

Uses of Social Media in Constituting a Student Movement: A Study over Quota Reform Demonstration in the University of Dhaka

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Abstract:

In 2018, the students of the University of Dhaka organized a massive demonstration against a discriminatory provision of preferential quota in which a particular section of students used to receive a huge advantage over all other students in recruitment process of a government job. In this movement, social media has been used as the key tool in order for people's mobilization and information dissemination. This article mainly figured out the various uses of social media in constituting a student movement and its further implications. Demonstrators have chosen Facebook group and pages as the tools to keep their activists updated about latest developments and planning of next moves. Not only the demonstrators, the law enforcers, observers and government also had had great attention to social media sites regarding this demonstration. However, excessive reliance on social media due to having low credibility to mass media has caused spreading disinformation and resulted in violence.

Keywords: Student Movement, Social Movement, Social Media Users, Quota Reform Demonstration, Disinformation, Cyber security Act

Introduction:

Use of social media has been widespread recently leading the young generation to be more open and connected to the outer world. Study shows that there are 22 million Facebook users in Dhaka city, making it second among the top active user city of Facebook (Ovi, 2017). However, the engagement is more particularly when it comes to students. The University of Dhaka led study found that nearly 88 per cent of the students of Dhaka pass more time than general people using Facebook (Hasan, 2018). Therefore, Facebook is mainly used as a popular tool for information and communication. It helps to find the information that contributes to the young generation to be upgraded and well informed about the outer world. Facebook also makes it easy to interact with people from across the boundary, thus exchanging culture, tradition and values (Chenoweth, 2016). Bangladesh has experienced students' uprisings leading to great events from the very beginning of its history like language movement 1952, education movement 1962 and movement for independence 1971 as well as democracy movement 1990. In 2018, Bangladesh has witnessed a massive students' demonstration in protest of discriminatory provision with an aim to ensuring equal opportunity in a government job, named 'Quota Reform Demonstration'. Students have largely gathered with a view to creating pressure on the government in order to reform the existing quota system that favours only a small proportion against the rest. In doing so, the students adopted social media as the salient mode of communication for the uprising. Students fully utilized the opportunity of all Facebook options like chatting, writing on the timeline, video streaming and broadcasting live procession and so on. Mobilizing general students towards achieving specific goals with a view to bringing quota down to 10% became easier with the help of Facebook (Khan, 2018). Facebook connected a large number of people through the mass exchange of information and expression. The growing user base of twitter too helped the demonstrators to draw international attention as to what was happening in the country during the movement. Information dissemination has been a great barrier for every mass movement, which had been impressively removed through Facebook group (Malchik & Sharif, 2019). Although the demonstration ended with govt. interruption, it eventually could bring some fruitful outcomes. However the attainment of the demonstration is still debatable, but Quota Reform Demonstration produces a new precedence of accountability through social media. The new trend of social media based people's mobilization has made the authority vigilant about their delegated responsibility. When people think their expectations are not adequately met, they write

their grievances at social media. If the post goes viral and draws the attention of the proper authority, they respond immediately. Like many other developing nations, Bangladesh has also failed to meet people's democratic aspiration like freedom of expression in mass media in recent years. Along with these, the growing trend of socio-political intolerance also drives the mass people resorting to tools of social media to express their opinions. It has become popular among general people mainly due to having less regulation and feasible access. Therefore, nowadays disinformation spread and partially misrepresentation has become commonplace and poses a threat to proper use of social media (Max, 1979). During the quota reform demonstration it was largely perceived that the purposive spreading of disinformation led a peaceful demonstration into violent one (The Daily Star, 2019). Lack of mutual respect, intolerance and low credibility among different actors like a demonstrator, mass media, university authority and Governmental different forces were mainly found as the responsible factors for circulating disinformation (Dahlberg-Grundberg, 2015). This article was mainly based on primary data collected from the students, demonstrators and the leader of this movement through a semi-structured questionnaire.

Context and settings of the study:

The student of the public universities, especially of University of Dhaka, has been pioneering the nation from the very beginning of Bangladesh since its independence towards progress and prosperity. The young generation of this country has always been vigilant against all sorts of social, economic and political irregularities and injustices. In 2018, the students lead a demonstration against the Quota policy (eg. a system which gives a special advantage to some sections of society such as freedom fighters, disabled minorities and women). The demonstration was mainly led through exploiting social media particularly Facebook and YouTube. Thanks to the government formula of digitalization, the information communication technology has now become available to mass people. Information sharing, communication and networking through social media lead the mass people towards uniting on demand or objectives. As Ganajagoron Manch demonstration in 2013 was the first online media based demonstration, while the Quota reform demonstration and later Road Safety Movement followed that. The awareness among the social media users particularly the youth who are mostly connected in Social media has been growing up. Social media has since then become the tool for ensuring accountability and transparency in the government system. So it is felt as imperative to explore the uses of social

media for people's mobilization, communication on social issues, tools for raising social awareness and ensuring social accountability.

Objective:

The general objective of this study is to explore the uses of social media in constituting quota reform demonstration.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To figure out the different uses of social media in constituting a student's movement particularly in Quota reform demonstration
- To assess the factors that motivate the students to rely on social media excessively
- To explore the risks of disinformation through social media uses during students' movements
- To discover the further implications of the uses of social media in quota reform movement on to society and state

Methodology:

It's exploratory research that is aimed to find out the uses of social media in constituting quota reform demonstration and its further implication. To collect data, primarily it has adopted interview tools on semi structured questionnaire. It interviewed 320 respondents from different dormitories of the University of Dhaka who physically participated at quota reform demonstration in 2018. It also used KII tools to collect data from 10 leading actors of Quota reform demonstration. In addition, it purposively monitored the events and discussion of Facebook and Tweeter users during the demonstration. To analyze the data and graphical design of the information, the authors used the computer package of SPSS.

A theoretical gap of Social Movement:

A social movement is mainly the mobilization in order for certain social demands which codifies a particular set of values and objectives. The leadership is set not always by predetermined but through a spontaneous process. Participation is mainly based on social interaction and communication. In according to Diani, (1992)

“Social movements are defined as networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities”.

In according to Encyclopedia Britannica, Social Movement is loosely organized, however having a sustainable campaign in order for particular social goal. Particularly this is mainly led to having a change in terms of values and structures of the society. However, the movement is usually a mixture of peoples, spontaneous and having certain objectives (Smelser et al. 2019).

Gerlach and Hine (1970) figured out five key factors that must be present for being a social movement. The first one is the strong ideological ties. The second one is to have face to face recruitment based on social relationship. The third factor is to have an actor or set of actors who are committed to the demonstration with leading their previous experience leading into a unique set of values and behaviour. The fourth factor is having an ideology which codifies the values, set of objectives, frameworks and certain motivational spirits leading the demonstration. The last factor is to have an apparent or intangible form of opposition against whom the movement has been risen up.

The Quota reform demonstration is having featured with almost factors including having a certain goal, the framework of the demonstration and a set of values, motivations. In this Movement what is missing that the strong ideological ground. The students from different grounds got together on certain goals to eradicate discrimination in terms of getting a government job. The Quota demonstrators mainly the students from different public and private universities also have had the experience of a social media-based social movement from Ganajagoron Mancha Demonstration.

The worldwide social movement has been successfully managed with exploiting social networking facilities including Facebook, Tweeter, Whatsapp. The Arab Spring, Me too movement, Black Lives Matter, Gazy park Protest are the perfect example of social media-based demonstration. However, what is unique in the Quota reform demonstration is the transformation. The students of the University of Dhaka have had the experience of leading the nation in many progressive mobilizations is now in a new mode of protest. Social media has been used for placard demonstration worldwide, used in Bangladesh as the media of propagation.

The street physical gatherings have remained unchanged. Students did not follow the global precedence as a merely online movement, not such physical gatherings. Due to such unique nature of protest in Bangladesh, the risks and vulnerabilities have been largely increased. In Bangladesh in recent years, the demonstration has largely experienced with a massive range of disinformation and resulted in a violent response.

What is Quota System in Government job?

A quota is a privileged option for a particular section of the country in a government job when it comes particularly to recruitment. It was first introduced by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to advance the underprivileged group of all people with equal pace. The issue arises these days when government job reserves 56% quota for some specific groups (eg. freedom fighters 30%, women 10%, district, 10% other national minority groups,) while disenfranchising so many well deserved and talented students from getting into public sector and universities. The number of registered freedom fighters in the country is 2 to 2.5 lacs. It is relevant to note the freedom fighters for whom an overwhelming 30% quota are reserved only constitute 0.12% to 0.15% (Mahmud& Shovon,2018). This represents a sheer injustice to the students with talents but having no quota. At the same time, it deprives the public sector of recruiting talented and deserving students from whom the country could reap a huge benefit because in the 21st-century public sector requires talents to compete with the fast-growing private sector. What compounds the problem is if the required 56% reserved seats are not filled up by those students due to their failure in the recruitment exams, those government posts remain vacant.

Legal basis of Quota Reform Demonstration:

Everyone is entitled to enjoy equal rights to job opportunities regardless of their sex, gender, race, colour, religion or any other background. According to United Nation Human Rights' "International covenant on civil and political rights," the signatories to the covenant will ensure the equal right of men and women in terms of all civil and political rights enshrined in the covenant ODIHR (Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights). In the same token, article 19(1), 29(1), 29(2) of the constitution of Bangladesh states every citizen in the country will have equal opportunity in terms of jobs irrespective of one's race, colour, religion or any

other denominators(The Daily Star, 2018). The two above mentioned articles clearly outlines that equal right to a job is one of the inalienable rights to every citizen.

A brief account of Quota Reform Movement:

Quota reformed demonstration was largely motivated by the astonishing rate of unemployment among graduates. In fact, the unemployment problem has always been an obstacle to the equitable and sustainable growth of the country. According to the report of Dhaka Tribune, there are 4.4% unemployed youth in the country (Hasnat,2018). What makes it worse is the graduate unemployment rate published in British council sponsored report is around 47%, which is approximately 12 times more than the overall unemployment rate in the country (Asadullah, 2015). This statistic is often caused by the impractical education system and government policy for the employment sector in the public and private sector. To get rid of this vicious cycle of unemployment, students of the universities took to the street to demand their legitimate rights of getting into the public sector with their talents. On January 31st, a student and two journalists from the University of Dhaka filed a writ to the high court to re-evaluate the existing quota system in the government job sectors. They mention that there is 56% reserved quota in the government job currently which is a clear violation of article 19, 28, 29, 29(3) of the constitution of Bangladesh (Salim, 2018). On 5th of February, 2018, a bench of the high court turned down the writ saying there are mistakes in it. Upon this high court decision, the general students formed a Facebook group named “we demand quota reform” (for all jobs) to unite the general students. On February 14th, students staged a protest in front of Public Library and formed “Bangladesh Sadharon Chhatra Odhikar Songrokkhon Parishad” (Bangladesh General Students’ Right Protection Committee) which has been playing the most important role in leading the movement. Although they started with 10 points demand, it later came down to 5 specific point demands.

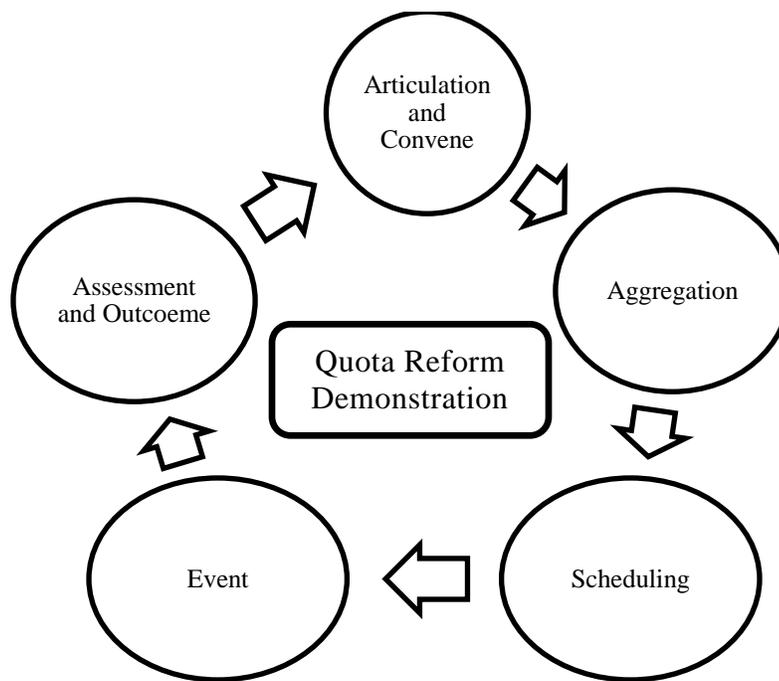
1. Bringing down the reserved seats from 56 to 10% and recruit 90% on merit basis
2. Fill vacant posts under quotas from the merit list
3. Stop special recruitment under a certain quota
4. Introduction of uniform age limit in government jobs
5. Transfer jobs under quotas to a different candidate only based on merit (The Daily Star, 2018).

On 4th March 2018, the students in different colleges and universities staged human chain and began suspending classes and exams to join the movement. On 25th of March, demonstrators staged protest sweeping the street while hanging their certificates on their shoulders to show their nonviolent mechanism of protesting. The movement met with police brutality on 8th of April when almost all colleges and universities in the country cancelled their classes and exams to stand for these demands (Khan, 2018). Subsequently, civil society members, writers and university teachers showed solidarity to the movement and criticized the crackdown of the government forces. In response to the movement, Prime minister said “there will be no quota” but did not make any formal notice. On 11th April, 2018, the teachers’ association of the University of Dhaka president, Professor A S M Maksud Kamal and Secretary Shibly Rubaiyat Islam called on the government to fulfill the demand of the students saying quota has to change keeping pace with modern time. They also urged security forces not to use force against the students (Dhaka Tribune, 2018). Most importantly, on 11th April, PM Sheikh Hasina in a parliamentary session said “we have digitalized the country to use the technology constructively. Now, these platforms are used to spread a rumour. A boy was hit in the head. All on a sudden, someone put up a status that he has died and immediately everyone took to the street. Even girls came out breaking their gates due to this rumour. If anything bad happened, who would take the responsibility? I could not sleep a wink because they were outside. They are the age of my grandchildren”. On 16th April however, three leaders of quota reform movement including convener Rashed khan was arrested on accusation of disseminating misinformation to destabilize the situation (The Daily Star, 2018). A series of attack followed on the demonstrators under the pretext of them spreading rumour and being influenced by the opposition party to topple the government. When parents and civil society wanted to stage a demonstration in front of press club under the banner of “Concerned guardians and citizen society”, the police also tried to disperse the crowd using force. On July 12th, Prime Minister said in a speech, “there is verdict of high court regarding the preserved quota for freedom fighters. Government cannot simply disrespect the verdict of high court”. The protest continued demanding 5 points demand with slogans like “no more than 10 % quota” “abolish grandchildren quota”. Sporadic violence took place across the country between the police force and demonstrators. Many termed this movement as “disrespect to our freedom fighters”. Groups formed by freedom fighters’ children staged a demonstration and said: “those fighting for quota reform are against the spirit of our

independence, and they should be brought to justice”. Ex advisor to caretaker government Dr. Akbar Ali Khan proposed that the quota should only be preserved for the children of disadvantaged getting pension from the government and needy people who receive an allowance from the government. He also added that seats remaining vacant if not fulfilled by quota students are a disturbing factor, and same case happens for banking sector too. An UNDP funded research concluded that the entire system is unfair and detrimental to the administration (UNDP, 2014). In fact, when rumors started being circulated, the question arose whether it was an ill-intentioned movement secretly led by the opposition party to destabilize the country and tarnish government’s image. Ultimately, the movement faced a tremendous setback when misinformation and rumour confused the general students. What followed was the controversial section 57 of the ICT act over “spreading rumour and sharing provocative posts” on social media.

Expropriation of the outcome by Ruling Party student wings:

A movement with huge people’s mobilization had been ended with an unsatisfactory conclusion. It has been a common phenomenon in Bangladesh for the last several years particularly like Quota Reform demonstration. In this movement, the outcome of the demonstration was badly expropriated by the ruling party student wings. It happened mainly through garnering the support from the leading position of the demonstration by either forcibly or luringly. In the Quota Reform Demonstration period, it has also attempted to lure the leaders of demonstration to come under its umbrella through offering lucrative packages and systematic force (eg. threats and intimidation). The Joint convener of Quota Reform Demonstrator Nurul Hoq Nuru complained, “Bangladesh Chatra League, the student wing of the govt., offered me a central post of their organization along with other enormous lucrative benefits”. It was the surprising matter that the leadership of Bangladesh Chatra League turned into an alliance with demonstrators from its initial stance of animosity as soon as PM declared there would be no quota which can be drawn a parallel to interest-seeking political game (Lugo & Romero, 2002-2003). However, as the govt changed its position, so did the Chatra League in turn. Afterwards, the decision taken by the government, the ruling elites started saying the leading actors of the demonstrator are from their own party. So, all credit goes back to the ruling agents.

Model 1: How the social media worked to organize a movement

Source: Prepared by author based on primary data source

The first step of every demonstration particularly Quota Reform demonstration was the articulation of the problem which conveys the message to the concerned people in order to achieve some specific goals. In this part, the conveyor outlines the problem clearly and articulates the fundamental objectives. In the Quota Reform Demonstration, the Facebook group has been used to articulate the problem considering the response from the students across the nation.

After articulation of a problem, it comes about how students would receive the initial information which in effect motivated them to go for the demonstration to stand up for their rights. It discusses whether it is traditional news media or social media that would particularly help them to be informed about the protest. This part also deals with the case from which students received an invitation to join the movement. Overall, this part is to show what the problem was and why they should stand up for their rights.

This second step deals with organizing the students to take to the street and make the movement a success. This needs a significant amount of effort to mobilize the students. The organizers need to inform the participant about the demands and their merits. In Quota Reform Demonstration, Facebook page, timeline, live videos and online news portal all played a vital role jointly to get the message out to inspire students to stand for the cause.

The third step talks about how the schedule of the rally and procession (eg. Time and place) will be reached to the participants. It has been key steps of demonstration to inform the students in order to make the movement successful. Facebook group, page, live feed, news portal and the Facebook wall of the leaders' personal account have been used to disseminate the information. In the Quota reform demonstration, the Facebook group "we want Quota reform" has been widely used to spread the message among large stakeholder of the demonstration.

Not only the leading actors, the activists also have tried to keep in touch with social media sites for getting updates about the situations, places and timing of demonstration. It was most particularly needed as there had been always a threat of being attacked or harassed. So, the reliability of the news sources had a lot to do with students' safety and security.

This final step focuses on how the demonstration took place and especially what live video had to do with providing safety, encouraging them, providing information to them, and making the movements livelier. This part also deals with evaluating the overall movement and its outcome. It particularly focuses on the number of casualties, govt's stance on the movement, whether people relied on social media in the end or not, and importantly how rumours have spread out and resulted in some harsh consequences for the movement.

Table 01: Uses of Facebook for Information

Social Media used to disseminate initial information	72%
Initial Conveyer through social media	70%
Involvement of the demonstrators with Social media	73%
Getting information about casualties	76%
Demand of the demonstrators	87%
Opinion of the demonstrators	96%
Government position	45%
The situation of the demonstration	92%
Place of the procession	96%
Time of the procession	98%
Source: Prepared by author based on primary source	

This table above summarizes how much Facebook was used at different stages of the movement. It is clear from the table that Facebook was largely used (well over 90% on average) for learning the opinions of demonstrators, observing the overall situation of the movement and knowing the time and place of demonstration to be held. Also, for conveying the initial information and casualty updates, social media contributed nearly 70% of the information disseminated. However, social media played the least important role (only 45%) in learning the stance of the govt. regarding the movement.

Use of Facebook	The demonstrator's Demand	Opinion of the demonstrator	Update of the situation:	Time of procession	Place of Procession
Facebook timeline	37.5%	10.6%	14.4%	12.2%	32.8%
Facebook group	36%	47.4%	49.1%	62.8%	45.9%
Facebook page	4.1%	23.1%	3.0%	6.3%	7.5%

Facebook live	6.9%	13%	22.6%	10.0%	10.0%
News Portal	12.5%	3.1%	7.8%	5.6%	3.8%
Messenger	3.1%	2.8%	3.2%	3.1%	-
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Source: Prepared by author based on primary source					

The statistical information provides a clear overview as to how demonstrators used to learn about the demands of the movement, opinions of participants in the movement, overall update about the situation during the movement as well as the place and timing of the movement. Looking at the fact how students came to know about the demands, there is a striking similarity in the number of students who received information from both Facebook group and timeline (36% and 37.5%). Only 12.5% of the participants got information from traditional news portal, which is interesting to note while the other features of Facebook such as Facebook page, Live, and messenger contributed only minimal.

Secondly, as for how demonstrator's opinion was changed or remained constant to continue the movement, the Facebook group contributed the most information, to 47.4% of the students' while, traditional news portal was only 3.1%. Facebook timeline and live videos contributed almost a similar number (10.6% and 13% students) in providing an update about demonstrators' motivation.

Moreover, in updating about the overall movement, Facebook group provided the highest amount of information (49.1% students). Approximately 22.6% of the students got an update from Facebook live whilst traditional news portal contributed only 7.8%.

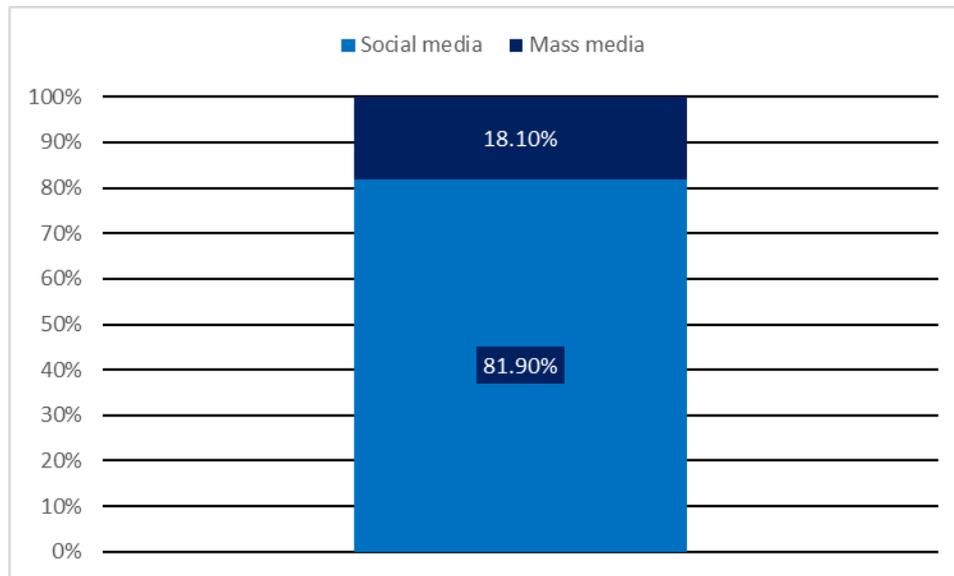
Last but not the least, in order for conveying the updates of the timing and place of demonstration, Facebook timeline and group disseminated the most information whereas traditional news portal only accounted for nearly 5% overall.

In total, it is fair to say Facebook group was the most popular source of information for all three categories.

Table 3: Reason of Facebook live broadcast during Movement		
Variable	Number (Out of 320 respondents)	Percent
Safety	241	75.3%
Encouragement	232	72.5%
Information dissemination	233	72.8%
Alternative voice of mass media	199	62.2%
Propagating disinformation	184	57.5%
Seemed more lively	215	67.2%
Source: Prepared by author based on Primary source		

The information provides an overview as to how Facebook live as respondents think benefited them during the movement. Among the respondents, 75.3% (241 respondents out of 320) students said the live broadcast provided them a sense of security ensuring that whatever scheduled was a real one since there had been always a threat from the authority. An almost similar number of students (both nearly 72%) said this provided them encouragement and update about the movement. Another 62.2% and 67.2% student believed live videos to be the alternative voice of mass media and livelier source of information respectively. Notably, almost 184 out of 320 students (57.5%) believe that Facebook lives contributed to propagating disinformation.

Figure 1: Distribution of the respondents according to their reliance on media during the demonstration



Source: Prepared by author based on Primary source

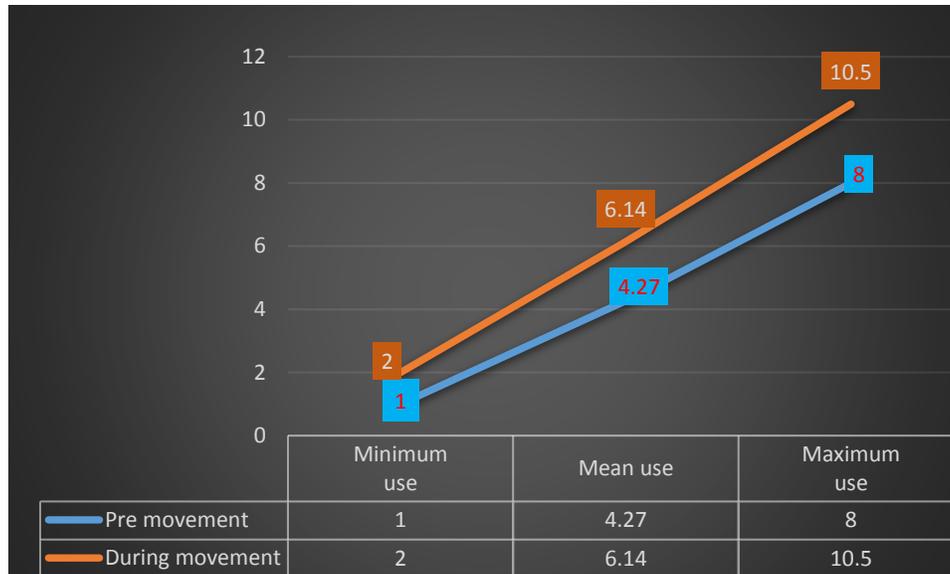
This chart draws a clear picture as to what source seemed to be more reliable during the movement. It shows that a vast majority of the students (81.90%) relied on social media rather than the traditional source of news. Only 18.1% believed that traditional media was still more reliable compared to social media.

Table 4: Factors contributing to reliance on social media extremely

Factors	Number	Percent
Feasible access of social media	250	78.1%
Freedom of expression	235	73.4%
Biasness of mass media	204	63.8%
Inadequate source of information	242	75.6%
Getting updated rapidly	217	67.8%
Initiating global trends	243	75.9%
Source: Prepared by author based on Primary source		

This statistical information gives an overview as to why students think they used social media far more than ever before during the movement. It shows almost 78.1% (250 students out of 320) of students used social media because it is feasible to them. 73.1% of the students used it because it provides freedom of expression to them. 75 % of the respondents used it to keep up with global trends during movement and due to an inadequate source of information. Almost 217 students (67.8%) used it for a quick update about the movement. Biasness of mass media prevented 63.8% from using it rather than social media.

Figure 2: Comparative analysis of the duration of their use of Facebook between pre and during movement



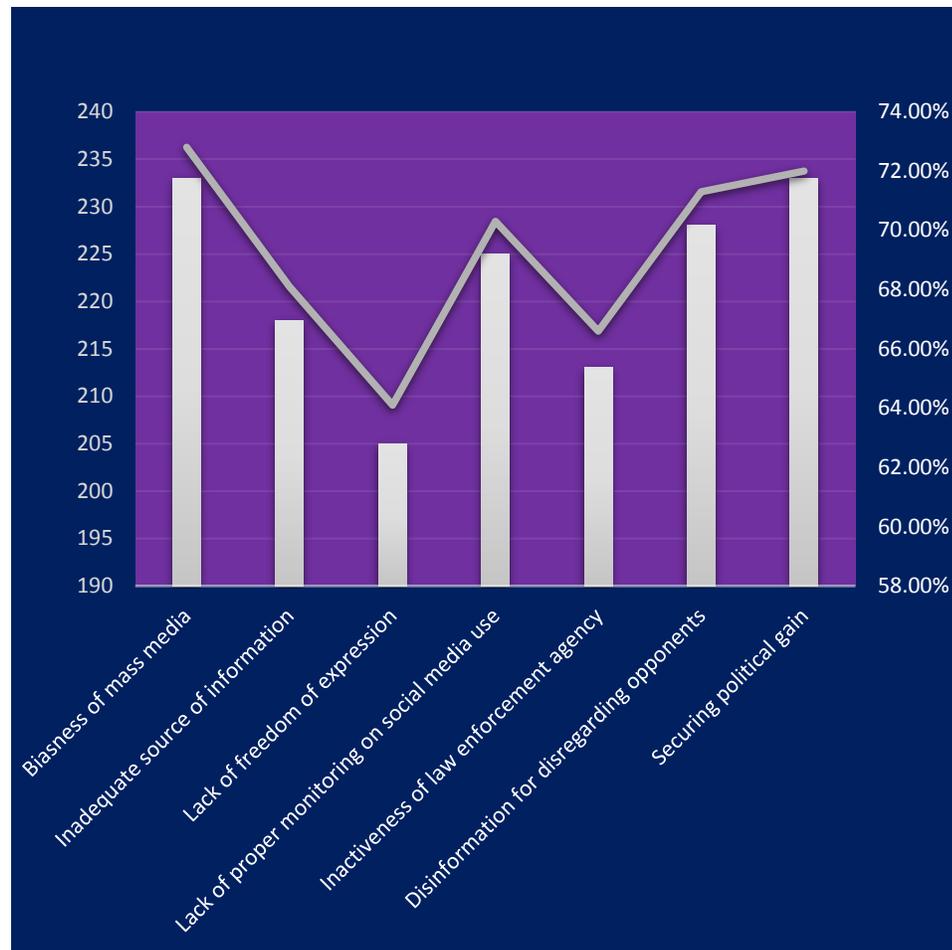
Source: Prepared by the author based on Primary source

The chart provides information regarding the number of time students used Facebook before the movement and during the movement. It is clear from the chart there was a noticeable difference between the amounts of time students spent using Facebook. Before the movement, the minimum use of Facebook was 1 hour while during the movement the minimum hours doubled. Among the respondents included in the study, the maximum number they spent using Facebook before the movement was 8 hours while the maximum limit rose to 10.5 hours during the movement. It is quite understandable why people used so much Facebook during the movement than the previous time.

Risks associated with social media-based student’s movement:

Due to social media-based people’s mobilization and growth of social media reliance, some problems have been created like disinformation, hate speech and negative speech to users. People have sometimes suffered extremely due to these problems including violence eruption and casualties. It has caused a huge security threat from individual to national level. In Quota Reforms Demonstration a number of disinformation had been spread and resulted in many more casualties and injures.

Figure 3: Reason of out breaking disinformation



Source: Prepared by the author based on primary data

This bar chart illustrates information with regard to the reasons why rumour has spread according to the students who participated in the study. Nearly 72% of the students believe that the two main reasons why rumour has been spread were bias of mass media and securing political gain. The second major motive why rumour has been spread was to disregard the opponents according to 70% of the students. It is interesting to note that 61% of students believe that lack of freedom has contributed to rumour spread. However, 69% of the students believe lack of proper monitoring on social media was responsible for a rumor.

Some stories of disinformation:

Death of a Student:

The story is about the death of a student at the University of Dhaka campus as a result of day-long clash with law enforcers during the quota reform movement. The time was on 8th April night, 2018 while students have continued their protest after having clashed with the law enforcers. Law enforcers have used tear shell and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters. In the meantime, the news broke that a students named Abu Bakar belonging to Haji Muhsin Hall was shot dead by police. Suddenly the news has been shared widely and drew a huge response from across the country including civil societies. Students' anger has been on the rise and they came into violence in a reaction to this. Later it was confirmed the students were badly injured but survived.

Fear of Helmet force:

On 9th April amid Quota Reform Movement, a news story has become viral across the social media about Helmet Bahini (a force who wore a helmet for covering up their face before attacking). It was circulated that the ruling party student wings hired some outsiders into the campus for attacking demonstrators, who were then on the spot. Therefore, a horrible environment was created. Then the authority confirmed there were no such outsiders as so-called helmet force.

Tendon cutting;

Sufia Kamal Hall, a dormitory of the female students, of the University of Dhaka, witnessed an event on 11th April at midnight. It was the result of Quota Reform Demonstration procession for several days that started from 8th April. A girl who took part in the demonstration was tortured by a leader of the ruling party student wing who was opposed to the demonstration. Certainly, several colleagues of that girl went live streaming on Facebook and showed the blood on shoes. It went well circulated and viral with the more fabricated story including tendon cutting. Rapidly the news came to dormitory students of the university which made them aggrieved. Many students came out on road, started protesting and continued until the declaration of suspension of that girl from university authority. But, it was later revealed as manipulated information.

Digital Security Act 2018:

Government's immediate reaction towards social media was the formulation of a new law to limit as well as control the arbitrary use of social media. Initially, it strengthened its existing law to bring all perpetrators under trial and but later it turned out as the new law of Digital Security Act 2018. Critics termed it as the tool for suffocating freedom of expression. Therefore, the government termed it as a protective measure to stop hate and defamatory speech. The government also argued to thwart the dissemination of disinformation through online with the help of this new act. ICT minister Mostafa Jabbar said, "One of the main objectives of the proposed law is to ensure the country's security from digital crimes and ensure the security of people's lives and assets". However, it may give rise to the question of freedom of expression. Expression of one's own viewpoint could be harmed by this act and concern has been expressed by different right groups and journalist society, editors' of national dailies and ambassadors of different countries regarding this. Although some members of civil society have filed a petition against section 57 saying it is an assault to freedom of expression on the vague ground, the petition still remained unresolved. Under this act, any criticism against the government, defamation or religious sentiments are classed as crimes. UN special rapporteur Frank La Rue said regarding this section, "Individuals face the constant threat of being arrested, held in pre-trial detention, subjected to expensive criminal trials, fines, and imprisonment, as well as the social stigma associated with having a criminal record" (Asian Forum of Human Rights and Development 2018). To illustrate how this section can bar people from expressing their opinions, it is important to look at some sections of it. For instance, "Section 25 says a person may face up to three years in jail or Tk 3 lakh in fine or both if he or she is found to have deliberately published or broadcast in a website or electronic form -- something which is attacking or intimidating or which can make someone dishonest or disgruntled; knowingly publish or broadcast false and distorted (full or partial) information to annoy or humiliate someone; knowingly publish or broadcast false and distorted (full or partial) information to tarnish the image of the state or to spread rumour"(The Daily Star, 2019). Quota reform movement too faced huge setbacks due to this section. On April 18, 2018 a police filed a case under Cyber Crime Tribunal referring to 43 Facebook posts that people have reacted to with likes or comments mentioning that these posts have caused the unrest. As the movement progressed, there was the blame of spreading rumour against the leaders of the quota reform movement. "As per section 43 of the draft law, a police official can search or arrest anyone without any warrant

issued by a court” (The Daily Star, 2018). Joint convener of the movement was arrested on accusation of spreading rumor going on Facebook live streaming under section 57 of ICT act. Convener of the movement, Hasan Al Maumun, told The Daily Prothom Alo that his Facebook account too has been deactivated by authority to stop their activities. Under section 57 of ICT act, it is legal to punish a person who posts content in electronic form which is fake and defamatory which causes often the violation of the law. It has been used as a means to intimidate and harass people (Prothom Alo 2018). What’s more, under this section of draconian information act one can be arrested simply on the basis of a complaint submitted against him or her regardless of its merit or the person accusing is really affected by it, thus restricting the freedom of expression to a large extent (Bergman,2018).

Social Media in Organizing Protests Worldwide:

In 21st century, social media platforms have challenged the status quo and inspired people around the world to stand for their rights. It has empowered people giving them voice (Sharma, 2015). For this reason, in last decade alone the number of social movement has risen 3 to 4 times more than the previous decade. From then onward, the global community has witnessed so many instances of movements and among them highly consequential ones are Arab Spring, Black lives matter, Turkey’s Gazi Park protest, 2014 Venezuela protest, occupy wall street, and Me too (hashtags) movements. To epitomize how these movements have garnered people’s support and motivated people to take to the street, we will take at the cases of Iran, Arab Spring and Black Lives Matter movements (Simonite, 2017). Firstly, the online movement began drawing global attention with Iranian people taking to the street to protest against election irregularities and to topple president Ahmadinejad in 2009. This “Twitter revolution” started on July 13 immediately after the election result was announced. “Iranian Green Movement” was spearheaded by two opposition leaders, Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi supporters and erupted fast across major cities. Although the supreme leader started an investigation on irregularities on 14th June, violence spread across the country. Government forces became violent to suppress the movement and resultantly killed 36 people according to the government report. The incident of an activist, Neda Aga-soltan, being shot by police was uploaded on social media sites such as Twitter and YouTube and caused huge criticism. In response, the government shut down the telephone system used for exchanging text and blocked websites though they were late to shut down twitter

and the world had received the update via twitter feed (Washington times, 2009). Even if the movement failed to topple the government in the face of the extreme government crackdown, it all started again with the wave of Arab spring across the Middle East on February 14, 2011 with the help of social media(Tusa, 2013).

Another prime example of social media led movement was the Arab Spring that shook the long-standing status quos. On January 25, 2011 social media-inspired thousands of people to take to the street to unseat the then-president Hosni Mubarak after long 30 years in office. Next year the wave of change started in Tunisia, finally leading to Arab spring across the Middle East and North African countries. These movements drew global media attention with the use of twitter and Facebook. Social media provided a unique opportunity to organize the movements which traditional methods of communication could not due to government restriction. Fawaz Rashed, an Egyptian protester wrote on his twitter “We use Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world.” Since an overwhelming majority of social media users are youth, it is quite understandable why social media platforms play such an important role in mobilizing people. Even foreign policy magazine went on to say the revolution the twitter “news moment of the year”. Some hashtags like #Jan25 were so popular, being posted approximately 2,30,000 times per day before Mubarak being toppled down(Shearlaw,2016). This platform eventually became the tool to divide the nation due to the rapid spread of rumours and misinformation. In a recent Ted Talk Wael Ghenmin, one of the kick-starters of the Tahrir Square movement said: “Social media quickly became a battlefield of misinformation, rumours and trolls – the same tool that united us to topple dictators eventually tore us apart,”. Even BBC reported that the hashtag “#I participated in January Revolution” had become a divisive force for the Egyptian nation. What is worse, even the protesters in January were told to be ashamed of themselves due to uprising and spreading rumour (Harlow & Johnson, 2011). The revolutionary spirit of Arabian people started with the death of a Tunisian street vendor of fruits and vegetables, Mohammad Bouazizi. On December 17, 2010 he had his vegetable license revoked by a policewoman who slapped him, spit on his face and used bad words for his dead father simply because he was not able to pay the fine incurred. Being totally insulted and devastated, he set himself on fire. Resultantly, the flame of protest started from his own town, Sidi Bouzid, which later turned out to be Arab Spring. 10th day of the protest brought 23-year rule Ben Ali to an end, igniting the entire Arab region for a change. The fall of Ben Ali swiftly erupted to Egypt,

Jordan, Algeria, Bahrain, Morocco and Syria. (Monsour, 2012) Most of these were highly propelled by social media platforms that help protesters to organize, train and update the world as to what had been going on. In recent years, the voices for addressing social causes and standing for people's own rights has gained strength with the help of social media platforms. With the ever-growing user base of social media sites particularly Facebook and Youtube, the global awareness has been on the rise especially among youngsters. Formation of online communities, organizing groups, stirring the emotional appeal, getting people to take action has all been facilitated by social media platforms (Lim, 2011).

Last certainly not the least, On July 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman who shot dead Trayvon Martin, an African-American teenager, Alicia Garza along with some of her community organizer friends initiated the movement to raise their voices against police brutality, racial profiling and other systematic injustices against African-American people. people across the US started using #BlackLivesMatter on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Tumblr and on other social media sites which got the message out faster (Luibrand& Dey, (2015).A year after that when Zimmerman was set free, another unarmed 18-year old black boy, Micheal Brown, was shot dead in Ferguson Missouri. People from many cities joined the Ferguson protest which became popular when Hilary Clinton and President Barrack Obama used the phrase (Shearlaw,2016). These movements mentioned above all started with an online activist group standing for a cause.

Conclusion:

Students activism through social media has been growing in Bangladesh particularly after the Quota Reform Demonstration. Students mostly use Facebook in order to communicate with others which have nowadays become an effective and inevitable tool to mobilize the students to pursue a particular goal. Facebook group, page, live streaming as well as a chatting option offer the students an opportunity to be more engaged and forge unity amongst them. In this study it was clear that most of the students exploited social media; Facebook, tweeter, WhatsApp as well as YouTube as the tools for dissemination of information bypassing the Mass media. Social media facilities assist the organizer to spread the message, schedule information and outcomes of the demonstration across the country where it matters to gain public support and acceptance. The article also found that the feasible access and availability of social media have made it popular

among the students. However, the concerning point is that in some cases, it has found that the users were not aware of the verification of news that has come through social media post or sharing. Sometimes this poses a threat of spreading misinterpretation and disinformation, thus resulting in large scale violence. In this article, several stories of disinformation were also included that happened mainly during the quota reform demonstration. The negative implications and the reactions from the government on social media activities such as imposing new law, highly censoring as well as monitoring social media sites and their users were also figured out.

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