Harnessing Facebook by Gen Z to Mobilize Masses and Transform Student Protest into Revolution: A Study on Quota Reform Movement 2024 in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The Quota Reform Movement 2024 was initiated as a student-led protest highlighted on reforming the quota system in government jobs in Bangladesh. Initially it was confined to students only, the movement rapidly gained momentum through the strategic use of Facebook, where protesters (Gen Z) created pages and groups named "Baishammo Virudhi Chhatra Andolan" (Anti-Discrimination Student Protest) to organize protest, rallies, share movement activities and circulate videos, photos and news related to the protest. The movement reached a turning point when government-supported Chhatra League attacked on students particularly female participants and police opened fire on unarmed students resulting in six deaths in different universities on July 17, particularly Abu Sayed from Begum Rokeya University killed on July 16. These violent acts, documented and widely disseminated via social media, sparked public outrage. In response, the furious students initiated various protest strategies such as Bangla Blockades, Complete Shutdowns and Marches, alongside symbolic actions like changing Facebook profile pictures to red. Some revolutionary slogans, such as "Tumi ke? Ami ke? Razakar, Razakar" ("Who are you? Who am I? Traitor, Traitor"), further mobilized the masses. As the atrocities of the Sheikh Hasina government spread across social media through Facebook pages and groups, public sentiment grew stronger, transforming the students-led protest into a mass revolution which finally broke down Sheikh Hasina regime 2009-2024. The study is fully carried out through self funding and follows a descriptive methodology conducting on both primary and secondary data along with in-depth interviews. Finally, the study remarks that the future protests and movements will highly be influenced by modern technology.

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Introduction

In the modern age, social media platforms have become powerful tools for gathering masses, particularly in the context of political and social movements and an easy source of information. Social media have been playing a pivotal role in public protest in different countries in the globe and Bangladesh is not so exceptional too. In Bangladesh, Facebook, with 56.6 million users (Dixon, 2024) as one of the most widely used social media platform, has played a vital role in making public opinion, organizing protests, creating support and influencing collective action in Quota Reform Movement - 2024 though other social media such as YouTube, with 36.8 million users (Ceci, 2024), X(twitter) with 1.69 million users (Cemp, 2024), and Linkedin with 7.36 million users, (Markedium, 2023). Khan (2018) stated that the Quota Reform Movement in 2018 was said to be organized through social media, particularly Facebook. Again, the protesters (students) participated in Quota Reform Movement-2024 belong to Generation Z (Gen Z) whose ages are between 12 to 27 and fully engaged in social media and modern technology, which helps the protest to get strong by taking online proofs and spreading them over the mass people.

The Quota System in Bangladesh's government jobs is kind of facilities given to the minority, backward communities, people who are physically incapable and specially to freedom fighters including their children and grandchildren. Abu Alam Shahid Khan, former secretary said, "There needs to be quota for sections of society that lag behind such as women, ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities" (Sohrab & Galib, 2024). But 56 percent jobs in quota (Al Jazeera, 2024), sector wise more than 90 percent, created discrimination in government jobs in Bangladesh. So, the Quota Reform Movement emerged as a powerful issue which gathers students and youths across the nation in unprecedented protest demanding reforms in the quota system which created inequalities in government jobs. In 2018, Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh in Parliament eliminated quota system from government recruitment particularly for first- and second-class jobs (ETV News, 2018). But declaring that order invalid (Financial Express, 2024), the High Court reestablishes Quota System in 2024 which creates public outrage particularly in Students Society and this outrage finally turned into a revolution and breaks down Sheikh Hasina regime (2009-2024). Based on Quota Reform, the protest has been organized through Facebook as it is a cheap way of social communication and widely used for social connection. Tufekci (2014) said that recent mass uprising and immense protests across the world have displayed the evidences that

modern technology-based infrastructure empowers protests and movements in particular way. If we notice some protests like the 'Tahrir Square' uprising in Egypt, 'Tunisia Revolution', 'Occupy Movement in America', 'Arab Spring' and 'Mass uprising' in Sri Lanka, we can find out the widely use of social media there. So, social media influence on public protests has been emerged as a new area of the study.

This paper examines the organizing and mobilizing power of Facebook as a social media in turning the Quota Reform Movement-2024 in Bangladesh from a Student-led protest into Revolution. Moreover, this research aims to explore how Facebook helped to mobilize masses in the movement and the strategies taken by Gen Z protesters to transform the student protest into revolution.

Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the study are followings.

a. To find out the influence of Facebook on mobilizing masses and transforming the student-protest into revolution.

b. To explore the strategies taken by Generation Z (Gen Z) protesters to shape the student-protest into a mass uprising.

Background

After one year of Bangladesh's Independence, since 1972 there was quota system in government jobs for freedom fighters, district area and women. The then government issued an executive order on September 5, 1972, regarding recruitment and distribution of quotas in government, autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions and various corporations and departments. In this,20 percent jobs were merit-based and the remaining 80 percent were kept for district quota in first- and second-class jobs. But in that 80 percent, there were 30 percent for freedom fighters, 10 percent for war affected women and remaining 40 percent for districts (Ferdous, 2017).

Four years later in 1976, the quota allocation was reformed for the first time. During this time, the number of merit based recruitment was increased.In this, metit based jobs were 40 percent and the remaining 30 percent for freedom fighters,10 percent for women,10 percent for war-affected women

and the remaining 10 percent is only districts based.After that the then Ministry of Establishment (Public Administration) amended the quota system in 1985 by including people from ethnic minorities in the quota and increasing the amount of recruitment based on merit. According to this amendment, merit-based quota for first- and second-class jobs was 45 percent and district wise for 55 percent but among that district wise quotas, 30 percent for freedom fighters, 10 percent for women and 5 percent for ethnic minorities that are shown in the table below.

Table 1. Changes in Quota System

Year	Merit	Freedom fighters	Women	War Affected Women	Tribal	District	Total
1972	20	30	0	10	0	40	100
1976	40	30	10	10	0	10	100
1985	45	30	10	0	5	10	100

Source: Ferdous (2017)

The children of freedom fighters were included in the quota system of government jobs in 1997. Keeping the 1985 quota distribution unchanged, an order was issued to allocate only 30 percent freedom fighter quota to sons and daughters of freedom fighters if suitable freedom fighter candidates are not available (Establishment Division, 1997). In 2002, another circular was issued during BNP regime, cancelling the previously issued circulars regarding the allocation of quota for freedom fighters. According to this, 30 percent quota for freedom fighters but if no suitable candidate is found from that 30 percent quota, then the vacancies (cadre and non-cadre) can be filled up by the candidates who stand at the top of the merit list. But when the Awami League-led government was formed in 2009, this directive was cancelled (Tasnim, 2024)**.**

The quota movement took massive shape for the first time in 2018. At the end of January of that year, a student of Dhaka University and two journalists filed a writ in the High Court seeking the cancellation of the quota system in government jobs and its re-evaluation. It also mentioned that the quota system is in conflict with the constitution. But the Supreme Court dismissed the writ in March. Meanwhile, after filing the writ in the court, a page called *'Quota Sanskar Chai'* was opened on the social media Facebook in February and various programs were announced from the page. Again, another page was opened named *'Bangladesh Student Rights Protection Parishad'* on Facebook for the purpose

of quota reform. In April of that year, the quota movement became widespread. Taking part in the movement, the students started boycotting classes and exams all over the country. Finally Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in the Parliament, announced the cancellation of all quotas from first- and second-grade jobs on 11 April, 2018, in the face of continuous agitations (ETV News, 2018).

After six years later on July 2024, the High Court annulled the circular of 2018 and re-introduced the quota system where 30 percent freedom fighter quota, 10 percent district quota, 10 percent women quota, 5 percent minority quota and one percent disabled quota were upheld that is a total of 56 percent. On the contrary, 44 percent is only merit-based, this is just only for first- and second-grade jobs which described in the table below.

Table 2. Quota distribution reinstalled by High Court

Type of quota	Percentage for first & second class jobs
Merit	44
Freedom fighters	30
Women	10
Tribal	5
District	10
Disabled	1
Total	100

Source: Al Jazeera (2024)

But, sector-wise quota is more than 90 percent. For instance, in Primary school assistant teacher recruitment (13th grade), 60 percent female quota, 30 percent freedom fighter quota, 5 percent minority and one percent disabled quota is kept. Here total 96 percent recruitment is on quota but only four percent is on merit which really creates huge disparity in government jobs. To eliminate this discrimination, students called for 'Quota Reform Movement' which is also called *"Baishammo Virudhi Chhatra Andolan" (Anti-Discrimination Students Protest)* which later turned into a revolution in July 2024 and broke down Sheikh Hasina government.

Research Questions

This research has been conducted based on a key question "How did Gen Z utilize Facebook to mobilize masses and to transform the students-protest into revolution"? Searching for the answer to the above question, we also made some sub-questions.

a. Why did protesters (students) choose Facebook as a medium of their protest's activities? And is there any major contribution of Facebook to the Quota Reform Movement-2024 in Bangladesh?

b. Did quota reform movement-2024 get organized and reached everyone through Facebook?

c. Did people get influenced from Facebook to support and participate in the mass protest?

d. Did the protest activities getting public attention by Facebook?

e. Through Facebook what strategies were taken by Gen Z to get involved the general people in the protest which finally turned into revolution?

Literature Review

Most of the literatures identified that there is a huge relationship between social media and mass protest. Hussain and Howard (2012) by analyzing the protests of the Gulf States, they identified the high levels of social media influence on the protests. Even in the low-level protests, there also social media influence they recognized.

Bellin (2012) by examining the four key factors in Egypt and Tunisia: long-lasting grievances, an emotional trigger, a sense of impunity and access to new social media, they remarked that they (factors) triggered protests. And scholars marked the Arab Spring as a social media revolution. Hasan, Ali, and Arnab (2020) showed that Facebook played a pivotal role in organizing and spreading the quota reform movement-2018 in Bangladesh. Their findings suggested that many general people gathered to the protest hearings from Facebook posts. Neumayer and Raffl (2008), by analyzing the role of social media for political movement, they identified some new opportunities. They suggested web blogs, wikipedia, social media and various networking sites offer technology-based help for grassroots activities and to share movement information. But they also argued that by using social media, protests will get public attention, but people who do not use social media will remain uninformed about this.

Valenzuela (2013) remarked that how social media playing vital roles in protests activities. His findings showed that using social media for opinion, views and activities actually helps to create a

coherence among overall social media users and protest behavior. He also suggested that there are a plenty of evidence in both developed and developing countries that people involving in government and political activities, including mass protest are frequently users of social media. Harlow (2011) showed that claiming justice for Guatemalan lawyer Rodrigo Rosenbergthe, social media helped to organize an online protest. Before his murder, he shared a video clip on Facebook and YouTube claiming that he was being killed by Guatemala President Álvaro Colomo. Immediately after his posting video clip on Facebook, users' activities on Facebook helped to organize a massive protest in Guatemala history.

Here we notice that, many literatures showed the influence of social media like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc. on public protest in the modern age. But Facebook power harnessed by Gen Z to mobilize masses and transform the students-protest into revolution is still out of the study. So, this paper attempts to fill up the research gap.

Methodology

This study follows a descriptive method conducting on both primary and secondary data. This paper also collected data from eight hundred respondents including students currently studying in different Colleges and Universities, job holders and general people from eight divisions of Bangladesh trough a survey as the study wants to highlight the facebook power used by Gen Z in quota reform movement-2024 to mobilize masses and transform the protest into revolution.

Besides this, the paper has been carried out based on an indepth interview with the central coordinators of quota reform movement 2024.To explore the protest and strategies taken by protesters via online as well as offline, running central coordinators Hasanat Abdullah (25), Sarjis Alam (25) have been interviewed "How they harnessed Facebook to mobilize masses and transformed the student protest into revolution. And what challenges they faced in doing so". The limitation of the study is— it doesn't include primary and secondary School's students considering their maturity. Beside this, the study doesn't include older people who are more than 60 and don't use mobile phone and internet.

Theoretical Framework

a) Network Society Theory

Castells (2000), is one of the prominent thinkers of 'The Network Society' theory, illustrated that— the network society is a social system based on various networks by information and communication technologies, micro-electronics and digital computers that generate, process, and transfer information based on knowledge accumulated in the nodes of the networks (Castells & Cardoso, 2005). In the network society, individuals are almost free to disseminate information all over the world by utilizing modern technologies. And this form of system that Castells called as 'The Network State' (Castells & Cardoso, 2005). Recently, we find out that 'Quota Reform Movement 2024' in Bangladesh, is organized, coordinated, maintained, and arranged by social media, particularly Facebook which according to Castells (2000) can be called as 'networked social movement' of the modern age.

b) Technological Determinism Theory

The theory 'technological determinism' was emerged by Thorstein Veblen and the theory illustrated the proposition that modern technology in any community or society identifies its nature. Through the technological advancement, Facebook has emerged as one of the prominent social media platforms having billions of users in Bangladesh. From making electoral campaigns for any political party to protest against them, Facebook has a pivotal role here. And this huge level of technological dependency of today's society has correlated with a new theory called Technological Determinism (Communication Theory, 2018). The study has been explained through these theories as the aim of the study is to find out the power of Facebook used by Gen Z to transform the student-protest into revolution.

Sampling

The study collects data from all the eight divisional areas of Bangladesh. Therefore, this paper chose to use clustered sampling here. Actually, conducting survey all over the country is time-consuming and too costly. So, for avoiding such difficulties, this paper chooses the samples in categorizing (Students, Professionals and Masses). Through cluster sampling, one can divide the country into Zila, Upazila, districts, or Zip code areas and choose groups of people from there. In the study, data

has been collected randomly from 100 respondents to each divisional area of Bangladesh and total 800 responses have been collected from all over the country.

Findings

The survey of this study has been conducted on eight hundred respondents including students, job holders, business men and general people from each divisional region in Bangladesh. Among them, the most are students who studying at different colleges and universities. Again, a large number of ages among the respondents are between 18-26 years which indicates that they belong to generation Z. Table 3 shows the age range among respondents.

Table 3. Age range among Respondents

Age range	Number of Respondents
15-17	25%
18-26	65%
27-32	5%
33- 60	5%

Again, the study shows that among the respondents of the survey, there are 76 percent students, 11 percent job holders, 12 percent general people and one percent others. Table 4 shows that among the respondents, majority are from students as they are center of the protest.

Table 4. Profession of Respondents

Profession	Percentage
Job holder	11
General People	12
Student	76
Others	1

The study also shows that in response to a question 'do you use internet'? we get 100% reply 'yes'. This result claims that all respondents use internet.

Table 5. Internet users among respondents

Internet Users	Non-Users
100%	0%

And when they were asked *'which media do you use most'?* 95 percent replied Facebook, four percent YouTube and others one percent. It claims that Facebook has most domination over Bangladeshi social media users.

Table 6. Social media users among respondents

Media name	Users
Facebook	95%
YouTube	4%
Others	1%

Moreover, the reason behind their most using Facebook is 65 percent for news, 10 percent for education and 25 percent for entertainment. Table 7 shows that a large number of people use Facebook for daily news.

Table 7. Reasons for using Facebook most

Reason	Respondents
For news	65%
For education	10%
For entertainment	25%

Again, the respondents were asked, *'From which media did you get informed first about quota reform movement-2024'?* The reply we get that 95 percent from Facebook, four percent from YouTube and remaining from others media. It ultimately supports Table 7 where most people use Facebook for news.

Table 8. People heard protest news first from

Media name	Peoples' inform rate
Facebook	95%
YouTube	4%
Others	1%

The above tables indicate that Facebook as a social media has a powerful impact on Bangladeshi internet users including students, job holders and general people. And here the Power of Facebook harnessed by Generation Z is the protesters (students) created Facebook group and Page named *Baishammo Virudhi Chhatra Andolan* for each region to organize the protest and to gather students as *Fahim Faruki,* a protester and third-year international relations student at Dhaka University, said, "*The students organized the protests through a Facebook group and were not backed by any political organization"* (Al Jazeera, 2024). Here, it's clear that, to mobilize the protesters and organize the protest, Gen Z used Facebook as part of their strategy.

The findings of the study also highlights that the people got influenced to participate in the protest are 95 percent from Facebook, four percent from YouTube and remaining one percent from others media. It shows that Facebook has a great influencing power on Bangladeshi social media users comparing to others media.

Table 9. People influenced by media

Media name	Influence rate
Facebook	95%
YouTube	4%
Othes	1%

And asking a question *'what's your contribution on the protest'*? We find some interesting answer that shows 50 percent were involved in the protest through both physically and Facebook activities, 30 percent involved by physically only. And remaining 20 percent only by Facebook activities.

Table 10. Contribution type on the protest among respondents

Contribution type	Number of Contributors
Physically & Facebook activities	50%
Physically only	30%
Facebook activities only	20%

The tables indicate that protesters used Facebook as a weapon. Regarding on the Table 9 and 10, a protester said that *"We are all interconnected with Facebook and durning the protest we shared Facebook posts, protest updates one another so that it can reach to everyone and to mobilize masses in the protest".*

Another protester and student said, "*The coordinators updated the protest information via Facebook and we shared it to everyone to get support, for instance: changing Facebook Profile with red colour and one point's demand, Sharing slogan and police atrocities to the public".* So, here it's clear that protesters used Facebook to reach the protest everyone and mobilize masses.

This paper also highlighted a question *"Why internet was shutdown durning the protest from 18 to 28 July?"* To this question, 60 percent of the respondents commented that "*Government wanted to stop the protest"* and 35 percent commented that "*government wanted to divert the masses from the protest".* And only 5 percent claims *'other reasons'* but they didn't mention any. The below table shows that when protest rapidly spread across the nation via social media then, government determined to impose ban on internet.

Table 11. Reason behind internet and Facebook shutdown during protest

Reason	Respondents Views
Government wanted to stop the protest	60%
To divert mass people from protest	35%
Others	5%

To identify the relation between *'Internet Black out' and 'Protest Stopping'* our survey shows that all the respondents use internet and 95 percent of them have Facebook account too. And Al Jazeera claims with us that government banned internet and social media to quell the protest (Munir, 2024).

Table 12. Internet and Facebook users among respondents

Users type	Number of users
Internet users	100%
Facebook users	95%

Regarding on Table 11 and 12, in response to a question *'Why protesters choose Facebook to organize the protest'?*, they replied *''Facebook is available and easy way to all in Bangladesh''*. Here is the key point why government banned internet, particularly Facebook for three days more (Munir, 2024). Here, it indicates that government get scared of the strategies of protesters how rapidly they get the protest supported by general people using Facebook and others tools like *VPN (highest number of users during protest)* (New Age, 2024), bypassing internet access etc. That's why government banned internet including Facebook to dismantle the protest as Abdullah (2024) said*, "The shutdown was initially justified by Palak (ICT minister in Sheikh Hasina regime) as a response to a fire at a data center. However, the investigation has since debunked this claim, revealing that the shutdown was a deliberate act to suppress the student-led quota reform movement that had gained momentum across the country"*. Therefore, the strategies Gen Z used here is using VPN, bypassing internet access.

When respondents were asked, "*By watching videos, pictures, atrocities on students including children (UN, 2024) by police on social media, people got influenced and participated in the protest," do you agree with the statement?* We got 100 percent reply 'yes'.

Table 13. People got influenced and involved in protest by watching atrocities on media

Reply type	Percentage
Yes	100
No	0

A respondent from Savar, Dhaka said, "*The general people also started to get inspired by various videos, pictures and news of the student movement on Facebook. People could not keep themselves confined to their homes by seeing torture and murder of students on Facebook and YouTube. They also joined the movement in solidarity with the students. Basically, the movement is fruitful only by fostering the unity of all*". Here they recognized the protester's strategies based on internet that is "*sharing various videos, pictures and news of the movement on Facebook*".

This paper also highlights that 96 percent respondents believe that various strategies taken by Gen-Z like *March for Justice, Remembering the Heroes, Bangla Blockade, Changing Facebook profile with red colour, March to Dhaka9*, points to one-point, various slogans "*Tumi ke ami ke? Razakar, Razakar' '(who you? Who I? Razakar, Razakar) etc.* helped the movement to turned into mass protest. And remaining 4 percent believe 'others' but they didn't mention any.

Table 14. Strategies helped to transform the movement into Mass protest

Strategy type	Respondents Views
Strategy taken by students	96 %
Others	4 %

Respondents who thought the above strategies mobilized masses and turned student movement into mass protest, one of them, *an assistant teacher in Primary School* said that "*For one and a half decades, the way opposite political parties had been fighting against the ruling party actually bored the mass people hearing the same strategy more and more.But the strategies taken by students were new, for instance: Bangla Blockade, March for Justice, Remembering the Heroes, March to Dhaka, Changing Facebook profile with red colour and one point's demand, several revolutionary slogans for example "Tumi ke Ami ke? Razakar, Razakar" (Who you? Who I? Razakar, Razakar),"Cheyecilam Odhikar, hoy gelam Razakar "(Wanted our right, became we razakar), "Buker vitor onek zor,buk petesi guli kor" (Much sorrow in heart, we lay chest, shot gun), "Ek dui tin char, Sheikh Hasina godi char" (One two three, Sheikh Hasina flee), "Tor quota tui ne,amar bhai ferot de" (Take your quota, back my brother's life), "Diyechito rokto aro debo rokto,rokter bonnay beshe jabe onnay" (Shade our blood, more we bleed; by flood of blood, injustice would be buried),which strongly attracted public sentiment.* Thus, finally the movement which was confined to students only, later it turned into a mass protest which broke down Sheikh Hasina regime (2009-2024)".

Beside this, a student and a few of the respondents said that *"People thought students are like their children, when they(students) lay their chest before the gun, when they were being killed randomly, and when these barbarous scenes were disseminated via social media particularly Facebook, then people directly involved in the movement which turned the students protest into a revolution".*

At the final stage of our study, we interviewed two central coordinators, '*How they harnessed Facebook to mobilize masses and transform the students-protest into revolution and what challenges they faced in doing so?'.* One central coordinator replied, *"We never imagine that the protest would turn into revolution and Sheikh Hasina fled to India. What we wanted? We demanded quota reform only but when government continued stream ruler on students including children (UN, 2024), general public then it crossed the boundary of students and spread over the mass people".*

He also added that *"We created page and group on Facebook to organize the protest and to reach it everyone. Movement activities were directed from different Facebook groups and various posts related to movement were shared to gather masses but when the protest was uprising then, government banned Internet, Facebook. And when Facebook was banned, we faced difficulties".*

Another central coordinator, also commented the same but he added a complement that *"Facebook brought blessing for us. At the beginning of the movement when stream line media didn't coverage our activities, we used Facebook as a weapon to reach our protest everyone till the end".*

From the above comments, we finally can decide that the protesters (Gen Z) harnessed Facebook's organizing and mobilizing power properly and their strategies based on offline and online helped them to spread the protest from students to mass people which finally turned the students protest into revolution in the history of Bangladesh and broke down Sheikh Hasina regime from 2009-2024.

Discussion

Quota Reform Movement started after the cancellation of 2018 circular and re-introduction of quota by the High Court on 5 July, 2024, especially the students of public universities called for this movement first. To make the movement strong and reach everyone, public groups called *'Baishammo Virudhi Chhatra Andolan'* (*Anti-Discrimination Student Protest)* were first opened on Facebook for each area like Dhaka, Sylhet, Rajshahi, Kumilla etc. Basically, from the Facebook groups, the protesters(students) used to share photos and videos of the movement and gave instructions on what the program would be every day. Besides, a private group was opened on Messenger with the coordinators(*Samannayak)*, where the coordinators discussed and decided the program and later shared on the Facebook groups. A co-coordinator said that '*We discussed on the upcoming events of the protest in our private Messenger group and after fixing a decision, we delivered that on social media and our Facebook groups'.* Facebook and messenger basically were the main resources of the students through which movement-programs and directions were given and these were shared to other private universities and college students. Moreover, each university has its own Facebook group such as *Amra SUSTian and SUST Insider* for Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, *DU Insider* for Dhaka University, *RU Insider* for Rajshahi University, *CU Insider* for Chittagong University, *JU Insider* for Jahangirnagar University etc., and the updates of the movement were shared in these Facebook groups. In the first stage of the protest, organizing and communicating power of Facebook were properly harnessed in imparting students, instructing the protest-programme and conveying the message of the movement to other students as it was the major and easy way to the protesters (students). And the analysis of Table 12 shows that protesters (students) chose Facebook and created Page, Group only becsuse it was easy and available for all in Bangladesh; that's why, to reach the protest everyone, they focused on Facebook. Again, a co-coordinator said that *"We chose Facebook at the First stage when no stream line media coveraged us, after that it became comfortable to organize the protest and gathering students including general people till the end".* Thus, Facebook was becoming the primary way of students through which protesters were organized by sharing various pictures and videos including live as Fahim Faruki, a protester and third-year international relations student at Dhaka University, said *"The students organized the protests through a Facebook group and were not backed by any political organization* (Al Jazeera, 2024).

The protest took massive shape when the government-supported *'Chatra League'* attacked on general students, particularly when pictures and videos of the Chatra League's attacks on female students (Prothom Malo, 2024a) were spread on newspapers and Facebook. Besides, on July 16, when pictures and videos (Desh TV News, 2024) of *Abu Sayed* (a student of Begum Rokeya University's English department) killing was spread widely on Facebook, it created a huge reaction in mass people *as it was reported that "When Abu Sayed, an unarmed student of Begum Rokeya University, was martyred by the police on July 16, his picture became a source of inspiration for the protesters. The picture of Abu Sayed became an icon of resistance and revolution"* (Rakib, 2024). Moreover, on July 17, when students of Dhaka University, Rajshahi University, Jahangirnagar University and Comilla University were attacked (The Daily Star, 2024) by the police and their pictures spread over social media particularly on Facebook, then the movement turned into a mass protest. Actually, after seeing these atrocities on Facebook, the narrative going to be changed; even people who supported Awami League (government party), now they dislike and the civil society feeling bored as the secretary of *Sushasoner* Jonno Nagarik (SHUJAN) Badiul Alam Majumder said *"Awami League won a landslide victory with the support of the young generation in 2009. How this happened, what happened that students from high schools to universities are against Awami League, he wondered"* (Prothom Alo, 2024b). Regarding this, a respondent said that *"Protest was confined to students only, but the atrocities of 16, 17 and 18 July got mass people furious. After seeing the atrocities on social media, they didn't confine them in home; when they involved in protest, it turned into massive shape".* Thus, Facebook as a social media played a pivotal rule to create public opinion and organize mass protest. A day later on July 18, internet service was turned off and after 10 days, on July 28, it was turned on again. Here the interesting thing is that even though the internet was switched on July 28, but Facebook was off; it switched on 3 days later (Munir, 2024). In addition, to remove the Barbarous contents from Facebook committed by police and Chatra League, government requested Facebook authority so that protest can be diverted (The Business Standard, 2024). Moreover, Table 11 shows that *"60 percent people believe that government wanted to stop the protest by shutting down Facebook and internet and 35 percent believe that government wanted to divert mass people from the protest".* Here one thing is clear that government wanted to control over Facebook and tried to remove Facebook Contents related to the protest as it (Facebook) was keeping a huge contribution to gather mass people in the revolution.

Meanwhile, the students made 9 points demands but the government did not accept. In the beginning of August, when teachers, lawyers and people of various professions joined the movement, the student protest turned into a revolution, while everyone (students, teachers, mass people) changed their Facebook profiles with red colour *(symbol of blood)* photo to show their affection for the martyrs. To get the protest moving in a rapid motion, protesters arranged various programmes named *Remembering the Heroes, March for Justice, Bangla Blockade, Complete Shutdown and March to Dhaka.* On August 3, as the nine-points were not met up, and the government continuing supported for 'chatra league' along with 'police firing', the protesters called for *one-point demand (resignation of Sheikh Hasina government)*, while everyone changed their Facebook profiles with one-point's demand. On August 4, the government shut down the internet again to counter the revolution and on August 5, keeping internet off along with social media particularly Facebook, the government resigned and fled to India when protesters occupied the *Ganabhaban (prime minister's house)*. It shows that government again and again feared the internet specially Facebook as a social media and tried to turn it off so that protesters couldn't be organised and the revolution could be dismantled. Again, one thing has been seen here after the post-revolution that it has created huge public awareness including school students. Even, on any public issues, Facebook influence has been noticed significantly after the revolution, like 'Age Issue in Government Job', 'Auto Pass in HSC' (Higher Secondary School Certificate). Therefore, this revolution, by creating the path of social media inclusion in public protests, can influence on the future political movements and issues in Bangladesh and other countries of the world.

Conclusion

This study found that 100 percent respondents got influenced and participated in the protest by watching atrocities on social media. By creating Facebook page and group, sharing Facebook posts, protest activities, news related to movement, students organized the protest, gathered protesters and reached the protest everyone. And 96 percent respondents-views show the impact of Gen Z strategies which helped to transform student protest into revolution. Moreover, when government-suppurated *Chatra League* attacked on students particularly female students who participating in the protest and police firing on unarmed students, killed six on 17 July in different universities, with *Abu Sayed* killed on 16 July from *Begum Rokeya University*, and immediately when these heinous scenes disseminated via Facebook page and group, it resulted in generating painful emotions in the public sentiment. At the first stage, as streamline media didn't coverage the protest, by using Facebook, sharing the videos,

photos, news and police open-firing on unarmed students, Chatra League attack on them (even they continued sharing government atrocities by using VPN when Facebook and the internet were banned), students (protesters) got the protest reached everyone and influenced people to participate in the protest to the end. Finally, when teachers, lawyers, doctors, and mass people got involved in in the movement, then it crossed the boundary of students and turned into a mass protest which broke down Sheikh Hasina regime 2009-2024. A central coordinator, recognizing Facebook's usefulness he said, *"Facebook brought blessing for us. At the beginning of the movement when stream line media didn't coverage our activities, we used Facebook as a weapon to reach our protest everyone till the end".* Further when the protest got mass uprising shape through social media particularly Facebook and public opinion gathered based on one point demand (Sheikh Hasina Resignation), then government banned internet particularly Facebook for 3 days more to quell the protest, but failed. Therefore, we can take a conclusion from here that, by utilizing their strategies and Facebook's organizing and mobilizing power, Gen Z (protesters) gathered masses in the movement which finally transformed the students-protest into revolution. Along with revolutionary students, both central coordinators and moderators of Facebook groups and pages think that digital technology helped to organize the protest on large scale. And they further stated that future movements in the modern world would be digital technology based.

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