

Development of identity as a blogger | proposal



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FORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF BLOGGER AS AN IDENTITY IN BANGLADESH

INTRODUCTION

General Overview

As first evolved, the idea of being a blogger, always been counted as someone being technologically advanced, as long as a socially aware person with a good knowledge on contemporary reality with a good sense of expression through different forms of text. The identity of a blogger in the early days was so influential that, creative thinkers having least knowledge on blogging got huge interest over it and started to introduce themselves as a blogger, instead of just a creative fellow or a writer or anything else. But a single incident took place in the year of 2013 has drastically changed the scenario. Peoples of Bangladesh, where the country's population is Muslim majority, started treating the bloggers in a generalized way as Islam hater atheists in general. Not only the disparity in ideology, but the situation turned so awful that holding the religious agenda, incidences like assassination of bloggers started taking place in the history of Bangladesh. In this study, I will try to find the formation and reformation of blogger, as an identity in Bangladesh thorough its impact on socio-religious ideology and how the ideology of freethinker bloggers get perceived by the members of different stakeholders.

Background of the Study

Being introduced in the year or 1996, the initial use of VSAT and dial-up based internet brought first change in Bangladeshi computing with the world

wide web while the cyber space gathering was mostly based on yahoo groups (Sabir, 2015). On the other hand Justin Hall's created the first ever blog in the internet history opened a new dimension which has been categorized and titled by Weblog by online diarist Jorn Barger in December 1997. As the technology got improved Blogger introduced the first ever free blogging platform in August 1999 which was a revolution for the blogger community, though that blogging was in an individualistic manner for each blogger to writing blog post separately onto their own platform (Thompson, 2006). For Bangladeshi bloggers the first revolutionary attempt was somewhereinblog. net which started the community Bengali blogging platform from 15 December of 2005. Bloggers of which platform later on diversified in some other platforms like amarblog. com, sachalayatan. com, mukto-mona. com and so on, turning blogging as a trend for the people of new generation. The trend of blogging turned so popular that some mainstream newspapers online version and online newspapers like the Daily Prothom Alo, introduced blogging facility as a scope of citizen journalists for inviting bloggers to become voice for the voiceless citizens. The first generation bloggers have not bounded within the lines of blogs only, but also widened their blogging in social network platforms also, mostly in Facebook.

In February 6 2013, The International Crimes Tribunal-2 sentenced Jamaat-e-Islami leader Abdul Quader Mollah to life in prison for his against humanity role during the liberation war of Bangladesh. To raise voice against that unfair verdict Bloggers and Activist Network initiated the protest by organizing a human chain in front of the National Museum, which ignited the huge nationalist movement of Shahbagh, demanding the death penalty of

war criminals or Liberation war of 1971. When the rebellion movement was at its pick, a blogger and one of the initiator of Shahbagh movement Ahmed Rajib Haidar, was found dead by stabbing on February 15 near his house. From investigation, it was found that Rajib was threatened by some Islamic Fundamentalists for his involvement with Shahbagh movement and his online activities in against of Islamic sentiment. That particular assassination has started the series of killing in Bangladesh, targeting the bloggers and online activists. The next victim was another blogger Mamun Hossain, who has been hacked to death in Dhaka with the same acquisition of spreading hate speeches in against of Islamic religious sentiment. Another private university student and online activist Ashraful Islam also found dead in his flat in Savar, having a deep cut injury in throat. Islamic fundamentalists got accused for this case also. Some of those attacks got failed, such as in case of blogger Asif Mohiuddin, later who has to leave country and started living in United Kingdom, as provided Asylum by the government for his life threat in Bangladesh. In March 2013, in a meeting with Prime Minister's Office Allama Muhammad Mahbub Alam, Editor of Dainik Al Ihsan accompanied with a group of Islamic fundamentalists suggested repentance ('tauba') for the bloggers who are accused of making offensive statements against Islam and its Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) enclosing a list of 84 bloggers acting in that objectionable norms and a request to the government to shut down all those blog sites including somewhereinblog. net, amarblog. com, mukto-mona. com, sachalayaton. com and some others which are severely used by claimed atheists for spreading anti Islamic ideology, according to their claim. It was also found that the series or killing was miraculously following that list of 84 provided by Islamist leaders. That series killing has

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got an update this year on February 26, by the brutal assassination of freethinker, founder for Muktomona blog and science writer Avijit Roy near Ekushey Book Fair. Avijit's wife and another blogger Rafida Ahmed Bonya got severely wounded during that same attack after recovering has to leave country and fly back to USA alone, from where those two came to Bangladesh to visit this year's book fair few days ago. Prime suspect Farabi Shafiur Rahman got arrested by law enforcement agencies few days later, as he was accused for threatening Avijit over social networks for last few years due to his pro thinking and writings. On the contrary a miscreant cyber group Ansarullah Bengali Team claims their success in murdering Blogger Avijit through their Twitter Account. Here is not the end. Till date the latest incident took place with blogger Washiqur Rahman, on March 30 in Dhaka for the same acquisition of anti Islamist writing and practicing atheism in public sphere. Analyzing the total series of killing, the acquisition comes in front referring the bloggers and online activists being atheist and anti Islamist. Basically that identity of bloggers was used as an effective weapon by the Jamaat-e-Islami to divert the attention of people from the revolutionary demand of punishing the war criminals of 1971 with maximum penalty. On the contrary either the bloggers are being threatened of killing, leaving the country for securing their life, or started leading a new life leaving the unforgotten blogger identity aside, for the sake of security.

Operational Definition

Blog

The word blog is a shortened form of the word Weblog, which refers to some websites, easily counted as the digital version of diary, where the publisher

write posts in regular basis with identical date stamps for the posts for each days separately. Though firstly blog writing was and individual task for each blogger, later on community blogging platforms like forums or community blog sites evolved with the feature of all the bloggers to gather in a single space so share their thoughts and to place opinion on each other's ideas.

Blogger

In general, the people who writes blog regularly, is known as blogger. But in case of Bangladeshi people someone who has the authority to write something over cyberspace either in blogs or in social media platforms, be counted as blogger.

Research Question

Throughout this research, I will try to find out the possible answers for the following questions:

- How the identity of blogger in different blog sites is formulated in Bangladesh?
- How the ideological warfare between bloggers in real space has been provoked by that of the virtual space?
- How the ideology of blogger has been perceived by different stakeholders/groups?

Research Objectives

After the successful completion of this study we will be able

- To understand the building blocks of blogger identity in Bangladesh and its changing form as time passes due to several socio-religious factors.

- To know how stakeholders from different classes of the society perceive the concept of blogging and the ideology the bloggers promote.
- To understand the view of blogger community members regarding the current trend of blogging and online activity in Bangladesh.
- To have a clear scenario of blogging in Bangladesh and to assume its future trend.

Rationale of the project

For last two years the issue of bloggers has been emerged with high importance. In one side, group of miscreants backed by the fundamentalist are constantly threatening the bloggers to stop their activities against the religious believe. On the contrary, in spite of having the fear of death in front, the bloggers are continuing their activities using different blog sites even in Facebook as platform. To take a control over it, government introduced The Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006, having a very few impact on the bloggers activity. On the contrary the series death incidents of the bloggers turned the government's role under fire on ensuring citizen's life security. More specifically the after the brutal death of Avijit Roy, a Bangladeshi American blogger and write known for pioneering Bengali freethinkers has put Bangladeshi law and order system under question in the international periphery. As long as the bloggers, the involved Islamic fundamental forces can be perceived having related to the international Islamic terrorist movement, which can also be a threat to Bangladesh's global image and its diplomatic relation with other countries.

So undoubtedly the issue regarding bloggers is a highly emerged one among the contemporary Bangladeshi social issues.

Significance of the Research

Till date, some blogs post, articles have been worked on bloggers' identity formation and reformation in Bangladesh, in a scattered manner in different platforms from online publications, social media to newspapers. But no academic research has been done yet on such important topic. I hope this research can focus on the subjected topic immensely to have a better idea about the bloggers identity issues along with the ideological warfare of virtual world, impacting on the rage of fundamentalist in against of blogger community as a whole.

Scopes and Limitations

General purpose

To determine the way how different stakeholders perceive the identity of a blogger, how that identity can come across evolution influenced by social factors and finally how the identity of virtual space can impact in real world.

Subject matter

Blogger identity, ideological clash with fundamentalism and its acceptance and denial in different categories of stakeholders in the society.

Limitation of study

This research will focus on the identity formation of only the Bangladeshi bloggers. Bloggers from other countries will not be accountable in this research. Also in different social issues bloggers often got involved in

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creating public opinion and awareness, even getting opposing with the governmental or any other influential forces. But all the ideological conflict issue will not be covered in this research. Instead of only bloggers ideological clash with the fundamentalist Islamic force, their ideological warfare will be counted as the matter to discuss about throughout this research work.

Population or universe

Bloggers and online activists playing the role of acting force of fundamentalist movement, Stakeholders from different phase of society.

Locale of the study

Bloggers and associated different stakeholders originated in Bangladesh.

Period of the study: From the historical point from where journey of community blogging started its journey to 2016.

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