

Role of social media in shaping communication behavior of urban youth in Bangladesh

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Abstract

It is evident that social media is making strong impact in changing the patterns of interpersonal communication globally. However, the impact is not the same everywhere, especially, it may differ in urban and sub-urban/rural space as well as based on accessibility and quality of Internet. In Bangladesh, few recent phenomena like Shahbag movement have shown that the social media have become a very important communication tool among the urban youth. This paper aims at analyzing what sort of role the social media is playing in shaping their communication patterns and behavior, and how the other factors such as mobility are taking part in such transformation. The study is exploratory, explanatory and descriptive in design, and uses a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods, namely questionnaire survey and in-depth interview, for data gathering that included 300 students in three cities and towns across the country. To gain more insight out of the survey, academics were interviewed as well. The study reveals that social media has become such an inseparable part in Bangladeshi young people's lives that they even "feel like crazy" in its absence. The study also reveals that the Dhaka-youths have become more dependent on social media for their day to day communication than the youth living in other two cities. Their interaction with friends, family and relatives is much lesser than that in other two cities. Another interesting finding of the study is that a significant part of the youth barely knows about the means of human communication except social media.

Keywords: Social media, internet, communication behavior, urban youth, Bangladesh