individual pays close attention to what is happening in his social environment because it helps to determine "how far [he] expects to expose himself publicly on a particular subject.
- b) Willingness to express one's views publicly varies according to the individual's assessment of the frequency distribution and the trend of opinions in his social environment. If the individual sees that his opinion is favored in the public, he will be more willing to express it.
- c) If the individual's assessment of the current distribution and the actual distribution are not congruent, "it is because the opinion whose strength is overestimated is displayed more in public".



- d) If an opinion is [presently] considered to be the prevailing one, it is likely to be considered the future one also. The weaker the correlation, the more public opinion is going through a process of change.
- e) The final hypothesis posits that if an individual thinks that “the trend of opinion is moving his way, the risk of isolation is of little significance.

A key finding from her research was that when faced with public opinion, a core group of silent minorities were less likely to conform in any way. What they were willing to do was support their opinions by selecting persons and media that confirm their views.

**3. Scheufele and Moy:** Scheufele and Moy dissect the definition of public opinion by referencing two concepts offered by Noelle-Neuman (Neil 2009). The first is “public opinion as rationality” and the second is “public opinion as social control”.

**a) Public Opinion as Rationality:** Public opinion as rationality has following characteristics:

- i) It is a conscious process that comes about after careful consideration and public discussion.
- ii) It is termed by the authors as “a necessary condition for generating social change”.
- iii) In the form of rationality, public opinion uses several modes of expression such as, facial expression and highly visible symbols.

**b). Public Opinion as Social Control:** The traits of public opinion as social control are as following

- i)) It is an opinion, when expressed, does not lead to the risk of isolation from society, by society.
- ii) This format rises from unconscious.
- iii) They are opinions that have to be expressed in order to avoid isolation

iv) The spiral of silence “clearly falls under then model of public opinion as social control

Schuefele and Moy also add three more factors in explaining the spiral of silence as a process. They are the moral component of public opinion, the time factor and the role of the media.

#### **4.4 Democracy and the Intertwining between Public Opinion and Public Sphere**

Habermas (2006) notes 3 elements which are brought by the institutional design of modern democracy

1. The private autonomy of citizens
2. Democratic citizenship
3. The independence of a public sphere that operates as an intermediary system between state and society.

For Habermas, these elements form the normative bedrock of liberal democracy. The institutional design is to guarantee

- a) Equal protection of individual members of civil society by the rule of law
- b) The political participation of as many interested citizens as possible through equal communication and participation rights
- c) An appropriate contribution of a political public sphere to the formation of considered public opinions through a separation of a state from market-based society.

Habermas distinguishes the liberal tradition from the republican and deliberative tradition on the basis of their effects on citizens. For him, the former reveals a preference for the liberties of private citizens, whereas the latter two stress either the political participation of active citizens or the formation of considered public opinions.

Deliberative democratic public sphere theory has become increasingly popular in internet-democracy research and commentary. In terms of informal civil practices,

advocates of the theory see the internet as a means for the expansion of citizen deliberation leading to the formation of rational public opinion. In contrast to the mass media, internet is seen as force for radical democracy.

Habermas himself doubts the democraticizing potential of the Internet, as he saw it developing in a commercial direction, with a political orientation that was largely circumstantial (Habermas 2006).

1. The self-centered nature of online expression leads a narcissistic element to political deliberation online, which is distinct from the objectives of the public sphere.
2. Patterns of civic engagement online suggests selective uses of online media to supplement the representative model of democracy and mobilize subversive movements.
3. The proliferation of public spaces that are part of commercial and part private suggests a new hybrid model of public spaces, where consumerist and civic engagement co-exist.

Within the liberal model of the public sphere, mass media play a critical role in informing and directing public opinion. It is Habermas' argument that the commercialized mass media have turned the public sphere into a space where the rhetoric and objectives of public relations and advertising are prioritized. Commercial interest, a capitalist economy, and mainstream media content have colonized the public sphere and compromised rational and democratic public discourse extinct, with television frequently playing a vanguard role (Habermas 2006).

Therefore, comparing the theories of public sphere and theories of public opinion, we could argue that democracy is the linking line between the two categories of theories. But in case of online, such democracy has a problematic role.

## Chapter Five: Methodology

“A methodology is a model entailing theoretical principles and frameworks that provide the guidelines about how research is to be done” (Sarantakos 2005: 51). The methodology of a research denotes the nature of research and prescribes methods.

### 5.1 Types of the Study

Because of having a large population of online, the study demands a survey but respondents of the study, the bloggers, are fragmented and scattered. Again, since the context of the study includes controversial aspect of ICT act and hate speech, it can be assumed that online survey might not be the only responsive solution. Bloggers can be reachable also in offline interaction but that can happen very occasionally. So considering the scenario, the study is conducted by mixed methods which include observation, FGD, in-depth interviews and survey.

### 5.2 Preparation for the Study

Despite of occasional meeting, different groups of bloggers generally gather during ‘Amar Ekushey Boimela’<sup>1</sup>. There is a group of literary bloggers who organize meetings on the last Friday of every month for literary discussion which they call “sahitto adda” (সাহিত্য আড়া). In Boimela and through ‘sahitto adda’, several bloggers were approached to discuss about Bangla Blogosphere.

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<sup>1</sup> For the memory of those, who were martyred in 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1952 demanding Bengali as the ‘State Language’ of the then Pakistan, Bangla Academy organize a book fair known as Amar Ekushey Boimela in Bangla Academy premises in every year of the month of February.

### 5.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

A FGD was conducted with the participation of 5 bloggers from the group ‘Sahitto Adda’ on their monthly meeting on ‘Bissho Sahitto Kendra Cafeteria’ in Banglamotor Dhaka on June 20.



Participants of FGD

### 5.4 Case Studies

Case studies of 10 Bloggers were conducted who are of different ages. Some of them had blogged in the different period of Bangla Blogosphere. Some are still blogging while others had significant experience in their participation of Bangla blogosphere.

### 5.5 Pretest

Before starting the survey, two pre-test were conducted each contained 10 participants. The questionnaire form was sent to the participants through Facebook.

## 5.6 Online Survey:

5 most popular and significant Bangla blogsites were selected to post the invitation for participation the survey. The blogsites are: Somewherein, Amarblog, Sachalayatan, Prothom Alo Blog and Ishtishon. The Prothom Alo Blog Was shut down on September 16 by its authority. The survey questionnaire was developed using Google doc. The link of the survey form:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1dtYFLp05gXM4ombPghWD6Xp0DgxHcHMOYWgde-zZCIg/viewform>

The first post was given on Somewhereinblog on 7 September.

### বাংলা ব্লগিং নিয়ে একটি একাডেমিক গবেষণায় ব্লগাররা সাহায্যে এগিয়ে আসুন

০৭ ই সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০১৪ রাত ৮:৫২



আমি ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সমাজবিজ্ঞানের একজন ছাত্র। অনার্সের ৮-ম সেমিস্টারে পড়ার সময় নিজের অনার্সের একটি গবেষণার অংশ হিসেবে সামুর ব্লগারদের নিয়ে জরিপ করি যেটির ফলাফল ২০১৩ সালের ১৮ জুন আমি সামুতে প্রকাশ করি। লিঙ্ক এখানে। গবেষণাটি ছিলো শুধুমাত্র সামুর ব্লগারদের নিয়ে সামুর বিভিন্ন বিষয় নিয়ে। তাই ইচ্ছে ছিলো যদি সম্ভব...

বাকিটুকু পড়ুন ১৬টি মন্তব্য ১৯৪বার পঠিত ২👍

<http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/sadrilbest/29978730>

Only 6 bloggers participated in the survey from that post. The post was not taken into selected page. As the participation on the survey from blog post was very low, an

event was created in Facebook and Invitations were sent to 244 bloggers. 111 of them have joined but only 42 of them actually filled the form.

Facebook event page for "ব্লগারদের নিয়ে একটি একাডেমিক গবেষণায় অংশ নিতে এগিয়ে আসুন". The event is scheduled for Friday, October 31, at the University of Dhaka. The description discusses a study on social media and online public opinion. The event has 111 going, 6 maybe, and 244 invited.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/316120461893323/>

Blogger Rahanumah Sarah at Facebook herself had given a status referring the event.

Facebook status post by Rahanumah Sarah. The post is in Bengali and refers to the research project. It has received several likes and comments from other bloggers.

**Rahanumah Sarah** 3 hrs · 🌐

লিস্ট এবং লিস্টের বাইরের সকল ব্লগারদের দৃষ্টি আকর্ষণ করাছি 😊  
ব্লগারদের নিয়ে একটি একাডেমিক গবেষণায় অংশ নিতে এগিয়ে আসুন

Like · Comment · Share

👍 প্রবাসী পাঠক, নাইট রিডার, বর্ষণ বর্ষণ and 90 others like this.

➡️ 1 share

**Mesbah Patwary** আসলাম 😊  
3 hrs · Like

**Rahanumah Sarah** যাহ... আনিও গিয়েছি... 😊  
3 hrs · Like

**Mesbah Patwary** We r in top 6 going 😊  
3 hrs · Like

**Rahanumah Sarah** যাহ... প্রথম দিকের বলে কথা। সবার প্রথমে অবশ্য আনিবুর ভাইয়া গিয়েছেন। 😊  
3 hrs · Like · 👍 1

**সাবরিনা সিরাজী** তিত্তির আমি কি এখানে অংশ নিতে পারি ফুপি ?  
3 hrs · Like · 👍 1

**Rahanumah Sarah** সাবরিনা সিরাজী তিত্তির বোমা মজা লও? আমি আমার আগের সিরিয়ালে তোমারে রাখছি... 😊 😊  
3 hrs · Like · 👍 2

**সাবরিনা সিরাজী** তিত্তির আমি এখন তো প্রবাসী ! 😊  
3 hrs · Like · 👍 2

**Rahanumah Sarah** পরবাসী, চলে এসো ঘরে পরবাসী... 😊 😊  
3 hrs · Like · 👍 1



Another celebrity blogger of Somewherein 'Mamun Rashid' himself referred the invitation post at Somewherein. More than 40 bloggers responded then into the first post.

**আমার কিন্তু স্বপ্ন দেখতে আজও ভালো লাগে**

আমার কিন্তু স্বপ্ন দেখতে আজও ভাল লাগে ।

**আপনার মূল্যবান সময় থেকে মাত্র দশ মিনিট সময় চাইছি!**

২৭ শে সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০১৪ রাত ৯:২৬ |

শেয়ারঃ [k271 aawaj](#) [facebook](#) [twitter](#) [g+](#)

একবিংশ শতাব্দীর দ্বিতীয় দশকে এসে ব্লগের অপার শক্তি এবং সম্ভাবনা নিয়ে নতুন কিছু বলার নেই। নিজস্ব চিন্তা, মতামত, দর্শন আর সৃজনশীলতা প্রকাশের চমৎকার মাধ্যম এই ব্লগ। ব্লগ আজ শুধু ব্যক্তিক নয়, সামাজিক-রাষ্ট্রীয় এবং বৈশ্বিক প্রেক্ষাপটেও এক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ স্থানে অধিষ্ঠিত হয়েছে।

আমরা জানি 'ব্লগ' শব্দটি 'ওয়েব লগ' থেকে এসেছে। যার অর্থ দাঁড়ায় 'ওয়েবসাইটের ডায়েরি', 'ওপেন ডায়েরি' বা 'লাইভ জার্নাল'। যেখানে একজন তার দৈনন্দিন কার্যকলাপ লিপিবদ্ধ রাখেন। সারা বিশ্বে ব্যক্তিগত ব্লগের জয়জয়কার। তবে কমিউনিটি ব্লগিংও পিছিয়ে নেই। আমাদের দেশে কমিউনিটি ব্লগিং বেশি জনপ্রিয়। কমিউনিটি ব্লগে অনেক ব্লগার এক সাথে নিজেদের মাঝে আলোচনা, বিতর্ক এবং মিথস্ক্রিয়ার মাধ্যমে সামাজিকতা রক্ষা করেন। ব্লগারদের এই সামাজিক সক্রিয়তা সমাজ এবং রাষ্ট্রের বিবিধ ইস্যুতে সক্রিয় এবং দায়িত্বশীল ভূমিকায় অবতীর্ণ হতে উৎসাহিত করে।

**মামুন রশিদ**

আর এস এস  
ফিড

**পোস্ট আর্কাইভ**

অক্টোবর, ২০১৪(১)

**এই ডাকাতের হাত থেকে  
বাঁচার উপায় কি??**

সেপ্টেম্বর, ২০১৪(১)

আগস্ট, ২০১৪(১)

জুলাই, ২০১৪(২)

জুন, ২০১৪(২)

মে, ২০১৪(৩)

এপ্রিল, ২০১৪(২)

মার্চ, ২০১৪(৩)

ফেব্রুয়ারী, ২০১৪(৪)

জানুয়ারী, ২০১৪(৩)

ডিসেম্বর, ২০১৩(৩)

The post was also given at Istishon blog. The post was sticky there for 6 days but only 14 bloggers responded.

### সাদরিল এর ব্লগ

**ব্লগারদের নিয়ে একটি একাডেমিক গবেষণায় অংশ নিতে এগিয়ে আসুন**

লিখেছেনঃ সাদরিল >> সময়: রবি, 28/09/2014 - 8:56 অপরাহ্ন

আমি ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সমাজবিজ্ঞান বিভাগের মাস্টার্সের ছাত্র। মাস্টার্সের থিসিস হিসেবে বাংলা ব্লগিং নিয়ে গবেষণা করছি যার টাইটেল হলো **Social Media and the Culture of Online Public Opinion: A Study on the Bloggers of Bangla Blogosphere**। এই গবেষণার অংশ হিসেবে বাংলা ব্লগসাইটসমূহের ব্লগারদের জরিপে অংশগ্রহণের আহবান জানাচ্ছি। যেহেতু এটি একটি একাডেমিক গবেষণা তাই কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমতি নিয়ে শুরু করাটা অবশ্য কর্তব্য। আমি ইতিমধ্যে ইস্টিশন কর্তৃপক্ষকে নিজের পরিচয় নিশ্চিত করে অনুমতি নিয়ে নিয়েছি। ইস্টিশন ব্লগের ব্লগারদের এখানে অংশ নেবার আমন্ত্রন রইলো। এছাড়া আপনি যদি অন্য বাংলা ব্লগ সাইটের ব্লগার হয়ে থাকেন

> 13 টি মন্তব্য বাকিটুকু পড়ুন >> 325 বার পড়া হয়েছে

<http://www.istishon.com/node/9648>



Requesting bloggers to participate in the survey, two posts are also given on 2 November. One is in Amar blog (<https://www.amarblog.com/sadril/posts/182012>) and another is in Shobdoneer blog (<http://www.shobdoneer.com/sadril/74983>). Seven Respondents filled the form from Amar blog and Shobdoneer generated only two respondents. The four blog sites were chosen because at that time in Alexa ranking, they were the most visited and accessible sites.

### **5.7 Sampling**

For the case study respondents are purposively chosen. Those are selected for the case study who have good experiences of blogging and follow bloggers in Facebook. For the online survey posts were given to four Bangla blog sites requesting bloggers to respond in the survey and also the event was opened. At first, the event invitation was sent to other bloggers purposively through Facebook message. They were requested to join and share the event with others. Thus snowball sampling also added in the study. Specific quantitative sampling could not be applied in the study because the population (blogger) aimed by the survey, was not staying in one space rather it is very much fragmented.

It is difficult to maintain the ethical issues of traditional research in online survey. But still, the bloggers were made free to hide their identity while taking the survey. Among 10 respondents of case studies, only 2 respondents' real names were mentioned after receiving their consent.

## Chapter Six: Findings

This chapter includes the findings of field study which was conducted by online survey, case studies and FGD.

**Figure 1**

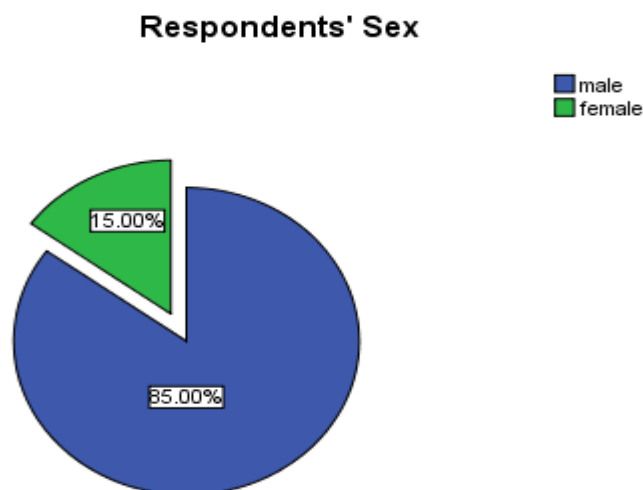


Figure 1 shows that among the participants the no. of males is disproportionately high. 85% respondents are male and only 15% respondents are Female.

Kanak, the only female respondent from Case studies, also agrees that women tend to write less on blogs and even those who are writing usually don't write about political matters. They just write about their personal feelings and experiences. Kanak generally writes on issues related to women rights. For her, whenever she writes about women she receives counter opinions from men.

**Table 1**

Respondents' Age by Respondent's Educational Qualification					
Respondents' Age	Respondent's Educational Qualification				Total
	Low	Medium	High	No answer	
Young	7	0	0	2	9
Young Adult	24	16	19	4	63
Middle Aged	1	10	27	2	40
No answer	0	0	2	6	8
Total	32	26	48	14	120

Table-1 shows that the majority of the respondents (63) are young adults who are in the age category of 20 to 30. Middle aged persons (aged 30 and above) have also participated in a significant number (40). The category of education is 'high' is highest among the respondents which means that those respondents are post graduated. Those who have graduated are in the category 'medium' and there number is 26. In the both categories, there are total 14 no responses.

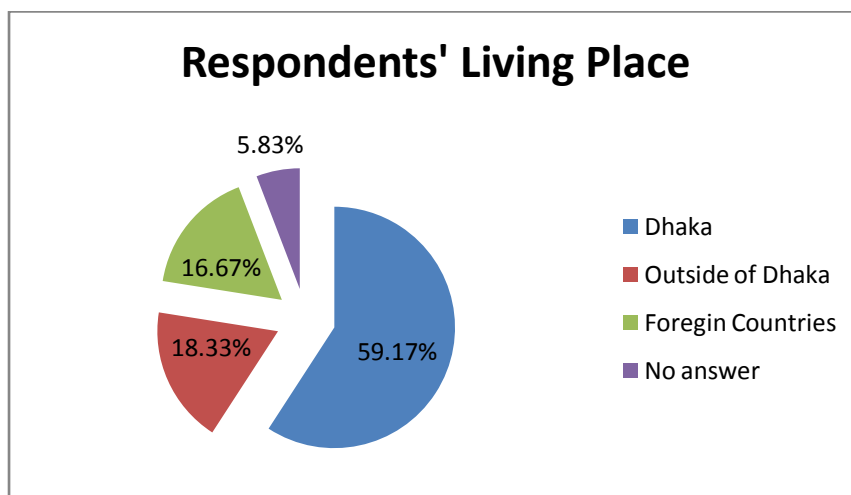
**Figure 2**

Figure 2 shows that 59.17% respondents are living in Dhaka, 18.33% respondents are in outside of Dhaka and 16.67% are living on foreign countries.

Case study respondent Shipu, who was involved in gathering blogger for different campaigns, agrees that the number of bloggers outside Dhaka is very few. With the spread of Internet, he thinks that the number of Facebook users has increased but the number of bloggers hasn't.

**Figure 3**

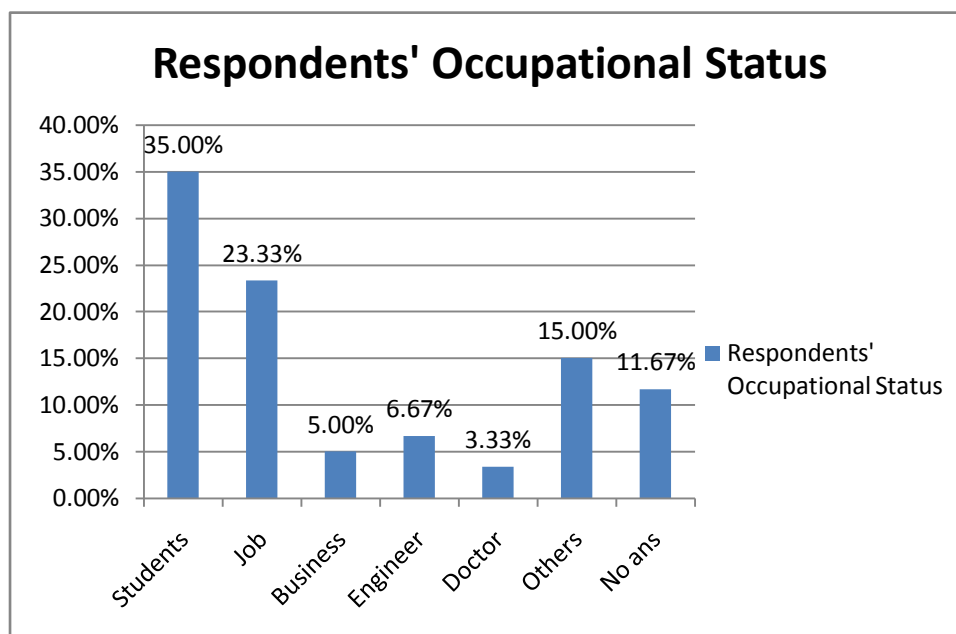
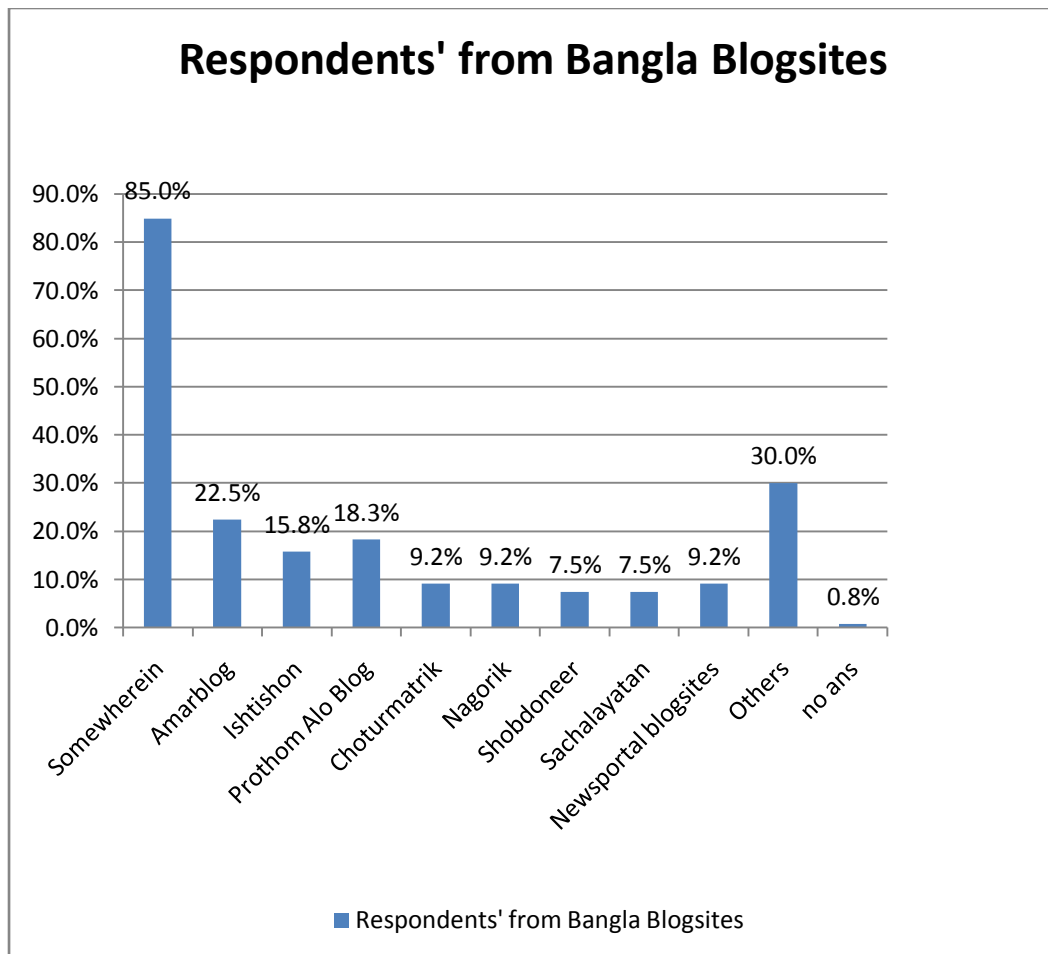


Figure 3 shows 35% respondents are students, 23.33% are in jobs and 5% are involved in business. Along with doctors (3.33%) and engineers (6.67%), there are respondents from other occupational backgrounds (15%) also.

Among the 10 respondents of case studies, 4 are students. Jitu thinks that while good writers have chances to get popular in Facebook, blog is not offering anything. As a result at one point of time people start to feel lack of motivation.

**Figure 4:**

Bloggers from 35 Bangla blogsites have participated in the survey. The figure shows that 85.0 % respondents have blogged in Somewhereinblog, 22.5% respondents have used Amarblog, 15.8% respondents have written in Ishtishon, and 18.3 % respondents have experience of writing in Prothom Alo Blog. There are small portions of bloggers from other blogsites as well such as Choturmatrik (9.2%), Nagorik (9.2%), Shobdoneer (7.5%), Sachalayatan (7.5%) and several newportal blogsites (9.2%) like bdnews24, bdtoday and bdtomorrow. 30% respondents are the bloggers of other blogsites of Bangla Blogosphere.

The respondents from case studies have also revealed their fondness toward Somewherein. For Shipu, Somewherein is the most user friendly blog although there has been a recent decrease of readers in there but still it has more readers than any other Bangla blogging platforms. For Nabi, unlike Somewherein, other blogsites run

on their own ways. He gives examples of Sachalayatan which is more literary oriented and pre-moderated while Amarblog has a political character. Nabi has observed that Somewherein has all types of readers and everything can be discussed in there.

FGD respondent Mr. Kamal says “Somewhereinblog is the post-moderation blog. Blogger’s post is immediately published and then it is moderated. But there is pre-moderate blog as well. For example, Prothom Alo Blog. You can post anything but you don’t know when they will publish it. Somewherein blog is more liberal than other blogs that is why it is most popular”.

**Figure 5:**

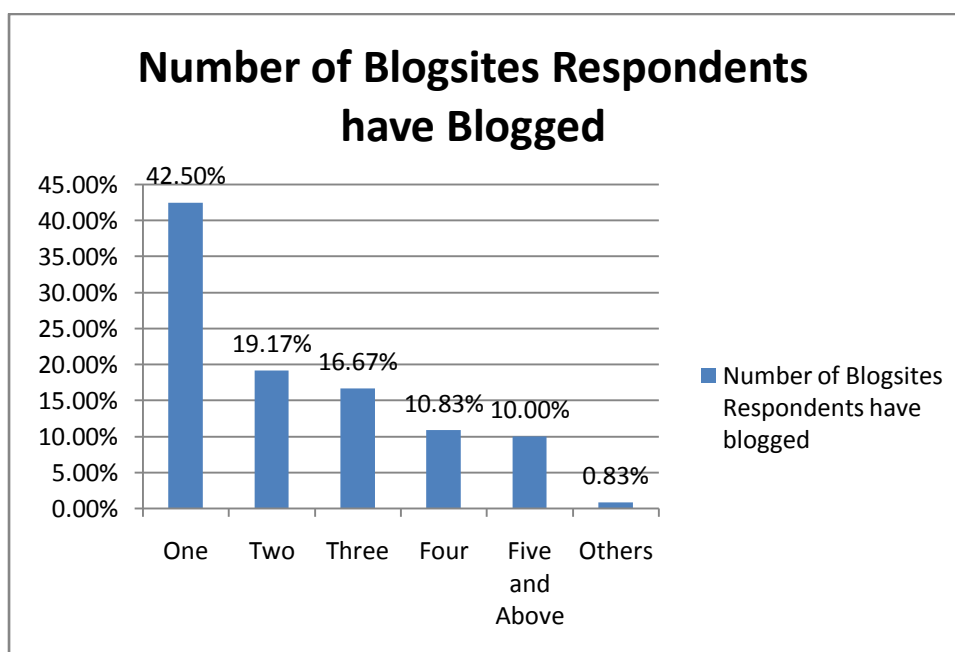
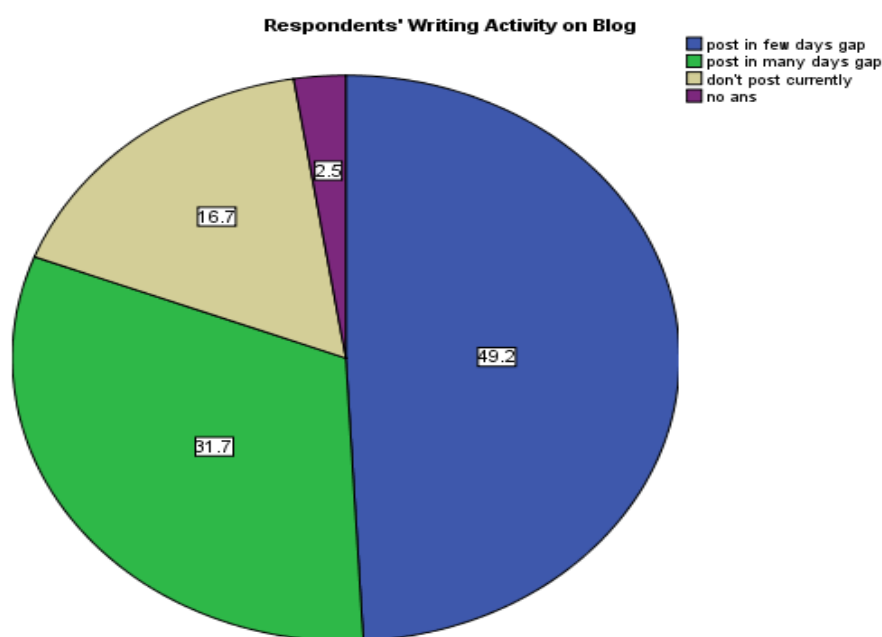


Figure 5 shows that majority of the respondents (42.50%) has written in only one blogsite. 19.17% have written in two, 16.67% have written in three and 10.83 have written in four blogsites. 10% of the respondents have experience of blogging in five and above Bangla blogsites.

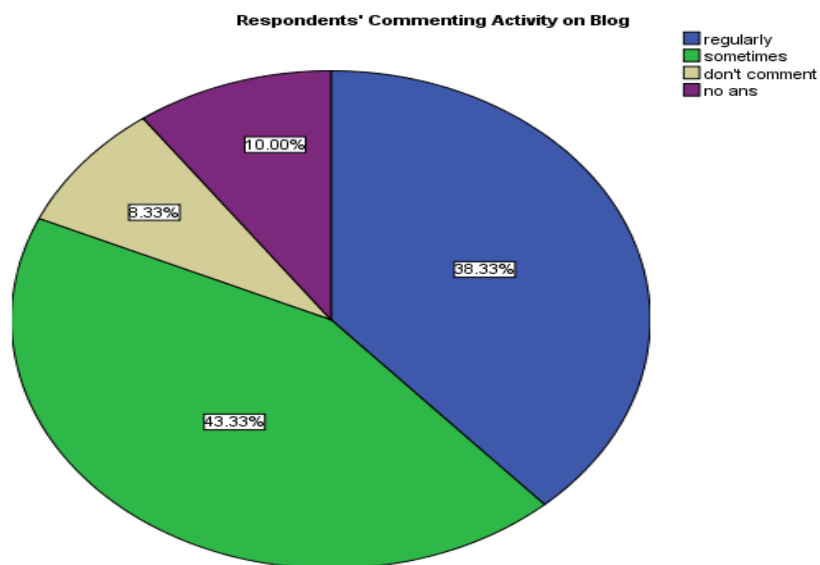
Respondents from case studies also blogged in different blogsites for different reasons. Nabi registered on Somewhereinblog in 2012 but Somewherein was taking

times to make him safe blogger so he started blogging at Prothom Alo and Nagorik blog. But after being made safe blogger, he has continued blogging in Somewherein. Kanak wrote on four blogsites. At first, she liked Amarblog but according to her, that blogsite eventually became biased for Awami League. She blogged at Choturmatrik as well but the readers there mostly expect literary writings. As she tries to write about women rights and other social issues, she is now writing at Ishtishon. Rafat Abrar tries to differentiate his blogging between two blogs by writing science based posts on Muktomona and travelling posts on Sachalayatan.

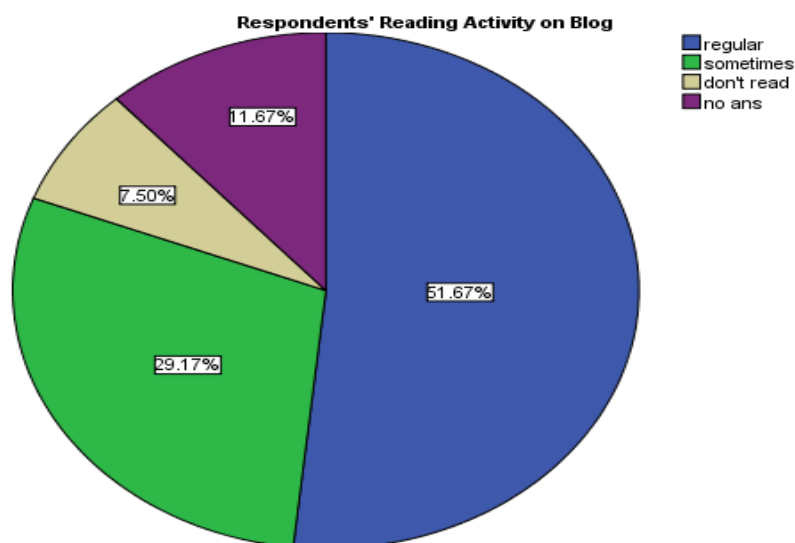
**Figure 6**



The figure shows that 49.2% of the respondents currently write new posts on their blog in few days gap. 31.7% say they write new posts in many days gap. 16.7% don't post new writings currently and 2.5% have not responded.

**Figure 7:**

The figure shows that 43.33% of the respondents are regular in commenting on other blog while 38.33% have responded that they sometimes make comments and 8.33% don't comment on other blogs. 10% have remained silent.

**Figure 8:**



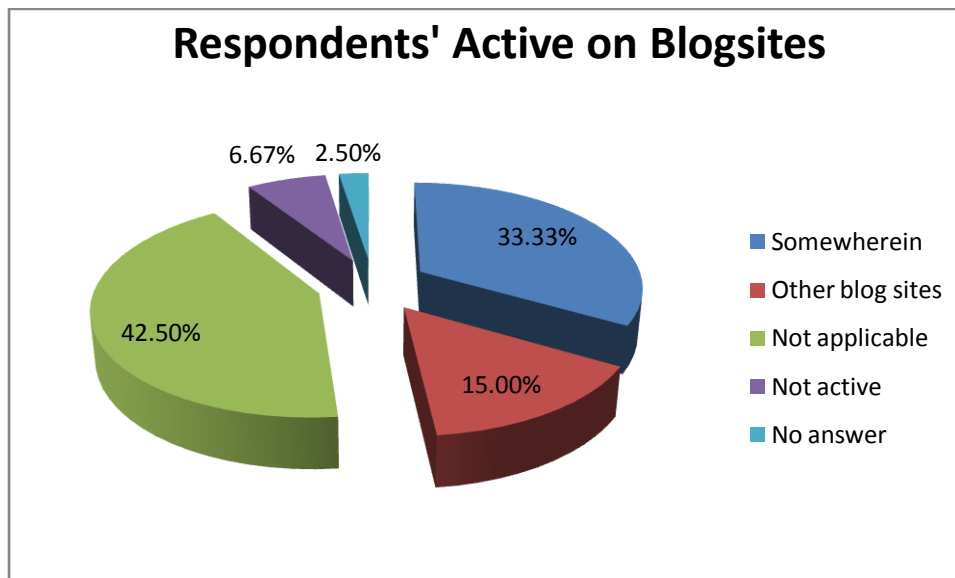
The figure shows that 51.67% of the respondents are regular in reading other blogs while 29.17% sometimes read other blogs. 7.50% don't read other blogs and 11.67% haven't responded.

**Table 2**

Respondents' Blogging Experience by Total No. of Posts on Respondents' Blog						
Total No. of Posts On Respondents' Blog	Respondents' Blogging Experience					Total
	Less than 1 year	1 year to less than 2 years	2 years to less than 3 years	3 years and above	No answer	
Less than 50	12	14	12	17	0	55
50-99	3	1	5	9	1	19
100-149	1	3	1	11	0	16
150 and above	0	1	3	21	0	25
No answer	1	0	0	2	2	5
Total	17	19	21	60	3	120

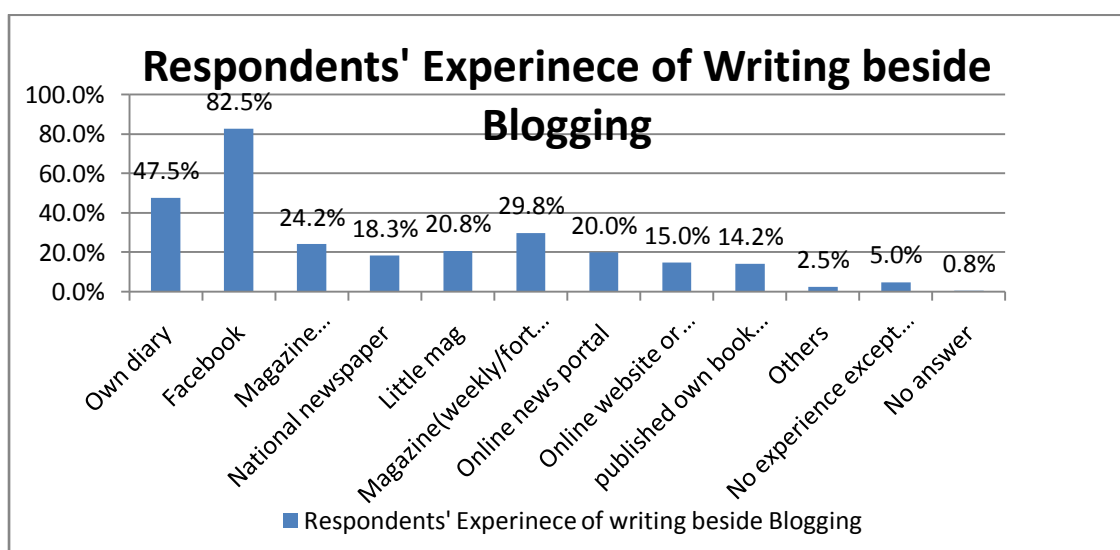
Table 2 shows that the majority (55) of the respondents have less than 50 posts on their blogs and the majority's (60) experience of blogging is 3 years and above.

Figure 9



Those who have blogged on multiple blogsites are asked to name the blogsite on which they are most active at present. 33.3% have chosen Somewhereinblog, 13.33% is active on other blogsites and 6.67% respondents says they are not active on blogging. As 42.50% respondents have blogged in one blogsite (see figure 5), the question was not applicable for them.

Figure 10



The figure shows that 47.5 % of the respondents have experience of writing on their own diary beside blogging but Facebook has the majority of the percentage (82.5%). Three types of magazines contain significant portions such as Magazine of school/college/university (24.2%), Magazine weekly/fortnightly/monthly/quarterly (29.8%), and little magazine (20.8%). 20% bloggers have experience on writing online news portals while 14.2% have experience on online websites/forums. 18.3% have published their writings on national newspapers and 14.2% have published their own books (single or joint).

The respondents of case studies have also experiences of writing on different platforms beside blogging. Komol has written two books of his own. His first book which was a collection of short stories published in the Ekushey Boi Mela of 2013 and his second book, collection of his poems, was published in the Ekushey Boimela 2014. Jitu's first book was a compilation of his writings on blog which is also published on Ekushey Boimela 2013. Jitu also heard that many bloggers have joined on online portals. Kanak has written on 'Women Chapter' which is an online portal for women. Shipu himself published a book collecting poems from other bloggers. Nabi has started his writings from his college magazine and now is writing on national newspapers. Rafat Abrar was a joint author with another blogger of a science based book. Zia Hasan is the author of "From Shahbag to Hefajote: Approver's Statement" (শাহবাগ থেকে হেফাজতঃ রাজসাক্ষীর জবাববন্দী). All of the respondents of case studies regularly write on Facebook except Wasif because they get instant comments on their writings there. The FGD respondents write on a literary magazine 'Sahitto Adda'.

**Table 3**

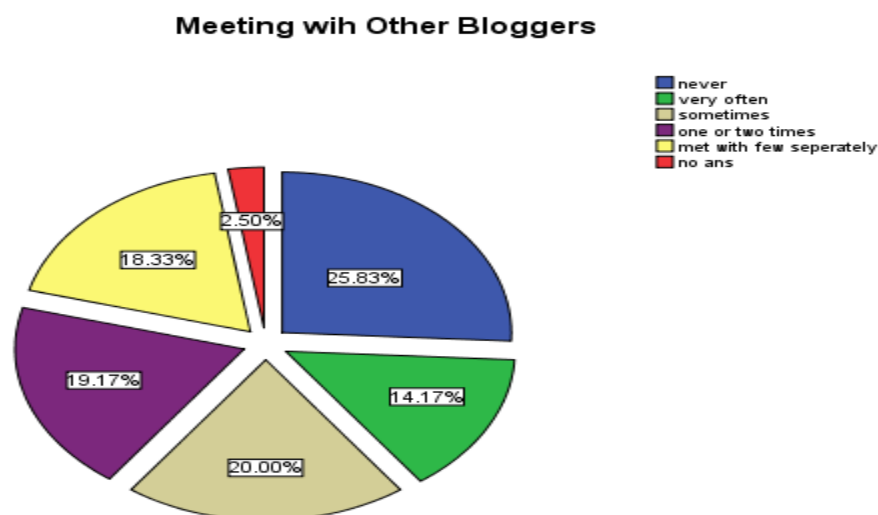
<b>Types of posts Respondents' have Written on Blog</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Literature	64.2
Funpost	40.0
Bangladesh politics	39.2
International Politics	18.3
sports	18.8
Religion	25.0
History and historical person	29.2
Liberation war and warcriminal trial	35.8
Women's right	26.7
Science and technology	26.7
law and securty	14.2
Shahbag National awakening	25.8
Travelling	24.2
Education, health and social problems	43.3
Daily experience	50.8
Entertainment	23.3
Others	20.8
No answer	0.8

Bloggers were asked which types of post they have written on their blogs. Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents is engaged in literary blogging (64.2%). 50% of the respondents have written about their daily experiences and 40% have written fun posts. 39.2% respondents written about Bangladesh politics while other matters related to politics have also significant portions such as war criminal trial (35.8%) and Shahbag national awakening (25.8%). Respondents have also written about social issues as 26.7% have noticed women's rights and gender violence on their writings while 43.8% of them have written about education, health and other social problems. Religion (25%), history (29.2%) and science and technology (26.7%) have also interested bloggers for writings.

Among the 10 respondents from case studies, Komol, Jitu, Nabi, were involved on literary blogging. Rafat thinks that people tend to write literary posts on blog because they are harmless. Musa wrote some experimental post about religion on Somewherein. He experienced that in case of religious debate, people reacted even when the post was written just with few lines. For Hasan, blog is all about special experiences.

It was the findings of FGD that in Bangladesh other media give limited chances to readers for publishing poems and stories as a result story writers and poets seek blogs to practice their literary skills. There are also some blog sites which are only for literature.

**Figure 11:**



The data from the figure says that the majority of the respondents (25.83%) have never met with other bloggers. 20% have met sometimes, 19.17% have met one or two times and 18.33% have met with few separately.

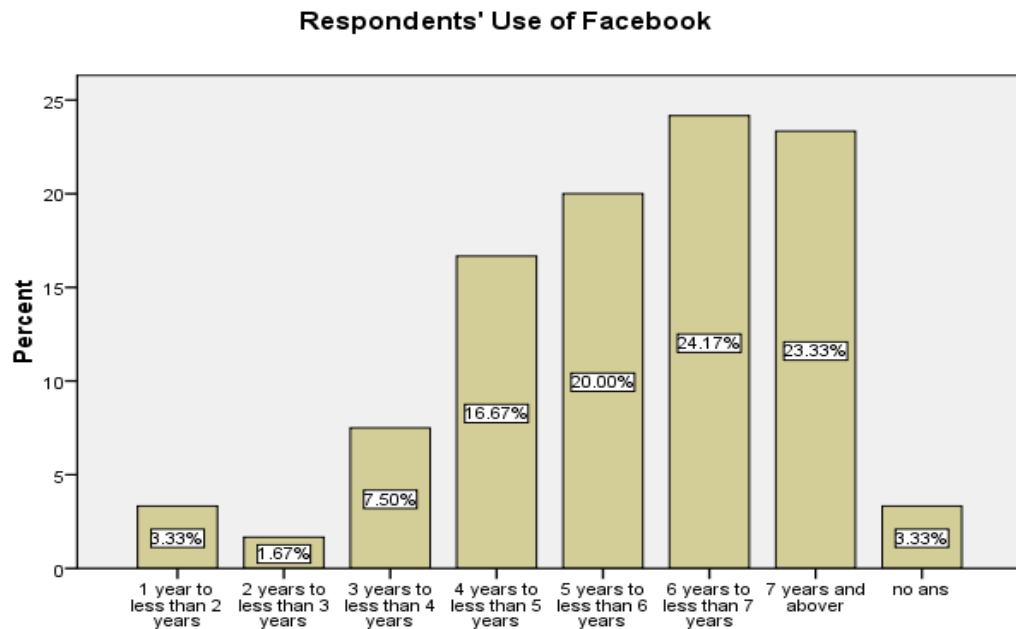
The respondents from case study also keep good contact with other bloggers. For Shipu, Ekushey Boimela is a good place for meeting with other bloggers physically.

ChobirHaat is kind of individualistic. He met there with his own circle where majority is blogger. There was a culture named Blog Adda. Bloggers used to give post offering the time and palce for the chat. Now bloggers do that at Facebook. I have almost 500 bloggers on my Facebook friend list. So I don't need to go to blog. But the base of my Facebooking is created from blog. Shipu says, "In Blog Adda, we used to have chat on serious issues but now we just make fun on our chats". For Shipu, many bloggers meet with one another during Shahbag movement. As they have made circles around them, they started to keep contact with one another and to continue their writings at Facebook.

There are bloggers who became the friend of Nabi in real life. Nabi first came to know almost 99% of them from blog and then he started to communicate with them in Facebook. Komol doesn't interact with other bloggers within blog but he keeps contact with many in Facebook and some has become friends of his personal life. Bloggers used to come to Chabir haat before Shahbag, but I started to go there after Shahbag. She met most of them at Shahbag movement and then she participated with them in other movement. For Rafat, other bloggers have become part of his friends and family.

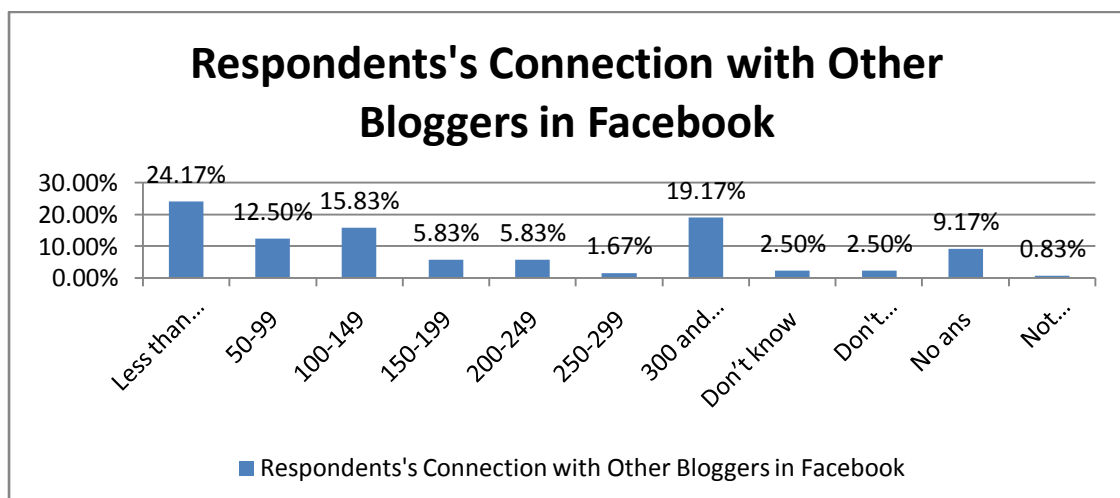
Hasan went to Chobir Haat to meet with other bloggers. He saw different circles usually come there to chat. For him, the network of Chobir Haat played crucial role in accelerating Shahbag Movement. But for him, those circles are very loosely connected.

Figure 12



The figure shows that for most of the respondents, the experience of using Facebook has crossed 4 years. According to data, 16.67% are using Facebook for 4 years to less than 5 years, 20% are using 4 years to less than 6 years, 24.17% are using for 6 years to less than 7 years and 23.33% are using for 7 years and above.

Figure 13



The respondents were asked how many bloggers they have in their Facebook friend list and following list. The majority (24.17%) of the respondents has less than 50 but the second majority has 300 and above.

Shipu has almost 500 bloggers on his Facebook friend list. So he doesn't need to go to blog. But the base of his Facebooking is created from blog. Nabi came to know about many bloggers from blog and then he started to communicate them through Facebook. Many bloggers have sent friend request to Komol at Facebook.

**Table 5**  
**Comparison between blog and Facebook**

<b>The Statements</b>	<b>percentage</b>
	Agree
Facebook gets quicker and excessive reactions than blog	58.3%
Facebook is more entertaining than blog	39.2%
Leaving blog or reducing blogging, many bloggers are writing at Facebook	59.2%
Blog gives more opportunities to extensively write about any matter than Facebook	72.5%
Blog gives more scope for constructive discussion between reader and writer than Facebook	71.7%
No answer	10.0%

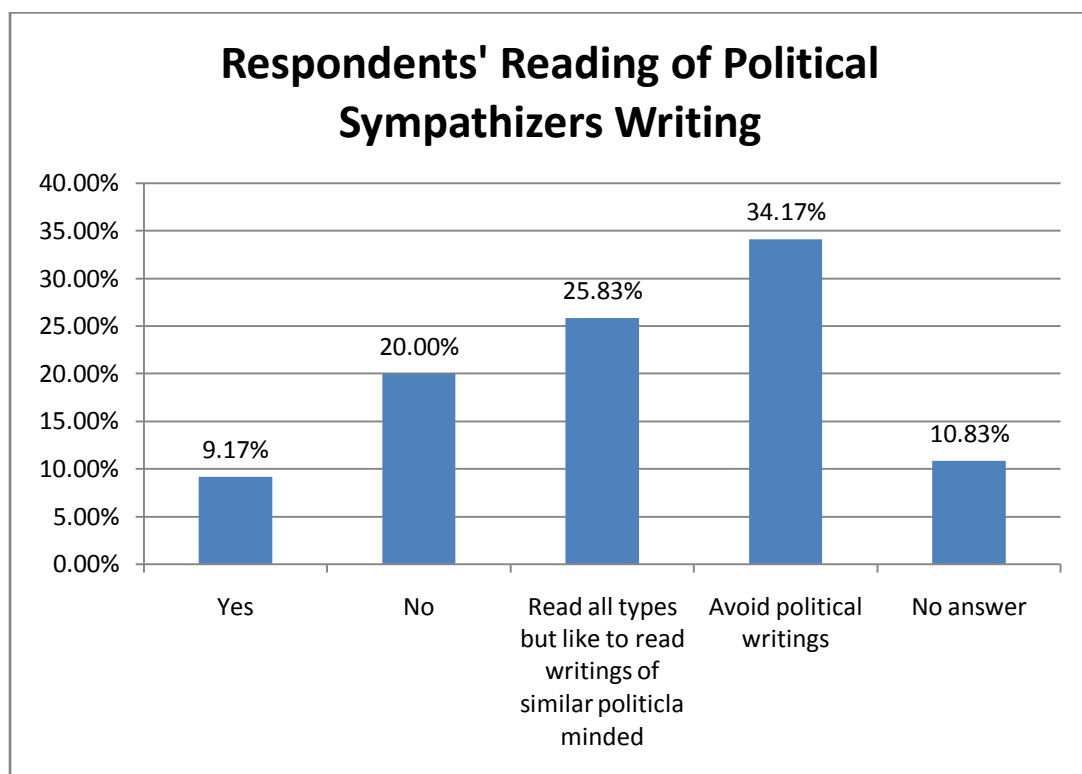
The respondents were given 5 comparing statements between blog and Facebook and asked to click those on which they agree. The majority has clicked the statements those favor the blog over Facebook. 72.5% respondents agree that blog gives more opportunities to extensively write about any matter than Facebook and 71.7% respondents agree that Blog gives more scope for constructive discussion between reader and writer than Facebook, 58.3% favors Facebook over blog as they agree



about getting quicker and excessive reactions on Facebook than blog but 59.2% also thinks that leaving blog or reducing blogging, many bloggers are writing at Facebook.

There are varied explanations comparing blog and Facebook from the case studies respondents. For Kanak blog is better for detailed discussion. Zaman only goes to blog when he wants to read expended opinions. Wasif thinks that m,any bloggers left blogging after Shahbag and now writing on Facebook, because Facebook has created a celebrity culture. Partho and Rafat have also pointed to the same thing. But for Komol such tendency emerged before Shahbag. Jitu prefers Facebook as easiest way to express opinions. Hasan feels that it is the poor design of Somewherein and other Bangla blogsites for which good writings get lost so quickly.

**Figure 14**



Respondents were asked whether they read more writings of their political fellows. Only 9.17% has responded yes and 20% says no but 25.83% says they read all types

of writings but they like to read writings of their political fellows. The majority (34.75) says that they avoid political writings.

Among the respondents from case studies, Rafat emphasizes the fact the he like to write at Sachalayatan because other bloggers he sees there possess similar political mentality that he does.

**Table 6**

Opinions on Online Issues	Percentage
Recent performance of Bangladesh cricket team	45.0
Ban of cricketer Shakib	43.3
Foreign Flags in the gallery of Asia cup and T20 world cup	30.0
T20 theme song and flash mob	25.0
world cup football	50.0
Gunday movie	32.5
Musa Ibrahim's Everest victory and Bangla channel crossing	20.0
Pakhi dress	35.0
Model Naila Naeem	10.8
Tista water sharing agreement	28.3
War criminal trial	60.8
7 murders at Narayanganj	26.7
Arrangement of national anthem	29.2
Crashing Chobir haat	22.5
Withdrawal of Avijit Roy's book from Rokomari.com	5.8
Movement of Toba garments workers	20.0
HSC question paper leak	41.7
Rescuing Tibbat hall	6.7
Student's suspension from Northern University	4.2
Attack on tribal, Biharis and religious minorities	34.2
ICT act	34.2
Election of India	14.2
Israel's attack on Gaza	55.0
No answer	9.2

Respondents were given 23 issues of online from February to July and asked to click those on which they have given any opinions on online. War criminal trial has the highest click (60.8%), and the second highest is Israel's attack on Gaza. World Cup Football (50%) and HSC question paper leak (41.7) have also gained attention of the respondents. Having 34.2% click on each, attack on tribal, Biharis and religious minorities and ICT act are two other important issues as chosen by the respondents.

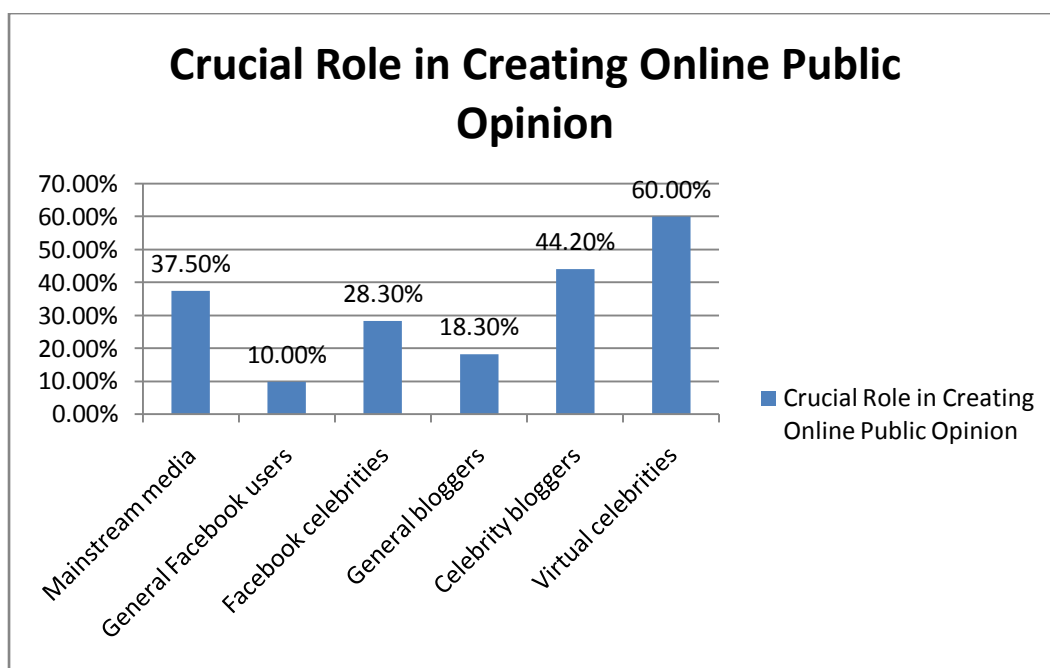
For Shipu, sports related issues seek attentions to the users of social media. He also adds that bloggers have taken issue against Jamaat from the very beginning of Bangla blog. Abrar thinks that the issue of Rokomari.com with Avijit Roy was not focused to any mainstream media because of their business purpose. Kanak went to Toba garments to take part in their movement and got beaten by police. She also participated on human chain demanding the release of two bloggers who were arrested by police in ICT act and human chain against Israel's attack on Gaza. Hasan thought that the protest against HSC exam question paper leak would gather crowd because of the involvement of Professor Zafar Iqbal but it couldn't.

**Table 7**

Respondents' Tendency of Giving Opinions about Online Issues	Respondents' Spending Time between Blog and Facebook				Total
	Facebook	Blog	Equally on both	No answer	
More on Facebook less on blog	40	4	0	0	44
More on blog less on Facebook	7	20	0	1	28
Only on Facebook	9	0	0	1	10
Only on blog	1	7	0	0	8
Equally on blog & Facebook	8	7	3	1	19
Don't give opinion	3	1	0	1	5
Give less opinion	2	2	2	0	6
Total	70	41	5	4	120

Table 7 shows that 44 respondents give opinions more on Facebook less on blog while 28 respondents give opinions more on blog and less on Facebook. 70 respondents spend more time on Facebook and in case of blog, the number is 41.

**Figure 15**

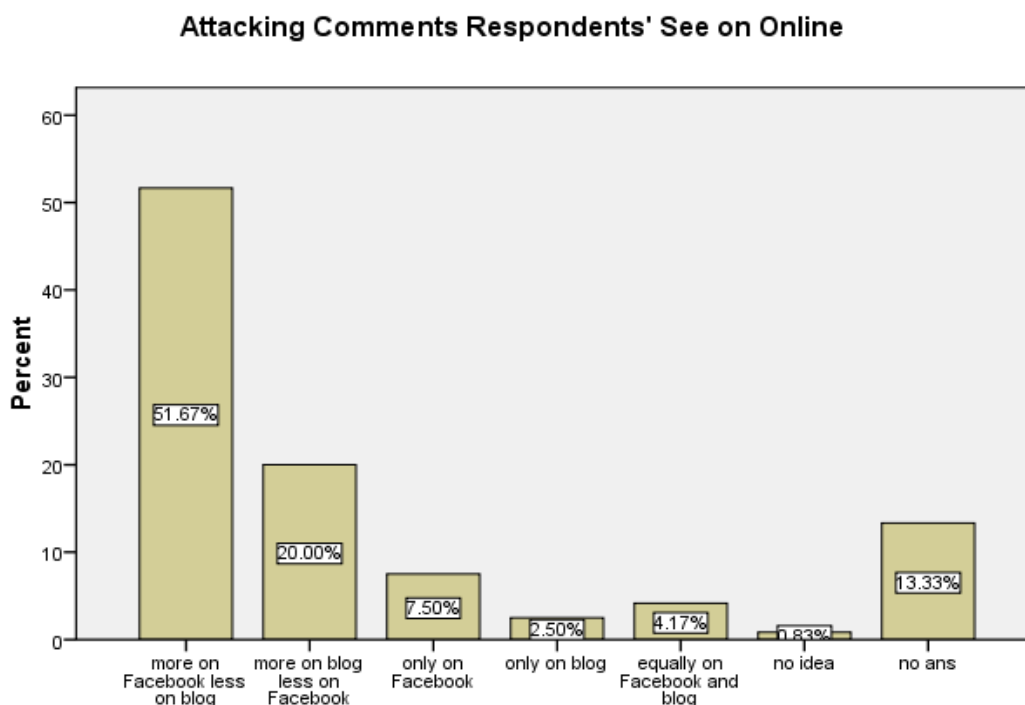


60% respondents think that virtual celebrities those who have plenty of readers on both Facebook and blog play the crucial role for creating online public opinion. For 44.2%, it is the celebrity bloggers whose role is most important. 37.5% refers to mainstream media for the role in online public opinion.

For Kanak people tend to give opinion on those issues which are the top news on mainstream media. Wasif and Zaman have said that in past, any news used to come to blog at first but now they come to news portals. For Wasif, news portals like Prothom Alo is now creating debates on online. Nabi credits blog for stil having issues but he emphasizes Facebook where he sees stir. Abrar doesn't credit mass media rather he thinks that issues from social media fit to the mainstream media. Hasan thinks that

news cycles in these days are built-i-short and Facebook is echoing the mainstream media.

**Figure 16**

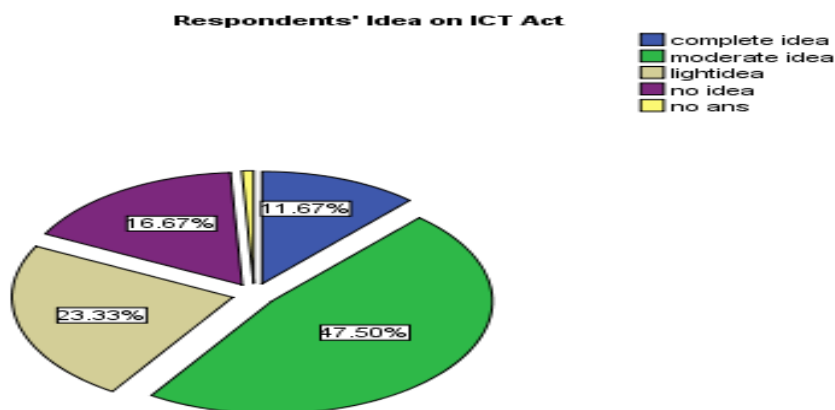


The figure shows that 51.67% respondents have seen attacking comments more on Facebook and less on blog while only 20% respondents see that more on blog and less on Facebook.

Among the respondents of case studies, Kanak has received hatred speech both in Facebook and in blog while Wasif himself posted a vulgar picture while arguing with other blogger at Somewherein which cost him 3 days ban by moderation. But for him he was experienced group attack by syndicate of Choturmatrik. For Shipu, pro jamaat activists cloeed his Facebook profile by mass reporting while he got tagged of all types in blog. Komol thinks that, the attacking comments of Facebook are kind of individualistic while in blog, attack tends to be group based.

For FGD respondents, the culture of hatred speeches started on Somewherein before the installment of moderation. After moderation hatred speeches have reduced.

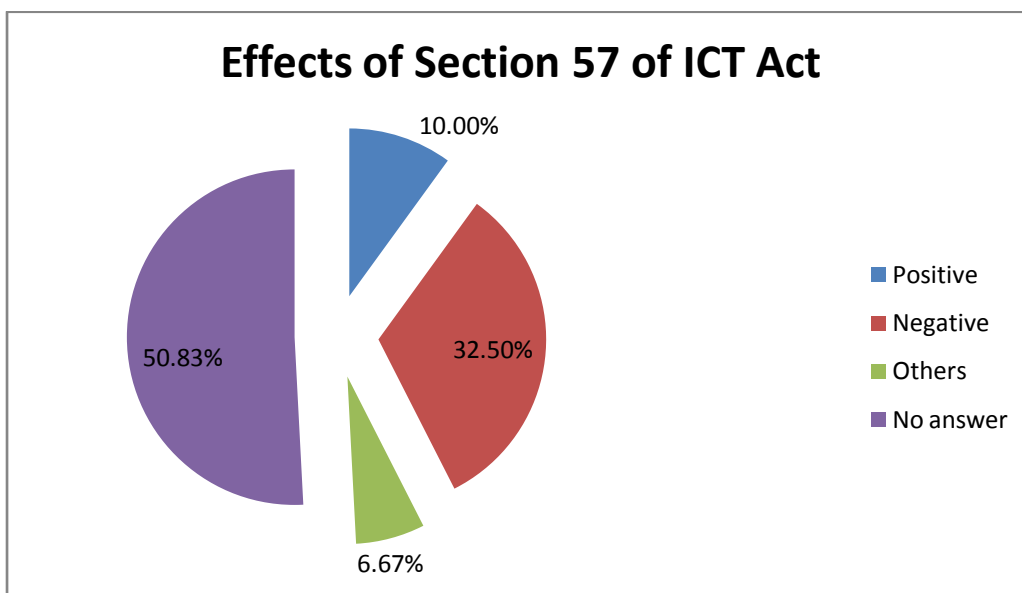
**Figure 17**



The figure shows that 47.50% respondents have moderate idea, 23.3% respondents have light idea and 16.67% respondents have no idea on ICT act. Only 11.67% has complete idea.

Among the respondents of case studies, Komol and Shipu are not that much aware of ICT act. For Nabi, it is now a dead act. But others possess strong knowledge on this act.

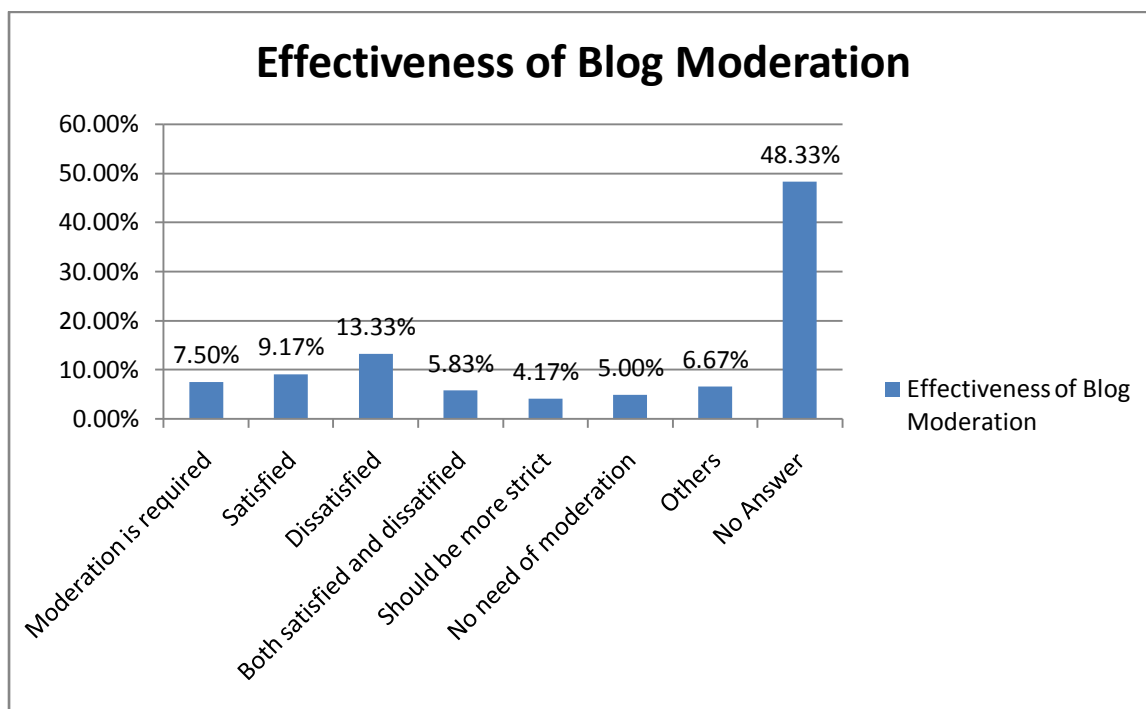
Figure 18



50.83% respondents did not answer the question while 32.50% respondents have given negative comments about the 57 section of ICT Act. Their comments include different views such as the law is biased and obstructive to freedom of expression, the application of law totally depends on government and for some, such type of law will encourage religious fundamentalism in the country. Only 10% respondents have given positive feedback for the act.

Among the respondents of case studies, there are varying answers as well. Hasan needs to think before writing anything political about ruling party. Kanak, Zaman, Wasif, all think that section 57 should be defined. Shipu and Jitu think that some restrictions are required.

Figure 19



The figure shows that 48.33% respondents did not answer the question while the others are settled in varying categories as the question was open ended. 13.33% respondents are dissatisfied with the moderation and 9.17% are satisfied. 5.83% are both satisfied and dissatisfied which mean that they have satisfactory experiences in one blogsite while dissatisfactory experiences in another.

Among case study respondents, for Shipu, moderation is like something pressing kind. Kanak thinks that there are still hate speeches within the blog which should be moderated. Hasan thinks that moderation of Somewherein is typical liberal minded and they are sometimes biased in promoting other posts.

It was the finding of FGD that moderation is capable nto reduces hate speeches in blog.



The findings were shown detect that bloggers of different type think differently about the condition of blogosphere although they posses certain similarities in their experiences.

## Chapter Seven: Discussion

This chapter aims to trace the connection between the findings and theoretical background. The discussion for finding the connection between the two will not just answer some significant questions but also raise further new questions.

### 6.1 Characteristics of the Space

Through bloggers, we have already connected Facebook and Bangla blogosphere in an online space where both Facebook and blog might be considered as separate tools but they both carries similar participants. The question can be raised do they have the potentiality to carry similar issues for the culture of online public opinion? The characteristic of the space are as following:

**a) Status Role:** The online space in social media linked to Bangla Blogosphere and Facebook has created status roles which has no existence in the Habermasian idea of public sphere. As a result both Facebook and blog lost their claim for public sphere. Blog has lost it when they had introduced strict moderation although they did not have any option. But Facebook giving their participants more freedom with advance feature, still running without any humanly moderation although there are report and block option of Facebook. That is why respondents of case study praised Facebook but one of them also concerned about the celebrity culture as for him celebrity bloggers sometimes intentionally make debate just for getting likes.

60% respondents from survey think that the most crucial part is played by virtual celebrities for online public opinion. The virtual celebrities were defined in the questionnaire as those who have many followers and readers on both blog and Facebook. The survey data show that bloggers were given importance as celebrity bloggers hold the

second position with 44.2% for their role in public opinion. What is crucial among the crucial role is 37.5% respondents give credit to mainstream media. Blog was considered to be different than mainstream media as 42% respondents of Shajahan's study (2013) was unwilling to compare between blog and mainstream media. But as one respondent of case study sees, that mainstream media is throwing issues while virtual celebrities play their part to share those. Thus the potentiality of generating online public opinion develops.

**b) Immaturity:** Chowdhury predicted an immature blogosphere. In fact it is still immature now. The case study respondents were old bloggers who are now mostly writing at Facebook. 3 of them have published their books and one is writing at National newspaper. Survey results also show that bloggers are writing other sources including national newspaper, magazines, little mag etc. As one respondent of case study said, at one part of time it is not unusual if one experiences crisis of motivator for blogging. Again, many bloggers are switching blog sites or permanently leaving blog sites, while new participants are coming. As a result, the public we are tracing is not kind of motivational public as it was in Habermasian bourgeois public sphere rather bloggers of Bangla blogosphere is kind of an episodic public. Habermas (2006) has called bloggers as issue public but this fits more with participants of Facebook.

**c) Change and No Change:** As respondents of case studies responded that Facebook as a part of social media is offering changes through newly updated features while blogosphere has remained static although its participants also have changed. Both Shajahan's (2013) and Haq's (2011) study has shown the dominance of literary writings of Bangla blog sites. In this study 64.2% respondents have written literature on their blogs. Therefore while blogging is considered as platform for citizen journalism democratizing the voices of people worldwide, Bangla blogging from its beginning has remained a platform for literary writings. It was the findings of FGD that because of not having good platform for literary practices of mainstream media, young writers specially

students choose blogging to practice their literary skills. As one of case study respondent feels that there is no such genuine platform of citizen journalism Bangladeshi internet users. As a result public opinion in Bangladesh doesn't have any diversity. Demonstration of Public opinion is still meant to be forming a human chain or arranging a discussion or meeting to show the concern and to demand any action. The bourgeois public sphere about which Habermas (1989) described also had a literary image at the beginning. But unlike French saloons and German table societies, British coffeehouses has transformed to a radical nature. There are two respondents in case studies who started blogging for literary purpose but they have turned into bloggers writing for public concern. But both of them have changed their writings at the beginning of blogging while those who stayed as literary writers still writing stories and poems. But that doesn't mean that bloggers are not giving opinion on public matters. Because of the changes in Facebook, like the follow option and event option, bloggers get the chance to contribute on public opinion with the broader online community which is not fragmented but can be considered as polarized because of the political polarization of Bangladesh. Facebook has the capacity to receive feeds both from its users and mainstream media. As a result it is creating the culture of online public opinion which exact blog did from its beginning period to 2012 when the Facebook has not been changed.

**d) Relation with Mainstream Media:** Bangle blog is similar to newspapers as moderator is playing the role of editor. Blog provides freedom offering extended opinions but the promotion lies at the hand of moderators. Facebook has the inner mechanism to promote one's opinion through share option but as pointed by case studies respondents opinions from Facebook are mostly about immediate reactions. As a result issues generated from mainstream media feeds the Facebook.

**e) Agonism and Antagonism:** Mouffe's (2005) prescription was to think rivalries as colleagues for creating an agonistic public space instead of antagonistic public space. After the breakage of so many pieces, each homogenous group has found blog sites of

their own. While Somewherein has still remained the breeding ground of all type of bloggers. The specialization of blog sites has created agonism among each blogsite having bloggers of similar thinking. As one responded has stated that blog sites like Sachalayatan and Muktomona have bloggers who think almost similarly. While Facebook is now antagonistic in nature. These new blog sites have created agonism among them. 51.67% respondents see attacking comments more on Facebook less on blog while 36.67% respondents put opinion about online issues more Facebook less on blog. The case study respondents have received attacking comments when they have given opinions on political matters. Therefore, as an antagonistic public space, while participants tend to receive hatred speech at the same time they also get the opportunity to make a point on the opposite opinion seekers.

**f) Male Dominated:** 85% respondents are male while only 15% are female. Even on the previous study, 87% respondents were male and only 13% were female. Women mostly remain silent in virtual world like the actual world.

**g) Influence of Dhaka:** 59% respondents of the survey of this study are living in Dhaka. The previous study of Shajahan also gathered 60% respondents from Dhaka. The internet users of Dhaka were the rudimentary users of broadband, 2g and 3g. As a result, they are enabled to try the extended tool like blog. Again, the educational institutions of Dhaka (especially universities) and restaurants of Dhaka are also offering wifi zones. As a result students are increasingly using Facebook and blog. 35% respondents of the study are students.

**h) Connection with Actual Public Space:** The networks of bloggers although are now circle based, but they have the connection with actual public space. Ekushey Boimela is the yearly meeting ground among bloggers while Chobir Haat is the place for circle based meetings.

These characteristics are important to understand the nature of online public opinion in relation to the social media.

## **6.2 The Nature of Online Public Opinion**

The comparison between blog and Facebook for identifying the characteristics of online space we are discussing about would be helpful for drawing the nature of online public opinion.

**1. Fast and Forgetting:** 58.3% respondents from the survey have said that Facebook provides quicker and excessive reactions. As one respondent from case study has said that when the issue like Rampal came to social media, everybody showed their patriotism claiming that Rampal power plant would be harmful for Sunderban. But now all have forgotten it. The quicker the opinion, the faster the public opinion generates and the sooner it gets forgotten. Shamim (2012) wrote about the velocity of blog for which many bloggers could not gain attention. But because of the velocity of Facebook, blog has lost its attention. As a result, immediate reactions are more seen by the users.

**2. More Immediate and Less Detailed:** The increase of immediacy of the opinions through Facebook has lessened the detail appeal of blog. As a result, in social media, we are having expression without deliberation.

**3. Old Ones with New look:** The major public opinion being accelerated by social media has not generated from new issues. 60.8% respondents have given opinion on war criminal issues and 55% respondents have given opinion on Israel's attack on Gaza. The public opinion had generated long before among these issues. The running issue like HSC question paper (leak 41.7), and attack on tribal, Biharis and religious minorities (34.2%) had also drawn blogger attention but as the fast interchange of issues within social media,

the opinion leaders get very less time to extend their writings for generating public opinion on any issue. There were sports related issues like performance of Bangladesh cricket and ban of Shakib where there was sort of public opinion but attention sports also an older phenomenon.

**4. Latent:** The way public opinion reflects on online, it doesn't reflect in actual society. Except for few blogger and online activists, others do not come to any demonstration related to new issues. Thus online public opinion remains latent. As one respondent from case study sees that public opinion in Bangladesh doesn't have any diversity.

**5. Political and Non Political Issue:** For its generation, culture of online public opinion doesn't necessarily need any political issue. Rather it could be generated in non-political issue like sports related issue. What it requires anything popular whether political or non political. It has the potentiality to mix political into non political as it was observed in the case of Gunday movie. Again, the more the popular the issues tend to be focused, the greater the chances are made for the culture of public opinion to be diverted into the culture of non public opinion or mere opinion as depicted by Habermas. 35% responses on Pakhi Dress which is more than important issue like Teesta water sharing (28.3) claim that the process of transforming public opinion into non public opinion has already started.

**6. Fragmentary:** As it is seen in diagram 7.1, both the immediate reactions from Facebook and the extended opinion of blog is creating the culture of online public opinion although according to the recent trend Facebook has the major contributions. Because of moderation, hatred speeches are reduced in blogging but have increased in Facebook. As the Facebook is offering to its users option like 'block' and 'remove', the online community is not breaking as it did in case of blog community. But in Facebook, a number of different clusters are created which accelerated the further polarization of Facebook. As a result, public opinion gets fragmented.





### 6.3 Aspects of Control

It is because of the control the culture of online public opinion gets fragmented. The control come from the blog moderation resulting breakage of blog community and the hatred speeches from Facebook which existed at blog before moderation resulting a manufactured polarization, the polarization which is more extreme than the political polarization of actual society. Because of the increased hatred speeches on the one hand and lack of specialized opinion on the other, bloggers cannot be considered to include with civil society. Again the 57 section of ICT act has created a fear of environment on the online space. But because of the heavy hate speech, many feel that there should be some restrictions. Such feelings unintentionally have created consent among them not say anything about ICT act. As a result, even when some teenage bloggers were arrested, there was not that much of reactions.

For FGD respondents and one respondent from case study, the ill defined 57 section of ICT act does not have that much of effect but other respondents also emphasized that the use of 57 sections is seemed to be political. 32.50% respondents from the survey have responded negatively about the 57 section while 50.83% responded have remained silent. It could be assumed that the use of 57 section of ICT act has created a silent selectivity among writers who write about political matters. As a result they have managed themselves into a self-censorship. On the other hand, those who are involved in literary writings have not experienced that self-censorship.

Therefore, this can be a good argument to draw from this study that whether it is the fragmenatory nature of online public opinion which causing the deliberative democracy, prescribed by Habermas for public sphere, problematic.

## Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the process of formation and fragmentation of online public opinion in social media. For that purpose, the study has drawn the characteristics of the online space where both Bangla blogosphere and Facebook coincides as the two different tool of social media.

The culture of online public opinion is the product of cyber culture which has its root in information age of Capitalist Networked economy. In Bangladesh, capitalism still has not appeared its fullest form. Social media is gathering the opinions of middle class educated individuals who have differences in the personal identity but they share a common collective middle class identity. Their identity has been challenged by the globalization through which popular culture is being manifested at Social media and thus the online space is experiencing increased amount of popular and individualistic opinions. In case of the culture of online public opinion, the polarized politics of Bangladesh and selective role of mainstream media have penetrated the aspects of control in social media. Thus online space promoting only those issues related to Bangladesh which can produce only public opinion of control.

Starting from the Arab spring to the emerge of Shahbag uprising, social media played a crucial role for creating a public opinion but because of the division and the polarization which social media inherited from the society, the goal of any type of public opinion generated within social media is fragmentation.

### Recommendations

The aim of the study is to contribute in the cybercultural studies of Bangla blogosphere. For the further researchers of cyber-cultural studies, this study proposes following recommendations:

1. Gender issue related to Bangla blogosphere has not been addressed in any of the studies in the area. Further researchers need to ask question why women are less participating to the public opinion culture in online space.
2. There exist a demographic fragmentation on the blog sites. People of different ages with different occupational and educational background have engaged into blogging. The question can be asked whether this demographic fragmentation has leaded the fragmentation of online public opinion.
3. There is no accessible and reliable statistics related to Bangla blogosphere. Although Alexa ranking suggests that the traffic rate of Bangla blogosphere is decreasing, but still the no. of registered bloggers are increasing. It could be a problem for public opinion generation when so many people are interaction in a specific space even if the that space is online space. As Rheingold (10996) predicted that the more the population will be, the grater the chancer for online public sphere to get cut out from democratic roots. But having so many population across worldwide, the participation of Facebook is increasing day by day because of the advanced features it is offering. The argument could be drawn whether or not population matters in cyberspace.

Again, recommendation can also be placed to the authorities of Bangla blogsites regarding the designs of their website which are still lacking the features of web 2.0. So those who are in the charge of the Bangla blog sites, have to think the ways to offer advanced features for the participants.

The government has enacted the section 57 of ICT act which is still ill defined. The proper definition of the section not only could rule out the political image of ICT act but also it could contribute for the creation of a vibrant democracy in online space.

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## Appendix-I: Questionnaire

1. Write down the Bangla Blogsites on which you have blogged: (Multiple answers possible)

Name of the blogsites	Code: Yes=1, No=2	
Somewherein	Yes	No
Amarblog	Yes	No
Ishtishon	Yes	No
Prothom Alo Blog	Yes	No
Choturmatik	Yes	No
Nagorik	Yes	No
Shobdoneer	Yes	No
Sachalayatan	Yes	No
Others	Yes	No

2. Click in the following options which correspond to your present activity in blog

2.1 Writing in blog

	Code
Post new writings on blog in few days gap	1
Post new writings on blog in many days gap	2
Don't post any writings on the blog currently	3

2.2 Commenting in other bloggers post

	Code
Regularly comment in other bloggers' post	1
Sometimes comment in other bloggers' post	2
Don't comment in other blogger's post	3

2.3 Reading in other bloggers

	Code
Regularly read other bloggers' post	1
Sometimes read other bloggers' post	2
Don't read other blogger's post	3

3. If you have blogged in multiple blogsites, as a blogger in which blog site now you are most active in visiting, posting and commenting? (Only for those who have blogged in multiple blog sites)

4. How many days it has been that you have opened ID in the blog?

5. The number of posts in your blog (Open ended)

6. Beside blogging, where else you have experience in writing? (Multiple answers possible)

	Code: Yes=1, No=2	
Own diary	Yes	No
Facebook	Yes	No
Magazines or school/college/university	Yes	No
National newspaper	Yes	No
Little Magazine	Yes	No
Weakly/ fortnightly/monthly/quarterly magazine	Yes	No
Online news portal	Yes	No
Online website or forum	Yes	No
Published own book (single or combined publishing)	Yes	No
No experience except blogging	Yes	No

7. Click those subjects about which you have written blogs (Multiple answer possible)

	Code: Yes=1, No=2	
Literature	Yes	No
Funpost	Yes	No
Bangladesh politics	Yes	No
International politics	Yes	No
Cricket	Yes	No
Football	Yes	No
Religion	Yes	No
History and historical person	Yes	No
Liberation war and war criminal trial	Yes	No
Womne's right and gender violence	Yes	No
Science and tech	Yes	No
Travelling	Yes	No
State's law enforcement and security system	Yes	No
Request to help someone	Yes	No
Copy paste post from other sources	Yes	No

8. Have you ever directly met with other bloggers?

	Code
Never	1
Very often	2
Sometimes	3
One or two times	4
Separately have met with few	5

9. For how many days you are using Facebook?

	Code
Less than 1 year	1
1 year or more	2
2 years or more	3
3 years or more	4
4 years or more	5
5 years or more	6
6 years or more	7
7 years or more	8

10. How many bloggers do you have in the friend list and the following list of your Facebook?

	Code
No one	1
less than 10	2
10-49	3
50-99	4
100-199	5
200-299	6
300-399	7
400-499	8
500 or more	9
1000 or more	10

11. In below, there are some statements comparing blog and Facebook. Click on those you agree with.

	Code, clicked=1, unclicked=2	
In any issue, Facebook provides quick and excessive reactions than blog	1	2
Facebook is more entertaining than blog	1	2
Reducing or stopping blogging, many writers are now writing in Facebook	1	2
Blog provides more opportunity to extensively write about any matter than Facebook	1	2
Blog provides more scope in constructive discussion between reader and writer than Facebook	1	2

12. Between blog and Facebook, where do you spend time most?

Facebook=1

Blog=2

13. In online, do you read more writings of political sympathizers

	Code
Yes	1
No	2
Read all types of writing but like to read writings of same political minded with me	3
Avoid political writings	4

14. In below, a number of issues of online from February to July is given. Click on those on which you have given or still giving opinion on side or off side.

	Yes	No
1. The recent performance of Bangladesh cricket team	Yes	No
2. Cricketer's Shakib Al Hasan's ban for his controversial behavior	Yes	No
3. Carrying foreign flags by Bangladeshis in the gallery of Asia cup and T20 world cup	Yes	No
4. T20 World Cup's theme song and flash mob	Yes	No
5. World Cup Football	Yes	No
6. Manipulation of Bangladesh's History in	Yes	No

Bollywood movie Gunday		
7. Controversy on Musa Ibrahim's Everest Victory and Bangla Channel crossing	Yes	No
8. Pakhi Dress	Yes	No
9. Model Naila Naeem	Yes	No
10. Tista Water Sharing Agreement	Yes	No
11. War criminal trial	Yes	No
12. 7 murder'	Yes	No
13. Arrangement of national anthem (লাথো কৰে জাতীয় সঙ্গীত )	Yes	No
14. Crashing Chobir Haat	Yes	No
15. Withdrawal of Avijit Roy's Book from Rokomari.com	Yes	No
16. Movemnet of Toba Garmen's worker for payments and bonus	Yes	No
17. Question paper leak of HSC exam	Yes	No
18. Rescuing Tibbat hall of Jagannath University	Yes	No
19. Student's suspension of Northern University	Yes	No
20. Attack on tribals, Bihari and religious minorities	Yes	No
21. ICT ACT	Yes	No
22. Election of India	Yes	No
23. Israel's attack on Gaza	Yes	No

15. Between Blog and Facebook, where do you put more opinions about online issues?

	Code
1. More on Facebook less in Blog	1
2. More on Blog less in Facebook	2
3. Only on Facebook	3
4. Only on Blog	4
5. Equally in Blog and Facebook	5
6. Doesn't give opinion on issues	6

16. Whose role is more important in making public opinion on online?

	Code	
1. Mainstream media (Prothom Alo, BD news, Bangla News, Kaler Kontho etc)	Yes	No
2. Those who write on Facebook (General Facebook users)	Yes	No
3. Those who write on Facebook and have plenty of friends and followers (Facebook celebrity)	Yes	No
4. Those who write on Blog (General Blogger)	Yes	No
5. Those who write on Blog and have plenty of	Yes	No

writers on Blog (celebrity blogger)		
6. Those who write on both Blog and Facebook and have plenty of readers on both	Yes	No

17. Where on online you see more attacking comments (i.e Tagging, abusive words, disgraceful comments, threat etc)

	Code
1. More on Facebook less in Blog	1
2. More on Blog less in Facebook	2
3. Only on Facebook	3
4. Only on Blog	4

18. What type of idea do you have regarding ICT act?

	Code
Complete Idea	1
Moderate Idea	2
Light Idea	3
No Idea	4

19. In your view, what type of effects Social media (especially Blog and Facebook) might have for the increase of punishment on the section 57 of ICT act?

20. What is your opinion on the effectiveness of Blog moderation?

21. Your Sex:

Male=1

Female=2

22. Your Age:

	Code
Less than 20	1
20-24	2
25-29	3
30 years or more	4
40 years or more	5
50 years or more	6

23. Where do you living now

Dhaka=1

Outside Dhaka=2

Foreign Countries =3

24. Your Educational qualification

SSC=1

HSC=2

Hons. Or equivalent =3

MA/MSS/MSC or equivalent=4

MBBS=5

25. Occupation:

Job= 1

Business=2

Banker=3

Engineer=4

Doctor=5

Others=6



## **Appendix-II**

### **Guideline for Case Study and FGD**

1. Blogging Experience
2. The present condition of Blog Community
3. Difference between Blog and Facebook
4. Communication with other blogs
5. Issues in social media
6. Influence of Shahbag Uprising on Blog/Bloggers
7. Effects of ICT act on Shahbag
8. Bad experience
9. Online activism
10. Contribution on Social media

## Appendix-III

### Case Study 1: Zaman

Blogger Zaman (anonym) is a student of Dhaka University. He has 2 years of experience of blogging in Somewhereinblog and Amarblog. He does not want him to be considered as blogger. At first he was a reader then he started to think about writing social and political issues. His post on Somewhereinblog about Dutch Bangla Bank's customer policy had a great response in social media. On June 2012, he gave a post at Somewhereinblog sharing his recent experience of being a customer of Dutch Bangla Bank (DBBL). He wrote that he had seen a sudden notice while using the TSC booth of DBBL which said that from July 2012 the customers of DBBL would be required to keep 2000 Taka in their savings account and 5000 taka in their current accounts. Before, the requirement was 500 taka for savings account and 2000 taka for current account. Zaman explained that it would be very difficult for students like him who generally spend 2000 taka for whole month. Zaman wrote, "I can't tell about others but those who are studying at Dhaka University know very well that how DBBL agents came to students halls and begged to them for opening accounts by mentioning their ATM facilities". Zaman finished his post noting that "Turning thousands of students as their customers, profit became everything to this corporate agency. But we have to protest against this otherwise our last weapon would be closing accounts massively". Zaman's post got more than three thousands of hits with 106 comments. Many bloggers mostly students came to agree with Zaman, some demanded to make the post sticky although Somewherein did not make the post sticky. Zaman himself had given a temporary post doubting that Somewherein was not making the post sticky because of corporate interest with DBBL and requested Somewherein authority to prove him wrong by making the post sticky. Although Somewherein did not respond to Zaman, the news of DBBL spread on Facebook and due to massive protest on social media, DBBL decided not to increase the amount of money.

Zaman generally spends more time at Facebook than Blog, but when he needs to see expendable opinions on something, he prefers to visit blogsites. He observed that those who engage themselves in blogging have more awareness and knowledge than general Facebookers. Bloggers seek interconnections to those who are more or less similar to them but in Facebook, anyone can open a profile easily thus Facebook has more rapid interconnections than blog and even bloggers, now a days, are focusing on their online activism at Facebook. That is why any issue is now first introduced at Facebook, even the protest in Shahbag demanding War Criminal Quader Mullah's death penalty was first spread on Facebook not in Blog". Zaman content wise differentiates between blog and Facebook, that blog is more literature oriented but Facebook is based on personal and daily life experiences.

Zaman thinks that before the increase of online news portals, Blog was used as online news portals. The recent online portals provide recreational news which is something different than actual news. Zaman says "I have given 'like' to many pages of online portals although I follow only few of them. What I see is that most of the news is focused on Indian celebrity gossips. I have my own observations that people are struggling in their actual personal lives. So when they enter into virtual world, they seek for some recreations and want to be kept themselves safe. Those, whether any portals or individual writers, can provide fun have more readers". Z thinks that these portals don't have any significant effects on their readers.

According to Zaman, there has been a change in Blogging after Shahabag movement. He asserts, "Divisions have been made on the basis of two criteria. One criterion says you have to be a believer or a non-believer of Islam, other says either you are on the side of liberation war or you are against it. Such criteria is not something a newer kind, it was existed before also but after Shahabag movement, it has reintroduced itself in more extreme form".

Zaman is not attached with any circles of blogger but he participated in the Blog Day on 1 February arranged by Projonmo Blog at Public Library where he met many bloggers. He says, “There is another blog day on 19 December celebrated by bloggers of Somewhereinblog. I also heard about other groups like ‘Bloggers and Online Activists for National Interests’. But I think such groups have divided into many other subgroups after Shahabag movement.

Zaman does not want to consider himself as blogger. He says “I have not blogged that much. First I was a reader and then I started to think about writing on social and political issues. I had huge response on one of my post where I had criticized the Dutch Bangla Bank.

For him, Somewherein blog has variety of readers whereas Amarblog is being much more specific. He agrees that Facebook has now similar features like Blog

## Case Study 2-Komol

Komol (Anonym) has finished his MBBS from Dhaka Medical College and now works as an assistant surgeon. He has written few posts at Sachalayatan but he is mainly a blogger of Somewhereinblog from 2011. So far Komol has written two books of his own. His first book which was a collection of short stories published in the Ekushey Boi Mela of 2013 and his second book, collection of his poems, was published in the Ekushey Boimela 2014.

In 2012, health ministry of Bangladesh had taken a decision that admission of government medical colleges would be taken by the results of SSC and HSC of the students instead of taking admission tests. There had been a huge reactions from students claimed that proper merit would not be judged without the admission test. Komol wrote a post where he showed the fact through a story with some fictional characters that the decision of the Health Ministry would give immense power to teachers and there would be increase of corruption about judging HSC exam papers and giving marks to practical exams. The post was made sticky in Somewhereinblog which had reached 5684 readers and 492 comments.

For the last two years Komol has been writing stories and poems in blog. After the launching of 'selected page', Komol doesn't read the chronological page. Because of the decrease of readers, his interest on whole blogosphere has felt down. He is now using blog like diary, and doesn't interact with other bloggers within blog but he keeps contact with many other bloggers through Facebook and some has become friends of his personal life.

Komol sees that bloggers are now increasingly write at Facebook because of getting more feedback which is absent in blog. Komol points to the fact that many visitors come to blog but they can't comment there. He has written many things in facebook which could be written in blog, but he didn't because feedback is very poor. Because of the syndicate less quality posts getting more hits. Blog moderation has nothing to do with that rather bloggers are responsible here. For Komol Facebook gives more freedom than blog, but

in some cases blog provides greater scope for constructive discussion. He thinks that there is a little similarity between readers of blog and Facebook as they visit both to read daily experiences of people but readers of news portals are completely different because they seek only news. There was a time when people used to come to blogs to see news and Somewherein was on top for that because any latest news used to be posted right after the happening.

Komol considers participating on the mass protest on Shahbag demanding war criminals' highest verdict is his crucial involvement on online activism. He was also participated on the events on Rumana Manjur, a professor of Dhaka University who was physically abused by her husband, and human chain against the decision of Rampal Power Plan at Sunderban. After Shahbag movement, there has been a decrease of some bloggers' active participation on blog. But for Komol, this would occur eventually not because of the movement but because of the Facebook which is now a powerful media who has weakened other online portals along with blogsites. Now in blog, the recent issues are raised on sticky posts and unless sticky posts, discussion among bloggers for a certain issue is very rare. It was usual back on 2011-12 when there used to be so many bloggers. Komol had seen even 400 bloggers at online at a time.

Komol likes to consider his contributions on online as a literary writer. For him, blog has played and still playing important roles for such practices. Blog might be undervalued but the quality of bloggers is far better than general Facebookers.

### **Case Study- 3: Partho (Anonym)**

Mr. Partho is one of the bloggers who was arrested during Shahbag movement when Hefazot-E-Islam claimed that atheist bloggers should be punished. Although Mr. Parvez was not accused on blogosphere for writing religious offensive content, it is known that police called him to come to police station just for some talks and when he went there, they arrested him and accused him for writing religious offensive content on online. After getting bailed, Partho still comes to events from online. When he was approached by this researcher, he has just participated on a human chain demanding the punishment of those who attacked on the Bihari camp at Mirpur. Partho thinks that it is his contribution to support those who are concerned about public opinion.

Partho started blogging in 2006 which was the beginning period of Bangla blogosphere. He had written on Somewhereinblog, Amarblog, Sachalayatan and Amrabondhu. He was last active on Amrabondhu blog which was initiated by a yahoo group. But now he thinks that he is tired of blogging. He doesn't go to blogs but he heard from others that the number of bloggers has decreased and the interaction among them has also decreased.

At first, Partho gave priority of writing literary blogs. But now he writes about recent matters on Facebook. For Partho, Facebook has created a bad tendency to appreciate writings through 'like'. Like option has become the part of existence. As a result, celebrity bloggers at Facebook try to make hype based temporally exciting debates which can generate Likes. He differentiates between Facebook and blog as Facebook is all about instant reactions while a blogger has to provide some responsibilities to write at blogs. He says "At our times, those who used to write at blogs were experienced. They were involved with journalism, reader's forum or politics. But now people lives on Facebook. We used to live in outer world". For Partho, mass media is now the issue generator because it gives so many information that a blogger can't offer. He says "As we don't have any platform like Huffington post to promote citizen journalism, this trend will be continued".

He states that during Shahbag, Somewherein had 25000 registrations within a week. He says that mass media credited bloggers for Shahbag. As a result, people gained curiosity about bloggers and online activists. But Partho sees that not in every case, issues of Mass media are not necessarily creating debates within social media. For

him in social media, even religious offensive posts could get 200 likes which is not possible in mass media. He mentions some forums at Facebook which have gained popularity by using abusive words toward politicians. According to him these tendencies will create bad influence on a long term. He believes that online can't change people. He doesn't see any diversity in public opinion of Bangladesh but he feels responsibility to support those who are making voices for public.

Speaking of ICT act, Partho recalls that the act was made in 2006 but it first came into the discussion on blog when a hacker named 'Mirza' was arrested under ICT act for hacking RAB's website though he hacked the website to show that the security of that website was very weak. For Partho, the act has been started to be used ferociously since 2013. Partho describes "Just after our arrest, arrest of another person was made from Sylhet who gave a 'like' to a Facebook page". He points other arrests from Comilla and Faridpur and for him, those incidents has created fear among the public. He also says that, lawyers don't want to take the case related to religious offensiveness. He sees it is their professional weakness because before judging whether a person really offended any religion, the person has to be provided legislative security. Partho also adds ICT act doesn't address the sexual harassment and that is why he thinks the purpose of ICT act is political.



#### **Case Study- 4 (Rafat Abrar)**

Rafat Abrar (Anonym) started blogging in 2008. He has blogged mostly in Sachalayatan and Muktomona, gave few posts at Somewherein and Amarblog, and he is also the editor of another blogsite. Abrar wrote mostly science based posts on his blogs. He was also a joint author with another blogger of a science based book.

For Abrar, every blogsite has followed an internal censorship. He mentions the A Team movement which resulted many bloggers to move from Somewherein to Sachal. But in Sachal there were too much restrictions, so another group then moved on to Amarblog. Abrar prefers a generalized rule for blogsites for which one can't show any kind of irresponsibility but pointing on the restricted moderation of Sachal, he also acknowledges the fact that on these days of fast Internet one doesn't want to wait for long to see his post on the front page which he or she needs to do at Sachalayatan. Sachal also had introduced chat option among its members but that couldn't sustain.

Abrar mostly wrote science based posts on Muktomona and travel based posts on Sachal. He also played a key role on providing information about War Criminal Moulana Abul Kalam Azad (also known as 'bachchu razakar') on Bangla blogosphere. In 2009, While Moulana Azad was very popular at NTV for his Islamic program, Abrar gave a post on 3 blogsites about Moulana Azad mentioning his role as war criminal during liberation war. In his post, Abrar added different documents including newspaper references which he himself collected. Abrar says that collecting information for a post voluntarily just like he did in case of bacchu razakar, was increasingly being seen at the beginning of Bangla blog community but now, issue is creating at Facebook which then fit into mainstream media. For Abrar, the algorithm of Facebook suggests only those types of posts which users usually give 'like'. As a result, an user of Facebook gets a selective news feed. For Abrar, Facebook lacks discussion. As a result opinions are getting smaller.

Abrar points out that there are so many blogsites but there are not multiple Facebooks. As everyone has started to give opinion about public concerns at Facebook, many bloggers are now writing at Facebook using their blogger identity. Facebook has a 'Like' tendency and provides instant reactions while one needs data to write blog about something. But

he also states that although Shahbag movement was organized by bloggers, Facebook was the kitchen for the movement. He shares his experience with his involvement with Shahbag uprising. After one week later of its beginning, several bloggers held a meeting and question was raised there that media was saying Shahbag as bloggers's movement, but why bloggers were not in the decision making process of the movement? After the killing of Rajib Haider, there had been a widespread debate whether Rajib was theist or atheist which ultimately weakens the movement. At first, there was a demand from Shahbag to ban religious based politics but after the killing of blogger Rajib Haider, the decision was taken that nothing would be said further about that demand. As a result, Shahbag lost philosophical standpoint. Attack on bloggers, for Abrar, is chronological. He recalls the attack on blogger Asif Mohiuddin which was happened month before occurring Shahbag movement. For him, these are two different discussions whether it is good or bad that Asif Mohiuddin mocked about religion and whether he should be attacked for this. Abrar says, some people merged the two and as a result majority of Muslim people who listens to the authority started to believe that he should be attacked. He tells about himself that he has written about Darwinism on his blog but now he needs to think about his security before writing. Because of same fear, he thinks that the number of investigatory posts has fallen down in blogsites.

Abrar recently wrote an article on an online news portal disussing the negative effects of ICT Act on the context of arrest of two college students under the 57 section of that act. For Abrar, ICT Act has a vague point like religious emotion. For him, religious emotion is linked with religious majority as a result religious minority groups are getting attacked. He thinks that ICT act should be based on definite rules and regulations.

Abrar deosn't have any bad experience on online for his writing but he shares another experience when he was an University student. He and his roommate had given a post identifying false references in a lecture about Darwinism given of Zakir Nayek. Other students of their batch complained to a teacher against them. That teacher then told them that Islam approves to behead anyone who is writing against it.

## Case Study 5: Nabi

Nabi( Anonym) registered on Somewhereinblog in 2012 but Somewherein was taking times to make him safe blogger so he started blogging at Prothom Alo and Nagorik blog. But after being made safe blogger, he has continued blogging in Somewherein.

For Nabi, Prothom Alo did not give freedom like Somewherein. Other blogsites run on their own ways. He gives examples of Sachal which is more literary oriented and pre-moderated while Amarblog has a political character. Somewherein has all types of readers. Everything can be discussed there including literature and 18 plus.

From the beginning of blogging, Nabi was involved with literary writings. But he now visits blog occasionally. He only reads posts of those he knows. There are bloggers who became the friend of Nabi in real life. Nabi first came to know almost 99% of them from blog and then he started to communicate with them in Facebook.

For Nabi after Shahabag, general people have got interested on blog but quality bloggers are now writing at Facebook because Facebook doesn't have moderation and one can increase the number of followers in there. One can have popularity just for his or her one status but in blog, a writer has to give a quality post and even those who are reading commenting at blog posts, have good quality as well. But in Facebook, Nabi has observed that after writing few good posts, one goes to such position where no one is criticizing the writer.

Nabi thinks that Shahbag provided a large number of visitors on blogsites but they have lost interest because the feature they get in Facebook are absent in blogs. The number of bloggers have increased but there has been a decrease of those bloggers who can write continuously quality post. For Nabi, blog and Facebook only reaches to a specific type of people but they couldn't reach to mass people.

Nabi thinks. it is not that blog does't have any issues but Facebook can stir onto anything. Because Facebook provides immediate reactions. Nabis says 'you can't write anything in one sentence at blog'. For Nabi slangs of blog and slangs of Facebook are different. On blog, even those slangs have some quality and one can stand against those but on

Facebook, sometimes a writer doesn't know why her or she is receiving those. Nabi says that he has received many disgraceful words in his Facebook inbox but he doesn't know the reason.

Nabi was involved with Shahbag movement and saw the movement from computer. At the beginning of Shahbag, everyone is united but now opinions have differentiated which damaged relations among them. Now they barely tell that they were involved.

Nabi acknowledges that 57 section was made during the Shahbag period but he thinks although it had some primary effects and received reactions against it when few bloggers were arrested, it is now a dead act. As far Nabi knows, in Somewherein, different moderators worked in different periods. Those bloggers who keep good relation with them get benefitted about the promotion of their posts.

## Case Study 6

Kanak (Anonym) has blogged on Ishtishon Somewherein, Choturmatrik, Amrabondhu, and on Amarblog etc. She started blogging by registering Somewhereinblog during 2012. She mostly writes about women and social issues.

Kanak has observed that different blogsites have different group of readers. For her, Chotur is mostly oriented with literary writings. At one time, Kana loved Amarblog but for her it is now totally Awami based. She is now continuing her blogging at Ishtishon because she thinks Ishtishon promotes serious matters and political issues. For her, blog is better for detail discussion but Facebook is all about humour and people focuses on those issues at Facebook which are the top news of mainstream media. She says “Before Shabag, only a circle knows that educated boys and girls go to blog. On that time the no. of blogger was less and they used to discuss about important matters”. She started to meet with other bloggers after the Shahbag movement at Chabir Haat and she also participated with them in other movement.

For Kanak, there are eve teasing and sexual harassment on online and instead of addressing those, ICT act is being used for political interests. Kanak points out the recent incident of arrest. Police has arrested a man who gave a Facebook status “If Sheikh Mujib is the nation’s father that his daughter Sheikh Hasina is my sister”. For Kanak, rather than being used to this silly matters, ICT act requires specific definitions.

Kanak came to know about a lot of slangs which she had no idea before coming to online. For her, few groups are using abusive comments to capture blog and Facebook. She has received some patriarchal comments on her posts about women issues. Recently she wrote on her Facebook wall that Chatrodol, Chatroleague and Shibir all are terrorist groups. Some boys of Chatroleagues commented against her and even some girls commented that as she is a girl, she should not write on political matters.

## Case Study 7

Wasif (anonym) has blogged at Somewherein, Nagorik, Amarblog, ProthomAlo, and at Choturmatrik. He used to post same posts at different blogsites. On a same post, he had appreciation from Somewherein and he received slangs against him at Amarblog. For him, both ProthomAlo and Choturmatrik have a few readers. There are several fixed bloggers in those sites and the readers read only their posts but on the contrary, Somewherein has a huge number of readers.

He has blogged with an anonym and always kept his real identity hidden from other bloggers. He went once to Sohrowardi Uddan where movie critic bloggers arranged a chat but he did not reveal his identity to them. He got 3 days ban on Somewherein because he posted a vulgar photo in a comment while arguing with another blogger. Wasif was also banned for 1 month on CHoturmatrikblog but on that case he claims he was a victim of blog syndicate. He posted a blog on Choturmatrik and a blogger identified his spelling mistakes. When he reacted against him, a group of bloggers started to report on his post. Wasif emphasizes that moderation is needed especially for the case where users intentionally use blog for spreading false news and blog turns into a wall of public toilet where anyone writing anything without flashing water.

For Wasif blog community is now broken. He himself visits very less and just checks travelling posts. This is happened because, he describes, after Shahbag, creative bloggers started to write increasingly at Facebook because Facebook provided them the opportunity to be established as a writer in one's own identity. Wasif has seen other bloggers who used to hide their identity at blog but at Facebook, some of them have failed to do so. Wasif points out how the identity of blogger Aijuddin came out through hacking. For him, Facebook has created a celebrity culture. In past, these celebrity bloggers used to make own issues but now they only extend those issues which has already been created. He says that Facebook has comments but lacks debate and celebrity bloggers at Facebook don't debate, they just reply some of the comments on their post.

Those bloggers who were involved in religious discussion at blog failed to do the same at Facebook for Wasif. Facebook has broken into separate communities based on different gangs. Facebook does not creating an issue, running issues are feeded in Facebook. Blog used to create debates,

Wasif also observed that in past, any news used to come to blog at first. But now they come to news portals. News portals like Prothom Alo now creates debate.

Speaking of ICT act, Wasif added law is needed but it requires specific definition. He mentions a student of Dhaka University who was not involved on religious o0ffensive writings but he was arrested by police. For Wasif, “Anyone can make you victim by hacking your profile”.

## Case Study 8

Mr. Shipu is a civil engineer who has started blogging at Somewherein in 2010. For him Somewherein was the most user friendly blog although the reader has recently decreased but still it has more readers than other Bangla blogging platforms.

Shipu used to write poems in Facebook. He came to know about blogging from a friend. After being involved in blogging, he wrote few literary writings and was mostly focused about writing on career, blog film and social cause. He was also involved on 'eve teasing protest campaign' with other bloggers and they had done countrywide posturing for creating public opinion against it.

He also participated on Shahbag movement but he is no longer engaged with that. What he has experienced that during Shahbag many bloggers came to know each other face to face. From then, they started to communicate with each other through Facebook rather interacting on blogs. Shipu himself doesn't go to blog now. He thinks that bloggers had started writing increasingly on Facebook when Facebook removed word limit for status. Again, moderation in blog was seemed very pressing. He still thinks moderation tends to treat different bloggers differently and oosts are selected on the basis of personal choices of the post selectors. He stats "As we don't know the post selectors, we remain unaware about their limit".

During his blogging period he used to see many posts about literature on Somewherein but for him issue based posts used to get more hits. "People went there for fun. They sought fun even on the slangs throwing by one political group to another. Those were kind of sadistic fun."

For Shipu, Ekushey Boimela is a good place for meeting with other bloggers physically. ChobirHaat is kind of individualistic. He met there with his own circle where majority is blogger. There was a culture named 'Blog Adda' (blog chat). Bloggers used to give posts offering the time and place for the chat. Now bloggers do that at Facebook. Shipu says "I have almost 500 bloggers on my Facebook friend list. So I don't need to go to blog. But the base of my Facebooking is created from blog". Shipu says, "In Blog Adda, we used to have chat on serious issues but now we just make fun on our chats".



Shipu thinks that online doesn't have any influence on people. The mentalities here is getting some information and making fun. Shipu gave the example of Rampal "We shouted against it, showed our patriotism now we have forgotten everything". But Shipu always involved himself with online activism. He was the first who had initiated winter clothes providing campaign from blog. Shipu says "Helping Rana Plaza collapse victims, Felani Issue, Bangladesh Cricket, Indian cultural domination, wherever people were needed we gathered them". But now his activism is totally Facebook based. For Shipu, "Online activism is all about dealing with people, and it is easy to connect with Facebook through Facebook". Shipu memorizes the situation of blog when he used to write there. "In past I used to get 500 comments on my post at Somewherein but now it would be hard to get 50 comments. You need to think before writing at blog because people expects more from you in there".

For Shipu, blog has presented issue like Fellani. Now Facebook is doing this based on news from newspapers and TV channels. Online celebrities play their part to spread those on online but most of them are based on instant reactions and temporal excitements.

According to Shipu, bloggers took position against pro Jamaat bloggers from the very beginning of Bangla Blog. As a result chagu tag became a main issue for cachal. Another cachal issue was theist vs atheist. Some bloggers have made their positions like 'peer'. They did have a better quality but they became act like peers when they gained popularity. Their followers used to agrees with them on whatever they had said. When they tagged anyone as 'chagu' then that person had to be chagu. Shipu says "I am a pro awami blogger but I was tagged as chagu, atheist, and sushil". For Shipu, such tagging is mostly egocentric. Shipu has also lost his Facebook ID because of mass reporting. He thinks 'chagus' are responsible for doing that. He has opened another ID at Facebook and now remains very careful to add any fake profiles.

## Case Study 9

Jitu (Anonym) was one of few bloggers who has entered into mainstream writings. He has already published three story books and is going to publish another in upcoming 'Ekushey Boimela'. In 2010, Jitu has started blogging in Somewhereinblog. He chose Somewherein because when he started blogging, Somewherein was so popular that blogging used to mean blogging in Somewherein.

During Cricket World Cup at 2011 in Dhaka, Jitu went to see matches of Bangladesh at Stadium and wrote his experience of watching games. Those posts had good hits along with Jitu's another series of satire posts. Jitu doesn't write in Somewherein now. For him, giving response in blog is tough because after opening a blog ID, user have to wait for the permission to comment on other posts. Jitu thinks Facebook is easier as anyone can comment right after opening an ID. Once there was a word limit for Facebook status but now it has taken. One can write big posts, and can save that just like blog. Many bloggers during Jitu's time are now writing at Facebook and Jitu has seen that now they are reaching to more people. For Jitu, only few bloggers used to write on blogs about recent issues and others used to believe whatever they had said but in Facebook so many people are writing. For him, what means 'cachal' in blog is now happening more at Facebook because so many people are giving opinions. Jitu had few experiences of facing attacking comments. During the protest of students against Quota system of BCS in 2013, he gave Facebook status supporting the movement and then many started to tag him as anti-Awami League and Razakar. Same thing happened to him when he gave a post about Pakistani cricketer Inzamam-UL-Haque. He thinks that war of liberation is something about which we should be feel pride but in social media, some people are trying to exploit it and there are other people as well who are trying to exploit religion.

Jitu agrees that there should be some restrictions for writings. Freedom is required as this is a democratic country but it doesn't mean to be writing anything offensive to other religions although he has seen that debate based on religion in social media are not occurring for religious cause, rather they are mostly egocentric.

Jitu has not ever been involved in any movement because he works in a government organization and the code of his job says he can't do anything against the government. But he wrote many posts on blog for public concern by mixing his personal stories. For example, in 2012 there was a road accident at Mirsorai which cost deaths of many school children who were going to see a football match. After the incident, there was a public concern in social media about the increase of road accidents. Jitu gave a post at Somewherein where he told a story about playing football games with his friends at school for clearing the point how precious of those lives were lost at Mirsorai.

## Case Study 10

Mr. Zia Hasan works in corporate sector. He is the author of the book “From Shahbag to Hefajote: Approver’s Statement” (শাহবাগ থেকে হেফাজতঃ রাজসাক্ষীর জবানবন্দী). He has started blogging in 2012 at Somewherein although he started reading blogs in 2008. He says, “The pressure was low at that time in my office, I used to read blogs after lunch hour. I was very excited. There is none such practical sphere like Somewhereinblog”. He also gave a close look to other newly coming blogsites because he had a plan to develop a web portal but he couldn’t go so far because of financial problems.

When Hasan was a regular visitor at Somewherein, blogging was mostly about sharing special experiences. For Hasan, War Criminal issue was the mainstream issue of blog but not the core issue. Describing the poor condition of Bangla blog at present time, he emphasizes on the design of Somewherein which is not advanced enough in the age of web 2.0. He also points to the groupings among blog moderators and for him, they only promote typical liberal views. Differencing between blog and Facebook, he says “As you were saying, Facebook is like echo chamber but blog isn’t. You cannot avoid anyone at blog but you can block anyone in Facebook. Our country is very polarized. Because of opinion polarization, tolerance of other persons is decreasing. Nobody wants a counter view. Second thing, civil discussion has stopped in our country. Those who are countering others are not doing in a nice way. The environment is extremely polarized”. He also adds “The polarization I see on online, I don’t see in actual society. This is manufactured polarization”.

But Hasan wants to give Facebook credit for being more democraticized. He has given an example, “The most polarized election in Bangladesh’s history occurred on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2014. Mainstream media has stopped saying about it but in Facebook, smaller resistances still exist”. In his book, he called celebrity bloggers as trend settlers but now for him, they are not in trend settling role anymore. He says “They were not initially celebrity bloggers. They became celebrities. What has happened before Shahbag and after Shahbag is different. Shahbag has devised blogging into two different arenas. Trend settlers are not trend setters anymore. They had independence when they didn’t subscribe any

ideology. People respected them. The independence of bloggers, whether on Facebook or blog, has been compromised by bloggers themselves because now they have subscribed some ideologies”.

For Hasan, Facebook is echoing mainstream issue. One issue arrives, discussed, lost and new issue appears. When he was an active blogger in 2012, issues used to sustain. He says that “Facebook is not designed for public opinion. Ideas get fragmented because of internal perspectives on Facebook. Anyone can form groups with his followers and that group becomes isolated from other groups. Bloggers or Facebook celebrities of Bangladesh we know have created a cluster. Population of this cluster is probably 20 thousand or not more than 60 thousand. But outside this clusters, there might be short clusters for public opinion in Facebook which we don’t know”.

Hasan had connections with some group of bloggers who were from leftist background. He met with them once or twice at ‘Chobir Haat’. For him, Shabag was initiated by what he has termed on his book ‘Chobir Haat Network’. But according to his observation, that network was very loosely connected.

Speaking of 57 section of ICT act, he feels that ICT act has created a fear of environment. Recently a blogger reviewed his thoughts. He was much honored but he couldn’t reply to that writing because of the fear on 57 section. He says “As the law is not well defined, we don’t know what the boundary is. I support blasphemy law. As Shahbag could stand for the justice, Hefajot could stand for blasphemy law. You can’t say anything abusive to prophets because this limit is defined by our society. This could be balanced with Sree Krishna, Buddha and others through blasphemy law”.

Hasan criticized Tareq Zia once and then some BNP supporters threatened him. Because of the identity politics, he hasn’t written anything about Sheikh Hasina or Joy even though when there was no 57 section. But he has criticized Awami League and Awami minded people didn’t offend him for that.

Speaking of his online activism, he mentions of going to the event for the Garments workers of Tajrin. He also attended Shahbag but that was not very relevant for him because thousands of people were in there. Rather He gave importance his online writings and likes to include those as part of his online activism.