

Role of Social Networking Sites in Civic Engagement of Marginalized Urban Youth of Bangladesh

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Abstract

Limited civic engagement of marginalized groups has always been a concern. Social Networking Sites are becoming a great platform for the youth residing in rural areas, to voice their words and become part of change. This study aims to identify the civic activities that they are engaged in, examine the role of social networking sites, and explore the associated challenges faced by the marginalized youth while using social media for civic engagement. The study has been conducted using both quantitative and qualitative approach to validate the findings through triangulation and give more reliable data. Non-probability sampling technique was applied to select participants who fulfilled specific criteria. This study followed 'Civic Voluntarism Model' and covered a varied demographic profile that essentially grasped the wider background of the marginalized youth.

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Community events as the most common civic activity among marginalized youth. Traditional approaches for civic participation often bypass marginalized youth because of their socio-economic isolation. However, the data indicates the positive impact of social networking sites on their civic activities. They show a greater preference to engage with political and civic issues online compared to offline. Lack of internet access, misinformation or fake news, online harassment or bullying, limited knowledge about political issues, censorship, or platform restrictions are some of the common challenges identified by the study. The findings will help reduce the engagement gap by providing actionable insights to policymakers, NGOs, educators and community organizations with information on how to improve civic engagement and empower marginalized youth.

Keywords: Civic Engagement, Marginalized Groups, Youth, Social Networking Sites (SNS), Digital Platform, Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM).

Introduction

Civic Engagement refers to the activities in which individuals participate in their community in order to enhance conditions for rest or to help shape the community's future (Adler & Goggin, 2005), such as advocacy, volunteering, political activism etc. Research shows that the active participation of young people in their communities (known as "youth civic engagement") is linked to various kinds of beneficial outcomes like- higher self-esteem, a greater sense of community ethos, greater community pride and lower crime rates. However, studies showed that urban youth, especially marginalized groups, do not participate in youth programs at the same level as their suburban counterparts (Brown & Evans, 2002). This low level of participation by marginalized urban youth is linked to a variety of barriers that they face every day, including spatial and social exclusion

(UN-Habitat, 2015; UNDESA, 2009). In cities like Mymensingh rapid urbanization has driven migration to informal settlements and has created many challenges for the marginalised youth in participating in civic activities. However, the rise of Social Networking Sites (SNS) has opened a bridge to overcome these gaps. Globally social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok are becoming safe spaces for youth to be vocal and initiate campaigns (Friel, 2021). According to the Population and Housing Census 2022, about 26.4 percent of the total population in Bangladesh are youth (age between 15-29) (The Daily Star, 2023). Ensuring civic engagement for this vast population has become a challenge for the country especially individuals facing spatial and social exclusion. 45 percent of the youth population works less than 40 hours a week, mostly in low-paid informal jobs and 29 percent of the youth population is not in education, employment or training (NEET) and the vast majority of NEET youth are female (87%) (Save the Children, 2021). At the same time, the digital landscape in Bangladesh is evolving. In June 2023, internet penetration increased to 73.46 percent and around 12 crore individuals are using mobile internet (BTRC, 2023) but severe digital divides persist, especially among women and ethnic minorities. Marginalised communities often lack regular access to smartphones or the digital skills necessary to navigate social media effectively (Save the Children, 2021).

This study focuses on marginalized urban youth in Mymensingh City, who face both spatial and social exclusion. This research addresses the gap in understanding the civic activities that marginalized youth are engaged in in Mymensingh City and whether SNS play a significant role in that. It aligns with exploring the challenges they face in enhancing their social and political participation. The study aligns with the United Nations SDGs, particularly goals 10 and 16. Goal 10 aims to reduce inequalities, while goal 16 emphasizes the need for inclusive and participatory societies. Besides the study also encompasses the element of UNCRC and Bangladesh's

National Youth Policy where they recognize the role of youth in fostering democracy and seeks to improve their access to technology and civic opportunities (MoYS, 2017). The research contributes to these agendas by exploring whether social networking sites (SNS) can address inequalities and foster youth engagement among marginalized youth. By examining the role and challenges, the study sheds light on how social networking sites can be utilized for inclusivity and empowerment.

Civic Engagement and Marginalized Youth

The term civic engagement encompasses a wide range of activities and behaviours that people can engage in to improve their communities and help solve problems (Jain, 2024). Civic engagement can include both individual or collective actions in which people participate in volunteer services that strengthen the local communities or society in general and address issues of public concern, including civic, political, and social dimensions (Procentese et al., 2019; Kahne & Middaugh, 2012). Youth aged 15 or above are neither born marginalized nor inherently vulnerable. As the rights and interests of young people are taken adequately by societies, youth and their communities suffer as a result (UNV, 2014). Marginalization in urban areas is accelerated by overlapping factors such as ethnicity, gender, disability, and migration status, which further restrict their opportunities and engagement in civic and political spheres as well as their decision-making process (UN, 2018; UN, 2020).

Role and Challenges of Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Digital tools can empower underrepresented groups but most youths primarily use them for basic purposes, like- communicating with friends or browsing educational content. However, social networking sites like-Facebook, Twitter (officially known as X since July 2023), and Instagram provide accessible platforms for marginalized youth or individuals who are less open and introverted, to express their options, mobilize for collective action, and

participate in civic and political engagement (Samsuddin et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2013; Loader et al., 2014).

Marginalized youth face many challenges like-the tendency of feeling estranged from political systems, finite resources, the superficial character of some engagement efforts, and difficulties in ensuring representation from distinctive youth populations (Brady et al., 2020). Other key issues associated with social networking sites can be identified as- digital divide, lack of digital literacy, limited access to reliable internet and digital devices, misinformation or fake news, online harassment, algorithmic biases limiting their exposure and reach in broader political and civic discussions (Hargittai, 2010; Van Deusen & Helsper, 2015; UN-Habitat, 2020; Guess et al., 2020; Citron, 2014; Noble, 2018).

In recent years, youth civic engagement has gained substantial momentum through digital platforms and grassroots movements, emphasizing the need for inclusive dialogue, capacity building, and active citizenship to shape a discrimination-free and prosperous Bangladesh (Liller, 2024). Despite the challenges, social media platforms empower youth activism by enabling organization and mobilization, highlighting the need for digital literacy, responsible use, and legal protection to enhance their impact (Sato, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM)

The Civic Voluntarism Model is an explanatory model developed by Verba et al. in 1995 that rests on three factors: resources, psychological engagement with politics, and access to networks through which individuals can be recruited to political life. This model has been used extensively in research to analyze several demographic factors affecting political participation, such as gender, race or socioeconomic status. It implies that individuals may refrain from political engagement due to lack of resources,

disinterest or insufficient encouragement from their social networks. The model also blends concepts from social capital theory, emphasizing how trust and community connections can continue to strengthen civic engagement.

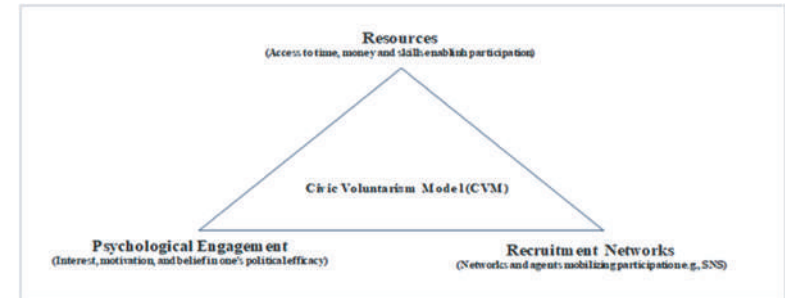


Figure 1 Civic Voluntarism Model

Source: Verba et al., 1995

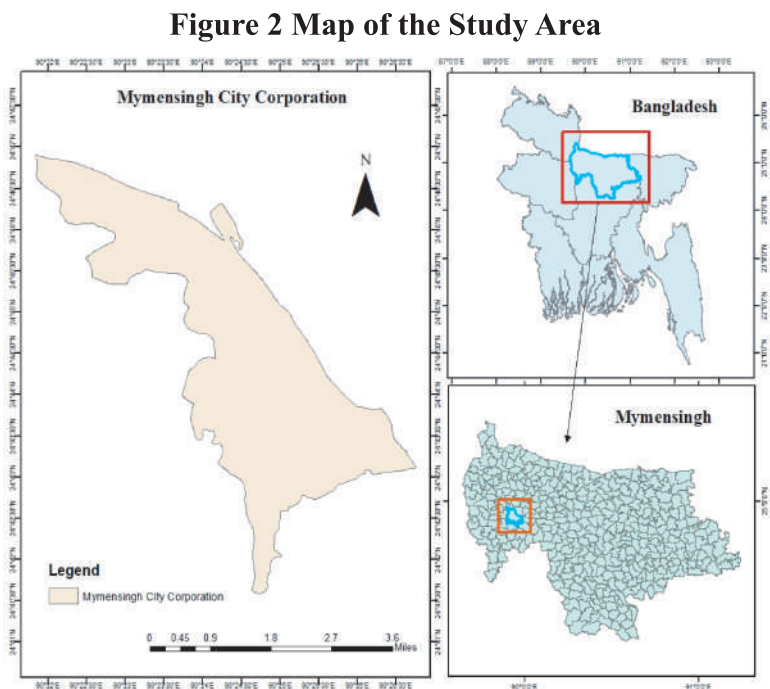
Civic Voluntarism Model provides a comprehensive approach to realizing why certain individuals engage in political activities while others do not, highlighting the interplay between individual capabilities and social influences (Verba et al., 1995).

The Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) presents a solid framework to examine the political and civic activities that individuals engage in. This model aligns with the study's objectives to find out how marginalized youth engage in civic activities in their community and through social networking sites. By focusing on the interplay of resources, psychological engagement and recruitment networks, this model matches the study's objectives to identify the civic engagement level using social platforms and the challenges for youth participation.

This model not only provides a theoretical framework but also serves as a guide to structure data collection and analysis. The survey questionnaire was made in accordance with the components of this model to enable a comprehensive understanding of their part in promoting social and political participation among marginalized urban youth.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed quantitative research method, supplemented by qualitative data on a limited scale. This condition can be termed a mixed-method approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). For field-level data, considering the resources, time and distance, “Mymensingh City Corporation” in Bangladesh was selected purposively. The city’s blend of educational, cultural, and urban features provides an ideal location for this research.



Source: Author; Generated Using ArcGIS

Research Design Matrix

Here the research design matrix has been given to provide a structured approach, aligning research objectives with appropriate methods and analysis techniques.

Table 1: Research Design Matrix

Specific Objectives	Research Approach	Research Methods	Data Collection Methods and Instruments	Analysis Procedures	Tentative Outcomes
Identify the types of civic engagement, marginalized youth participate in Mymensingh City	Mixed Method	Survey Method (structured questionnaire)	Face-to-face interviews Online Survey	Descriptive statistics using SPSS (frequency, percentages, cross-tabulation)	Categorization of different forms of civic engagement among marginalized youth.
		Key Informant Interviews (unstructured questionnaire)	Face-to-face interview Telephone interview	Verbatim analysis of KII responses	Understanding the extent and nature of their participation
Examine the role of SNS in civic engagements	Mixed Method	Survey Method (structured questionnaire)	Face-to-face interviews Online Survey	Descriptive statistics using SPSS (frequency, percentages, cross-tabulation, dominance response identification)	Insights into how SNS facilitates or limits civic engagement.
		Key Informant Interviews	Face-to-face interview	Verbatim analysis of interview transcripts	Identification of key digital platforms used

Specific Objectives	Research Approach	Research Methods	Data Collection Methods and Instruments	Analysis Procedures	Tentative Outcomes
Explore the challenges faced by marginalized youth while using social platforms for civic engagement.	Mixed Method	(unstructured questionnaire)	Telephone interview		for mobilization
		Survey Method (structured questionnaire)	Face-to-face interviews	Descriptive statistics using SPSS (frequency distribution, percentages, cross-tabulations)	Clear identification of barriers to SNS-based civic engagement.
			Online Survey		
		Key Informant Interviews (unstructured questionnaire)	Face-to-face interview Telephone interview	Verbatim analysis of KII responses	Recommendations for addressing these challenges

Source: Author

Data Collection Technique

Data was collected in December 2024. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection have been used. Offline data collection mode is applied using different data collection tools and instruments. Only the youth aged between 18-29 were allowed to participate.

Sampling

This study conducted a non-probability purposive sampling technique to select participants who fulfil this study's specific criteria. The total sample size is 114. Among the samples, 110 were surveyed and 4 were KII (Key Informant Interview) respondents.

Data Preparation and Analysis

The survey data was collected from a total of N=110 respondents using a structured questionnaire consisting of 32 close-ended questions. The collected data were stored and sorted to make the data reliable and compatible for further analysis with the help of statistical tools like Statistical Package for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS version 27) and MS Excel. Outliers were removed and multiple-response questions were broken into variables. Five multiple-response questions were broken into parts based on the answers. After the manipulation of the data, a total of 56 variables were developed. To analyse the quantitative data, frequency analysis, Cross tabulation and Dominance response index were used.

Here, the study has also measured the dominant response with the help of range rank distribution from the weights of the Likert scale. The study used a five-point Likert scale for a quick and authentic response from the participants. Range Rank Ratio (RRR) was utilized to divide the scale on a five-point Likert scale, 1 is the minimum value and 5 is the highest. The RRR categorise

the mean of the variables into the levels of the Likert scale. The formula for ranging the categories is below (Lindner & Lindner, 2024):

$$\text{Range Interval} = \frac{\text{Maximum Level (5)} - \text{Minimum Level (1)}}{\text{Number of Levels (5)}}$$

For a five-point Likert scale, the interval is 0.8. The interval and interpretation of an example of five-point Likert Scale used in the questionnaire given in the table below:

Table 2: Interval and Interpretation of a Five-Point Likert Scale

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00 - 1.80	Always
1.81 - 2.60	Often
2.61 - 3.40	Sometimes
3.41 - 4.20	Rarely
4.21 - 5.00	Never

For the qualitative part, Thematic Analysis using Quotes or Verbatim Method was used to substantiate findings with participant's exact words, bringing authenticity and depth to data. Following the above procedures, and based on the objectives, respondent's responses have been summarized and categorised to analyse and discuss. Moreover, for drawing a conclusion, results from quantitative and qualitative data have been converged and interpreted where necessary, though they have supplemented each other.

Validity and reliability of the collected data have been facilitated through triangulation of data by using different methods of data collection, such as surveys, face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews and verbatim analysis.

After analysing the reliability value on SPSS, the value of Cronbach's Alpha or coefficient alpha is 0.745 which indicates a good degree of internal consistency (Yockey, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 110 surveys were conducted for the quantitative study. The background characteristics of the marginalized youth are presented in Table 5.

Table 3: Frequency of the demographic profile

Variable	Factor	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	72	65.5
	Female	38	34.5
Religion	Hindu	34	30.9
	Muslim	65	59.1
	Christian	5	4.5
	Buddhist	6	5.5
Education Level	No formal Education	11	10
	Primary School	31	28.2
	Secondary School	26	23.6
	Higher Education	42	38.2
Community/ Ethnicity	Bengali	78	70.9
	Ethnic Community	11	10
	Horizon Community	21	19.1
Occupation	Student	35	31.8
	Formal Job	18	16.4
	Informal Job	40	36.4
	Unpaid care work	17	15.5
Total Respondents		N=110	100

Source: Author, generated using SPSS

Civic Activities

The first objective of this study is to identify civic activities among marginalized youth in Mymensingh City. After reviewing several kinds of literature, this study gathered some of the most common civic activities done in a community and tried to get responses from the respondents on whether they are involved in those activities or not.

Table 4: Frequency of Civic Activities

Civic Activities in the Community	Responses	Total	Percentage
Volunteered in local community events or projects	Yes	43	17.6
	No	67	
Volunteering with a youth club or leadership group	Yes	44	18
	No	66	
Supporting or participating in awareness campaigns	Yes	28	11.4
	No	82	
Signing petitions for social or political causes	Yes	9	3.7
	No	101	
Attending protests, rallies or community meetings	Yes	44	18
	No	66	
Donating money or resources to charity or social causes	Yes	49	20
	No	61	
Participated in no activities	Yes	28	11.4
	No	82	

Some of the respondents said that they are not usually active civically but if there is any kind of religious-related program or rally in their community, they would participate

in that program. Another respondent was said to be greatly active in sports and he even initiated a sports club in the Horizon community to engage more youth in his club. Even if few youths in these communities don't engage in any kind of civic activities besides their daily work, some engage in multiple activities too.

Figure 3 unveils data on cumulated civic engagement in marginalized communities, narrating the distribution of individuals based on the number of civic activities they participate in.

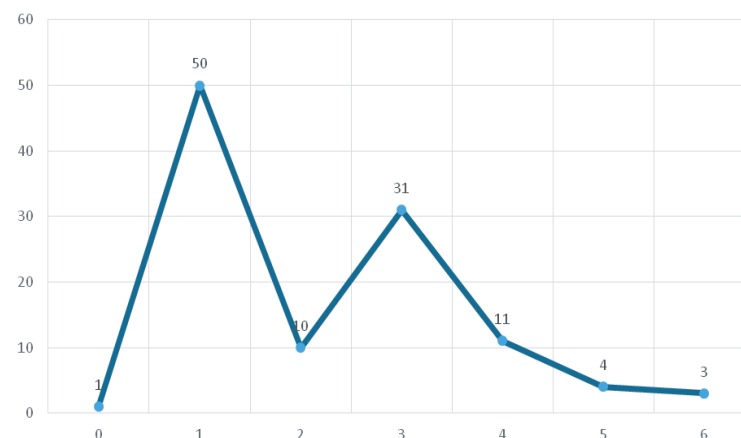


Figure 3 Cumulated Civic Engagement

Overall, we can conclude in the fact that even if most of the individuals are involved in at least one civic activity, their engagement significantly drops as the number of activities increases.

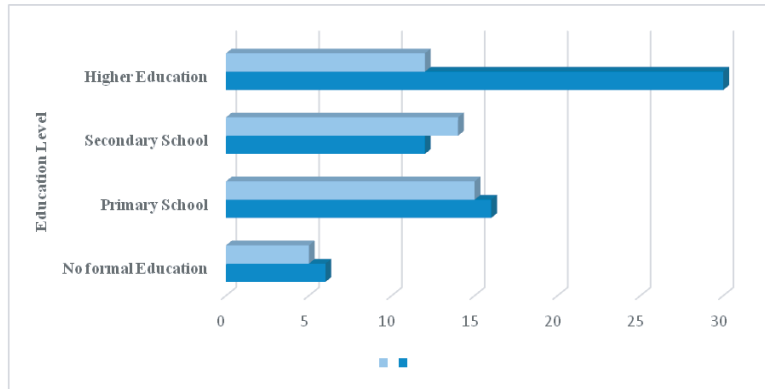


Figure 4 Cross Tabulation between Education Level and Voting Status

According to Martin Luther King, “voting is the foundation stone of political action”. Participating in elections is one of the most fundamental acts of civic engagement (Jain, 2024). Among 110 respondents in this study, about 58 per cent of respondents voted in elections (data table given in the appendix). This study wanted to know the voting status if the respondent’s education level changed. The above figure shows that the most positive responses came from the respondents who have a higher level of education.

Resources

Regular internet access, financial capability and the proper training and guidance for using these sites are important to evaluate the level of civic engagement among marginalized youth.

Table 5: Resources needed to engage online

Response	Regular Internet Access	Financial Capability	Training or Guidance
Yes	82.7%	50.9%	11.8%
No	17.3%	49.1%	88.2%

Table 9 presents the responses for three resources. About 83 percent of respondents said that they have regular internet access, while 17 percent responded negatively. In a matter of financial capabilities, the scenario is fifty-fifty. Around half of the respondents feel that they are capable of bearing the expenses and another half think that the cost of internet and other logistics are unbearable for them. On the other hand, only 11.8 percent took any kind of training or guidance from anyone for their social media usage. 88.2 percent are self-taught and didn’t need any kind of help from anyone to learn how to use digital devices or social networking sites.

Psychological Engagement

Resources are indeed crucial for civic engagement, but the willingness and eagerness to participate in these activities are also as important.

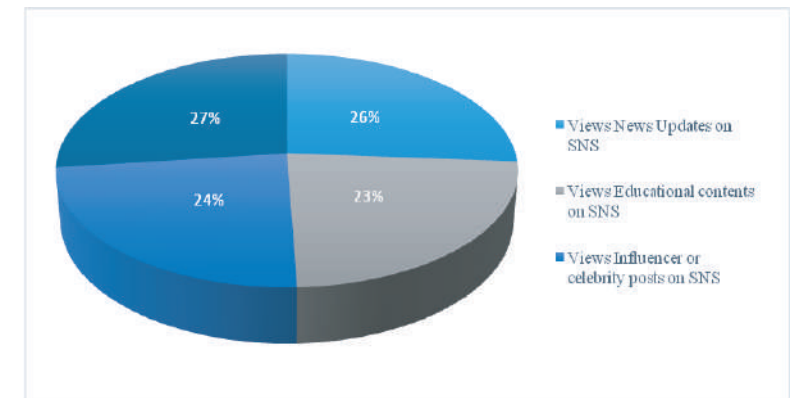


Figure 5 Percentage of Contents that Motivates to Use SNS

As we can see from the above figure, most of the respondents use social media for viewing content that is shared by either their family members or friends. This

means the youth who use social media are more into entertainment content than they are in educational or social causes, even if the difference is not that big.

For a better understanding of these motivational contents that influence the usage of social networking sites among the marginalized youth in Mymensingh City, here this study tried to compare the viewing of these contents with their occupation to see if there is any kind of influence of occupation in their viewing of contents.

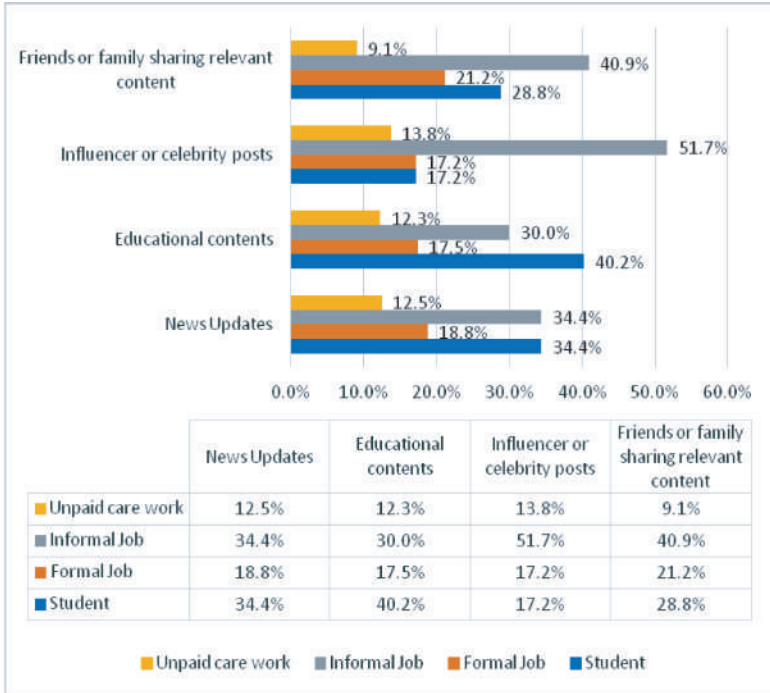


Figure 6 Cross Tabulation between Occupation and Motivational Content

The data from this table highlights differences in content preferences across occupational groups, suggesting that motivations to participate are influenced by the nature of the content and the social or professional context of the participants.

Recruitment Networks

Traditional recruitment for civic participation often bypasses marginalized youth because of their socio-economic isolation. Social networking sites can act as recruitment hubs, where they can connect with activists, NGOs and movements that mobilize participation. Hashtags, digital campaigns and groups can facilitate recruitment into civic activities.

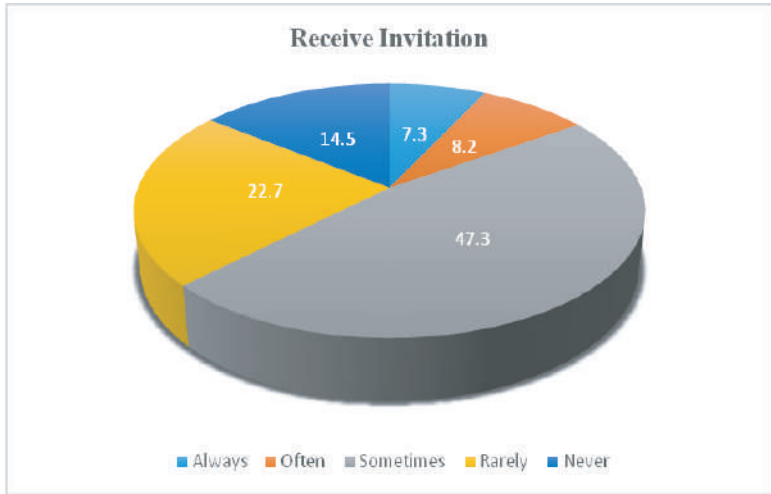


Figure 7 Recruitment Network Role of Social Networking Sites Usage of Social Networking Sites

To analyse the role of social networking sites on civic engagement among the youth in marginalized groups, first, it is necessary to get a clear idea of the time they spend on social media. The following chart shows the data on how much time these youth spend on digital media.

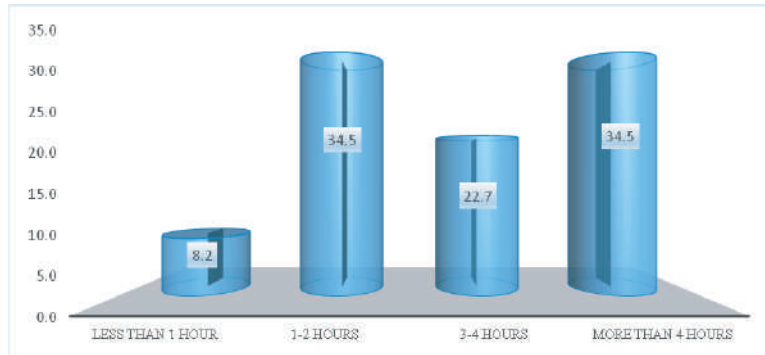


Figure 8 Time Spend on Social Networking Sites Daily

From the above figure, we can state that the majority spend either 1-2 hours (34.5 percent) or more than 4 hours (34.5 percent) on social media every day. It shows a bimodal distribution in usage patterns. This indicates that a significant portion of the respondents are heavily engaged with digital platforms, with nearly 57.2 percent spending three or more hours daily.

Dominance Response Approach for Comparing Civic Engagement across Online and Offline Platforms

From the table given below, we can see that for the first variable, the mean is 2.92 which indicates the dominant answer 'rarely'. That means the respondents rarely engage in political or civic.

Table 6: Dominance Response of the Variables

Variable	Mean	Dominant Response	Frequency	Percentage
Engage in political or civic discussion in the community	2.92	Rarely	22	20.00
Discuss political or civic-related issues online	3.38	Sometimes	34	30.90
Follow Political parties or leaders online	3.66	Rarely	23	20.90
Comment on civic contents	3.62	Rarely	34	30.90
Share political or civic related post on SNS	3.50	Rarely	32	29.10
Interested in Political or civic issues in the community	2.27	Interested	52	47.30
Social media protest participation	2.93	Neutral	35	31.80
SNS provide adequate information	3.32	Neutral	45	40.90
Trust the information on SNS	3.18	Sometimes	54	49.10
Fact-checking	3.45	Rarely	32	28.20

Table 6 illustrates that respondents show a greater preference to engage with political and civic issues online compared to offline, but this is limited to occasional behaviours. And they have a low level of trust and awareness about the online information.

Challenges

In the following table, the common challenges that individuals face using social media are presented.

As we can see from the data table, among the reported challenges, misinformation or fake news was the most significant.

Table 7: Challenges faced by Youth while using SNS

Challenges faced by Marginalized Youth		Responses
Challenges	Lack of Internet Access	69 (28.3%)
	Misinformation or fake news	84 (34.4%)
	Online harassment or bullying	24 (9.8%)
	Limited knowledge of political issues	47 (19.3%)
	Censorship or platform restrictions	16 (6.6%)
	None	4 (1.6%)
Total		244 (100.0%)

Note: Number in the parentheses indicates percentage.

This gives us the idea that unreliable information spreads widely on digital platforms, typically misleading youth and reducing their trust in civic decisions. After that lack of internet access, limited political knowledge also hold great challenge against civic engagement. Besides these common challenges, some underlying barriers also play a great part in decreasing the percentage of civic engagement among marginalized youth. One of those is not having enough knowledge about the community standards (what is and isn't allowed on social networking platforms). These standards are crucial for any individual using digital media to know and abide by them. From Figure 14, we see that about 63.6 percent of respondents don't know about these standards, while only 36.4 percent have some idea. This gives the reason for having a greater number of platform restrictions from the above table.

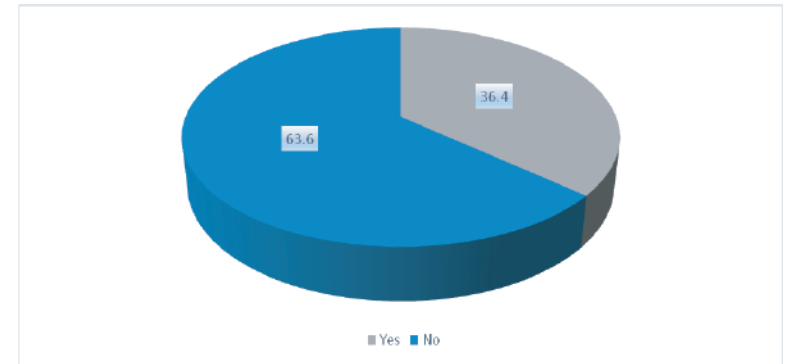


Figure 9 Awareness of the Community Standards

Moreover, there are some important acts and policies related to the usage pattern of digital platforms in our country, for example- the Digital Security Act (2018) or the ICT Act (2006). These acts are also important for any individual to have some prior knowledge about the rules and regulations of using social networking sites.

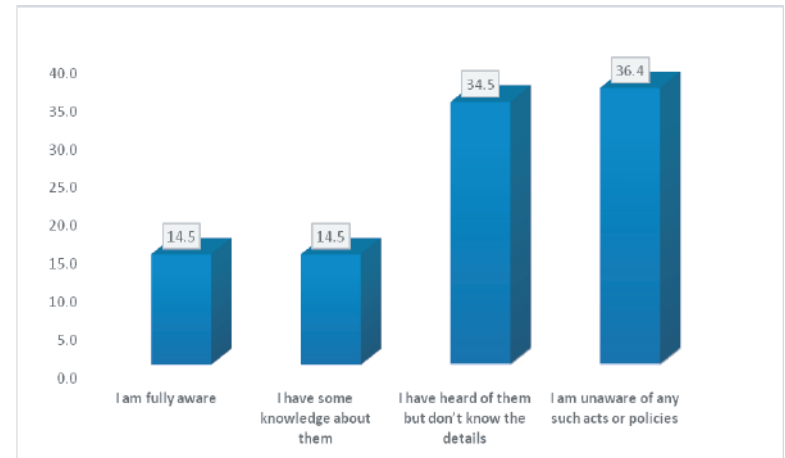


Figure 10 Awareness of Acts and Policies of Usage of SNS in BD

The above figure illustrates the present scenario of awareness of the acts and policies among the marginalized youth respondents. The situation is quite alarming as most of the participants which is about 36.4 percent are unaware of any such acts or policies. This indicates the lack of digital knowledge and awareness of the regulations among these groups of individuals.

Recurrent Points of KIIs

In this section, the qualitative data collected from Key Informant Interviews are presented. This study collected data from four key informants. Because of the confidentiality of the respondents, only the designations are mentioned while quoting the insights for a deeper understanding of their expertise.

4.4.1 Civic Activities Among the Marginalized Youth

Marginalized youth typically engage in many activities only in their community. They feel insecure engaging with mainstream groups. Many training programs or projects are happening to mobilize their participation. They have their own civic clubs exclusive to their community members. As the HR Officer said in his interview:

While I was working with the Horizon people, I noticed that they used to gather in one place to discuss various things which can be their family matter or any social issue or about any political matter.

Many times, external people come and give either money or food to engage them in various political rallies or seminars. According to the NGO field officer:

Many marginalized youths engage in some kind of political activities either for money or for future reward. It's normal in these communities. Any political member comes and takes them in order to attend a political procession or rally in exchange for some money.

The Role of Social Networking Sites

Social media helped them with engagement with various organizations and training programs. In this regard, the computer trainer from TTC mentioned the following:

These programs basically focus on youths from vulnerable groups. We used to collect participants from their homes and enroll them here. It was very tough for us to reach every individual. But now we give the circular online. So, they can see them and apply without even coming to the centre. They are more knowledgeable about digital devices than before. Now many participate in various kinds of activities using social media.

The Assistant Director from the Department of Youth Development also emphasised the positive changes that social media brought to marginalized youth participation. But it is also noticed that these groups use social media for entertainment purposes rather than any social or educational purpose. He mentioned,

There are some people in these groups who still don't know that they can use social media to voice their ideas or even engage with various organizations. They only use these platforms for entertainment purposes. Often, they are unaware of the sites that they can use to view educational content. Nowadays the scenario is changing but the process is very slow.

Challenges Faced by the Youth

The youth from these communities face many barriers due to their socio-economic status. They have a huge financial problem. It binds them with the thought of only working for a living and earning money. Voluntarism or development activities are a luxury for them. The NGO officer exclaimed that:

In the maximum family, there is only one earning person and the rest can't reach the mainstream even if they want to. An insecurity always works in them. So many times, the people of these communities cannot go outside the community and do any good job.

One of the major reasons behind the lack of engagement can be the language barrier. Youth from ethnic communities or the Horizon community have their own language. Another challenge is the lack of education. The HR Officer said when he was working on a project with vulnerable individuals he noticed,

They are able to read and write to some extent but have no knowledge about grammar or punctuation. And they are very careless about their National ID cards. Many cannot work in various institutional training programs or projects due to lack of NID cards.

The thing that came out the most from the interviews with everyone was the lack of awareness among these groups. According to the HR Officer,

Our team is now working with the people of the Horizon community. All the people are very eager to know and learn from us but we cannot give them as much time as possible due to our own other work. We try to have at least one member visit the community every week to check on their status. But we also know it is not enough.

Discussion

The whole analysis and result part extracts some of the focal subjects of the study for discussion. The study titled “Civic Engagement Among Marginalized Urban Youth in Mymensingh City: Role of Social Networking Sites and Challenges Associated with Youth Engagement” presents a comprehensive study on the state of civic engagement of the youth in marginalized groups, focusing on the role of social networking sites and the challenges faced by them through the digital media. The key findings of the study are discussed below:

Types of Civic Engagement Marginalized Youth Participate

The study's findings reveal that most of the marginalized youth participate in their community events or programs. Both numerical data and insights from the key informants emphasise community participation. Youth clubs or leadership groups are also popular among these youth. Participation in awareness campaigns is moderately low, whereas attending rallies and meetings is more popular. The qualitative data also mentioned their active participation in political events. Besides, they also participate in collecting money for social causes, religious events, and sports events. But a decent amount of youth doesn't participate in any kind of civic activities. Most of the youth participate in only one activity. Engaging in multiple civic activities is quite rare

among marginalized groups. Voting in elections which can be considered as one of the most crucial forms of civic engagement also differs and decreases with their education level.

Resources Needed for Better Engagement

For better civic participation, one of the most important factors is the basic resources for engagement. It was identified that very few of the respondents used computers which indicates the lack of proper digital devices in this modern world. Even if the majority responded that they have regular access to the Internet half of the respondents said that they were not financially capable of bearing the prices of the Internet. Very few had the proper skills to use digital platforms. Even if it was clarified from the expert interview that there are many training programs for marginalized groups, the data show insignificant training or guidance among marginalized youth. Moreover, accessing social networking sites can also imply an engagement tool. The popular sites that marginalized youth use to participate in online activities are- Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Imo, X, and TikTok.

Psychological Engagement Among the Youth

The results show a low level of psychological engagement in educational or social content on social media. Most of the youth use these digital platforms for viewing celebrity or influencer posts. TikTok and Likee are very popular among the youth in these communities. From the qualitative data, it was found that the projects or programs tried to engage these youth in many development activities but after a certain amount of time, they were back in their old schedule and work. Some of them are eager to come to the mainstream and voice their words but because of the community restrictions, they can't do that. Social

media is making some changes as they are willing to discuss matters online more.

Recruitment Networks to mobilize the Participation

Social networking sites can act as recruitment hubs, where they can connect with activists, NGOs and movements that mobilize participation. Hashtags, digital campaigns and groups can facilitate recruitment into civic activities. Most of the youth are motivated by their local community groups to engage in various activities. Religious or cultural groups also play a vital role. Government organizations, NGOs or other private organizations often recruit them for various projects and programs too. The online invitations from different advocacy pages from national and international further work as a vital recruitment component.

Role of Social Networking Sites

The results show that a significant portion of the respondents are heavily engaged with digital platforms as they spend three or more hours daily. The data indicates the positive impact of social networking sites on their civic activities. The data showed that respondents show a greater preference to engage with political and civic issues online compared to offline, but this is limited to occasional behaviours. And they have a low level of trust and awareness about the online information.

Challenges faced by the Youth while Using Online Platforms

Lack of internet access, misinformation or fake news, online harassment or bullying, limited knowledge about political issues, censorship or platform restrictions are some

of the common challenges identified from the quantitative data. Besides them, the lack of awareness about the community standards of the social networking sites and the acts and policies in Bangladesh also pose significant challenges to their engagement.

The insights from experts also mentioned challenges like- a lack of communication skills due to the language barrier, feeling insecure about working outside the community regulations and the lack of proper digital literacy.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on the findings from the survey, key informant interviews and secondary literature reviews, this section of the study proposes the following recommendations to overcome the challenges mobilize civic engagement through social networking sites among marginalized youth. A policy recommendations matrix for enhancing SNS-based civic engagement among marginalized youth is given below:

Table 8: Policy Recommendations Matrix

Policy Objectives	Implementing Agencies	Key Activities	Performance Indicators
Improve Digital Accessibility for Marginalized Youth	Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications, and Information Technology	Make the internet connection affordable and provide training modules for better knowledge about digital media for marginalized groups.	Improve internet usage and facilitate proper knowledge about social media.
Address online harassment and cybersecurity concerns	Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC)	Establish strict policies against online bullying, harassment and misinformation and provide legal support for the individuals facing abuse.	Address relevant cases and implement policy regulations
Encourage online political engagement among the youth	Election Commission of Bangladesh	Develop online platforms supervised by the government for civic discussions and encourage the youth to participate in online governance initiatives.	Increase the voting status among the youth in marginalized groups.

Policy Objectives	Implementing Agencies	Key Activities	Performance Indicators
Foster Collaboration between Government, NGOs and Youth Groups	Ministry of Youth and Sports, NGO Affairs Bureau	Boost partnerships between development sector organization	- Increased number of participants discussing civic issues. - Increase in skilled and trained individuals.
Address Socioeconomic Impediments for digital participation	Ministry of Social Welfare	Offer financial support and capacity-building programs for the youth in marginalized groups.	Number of participants enrolled in digital civic education initiatives.
Integrate Civic Education in Digital Spaces	Ministry of Education	Develop SNS-based civic education programs to promote awareness and participation.	Annual transparency reports and citizen feedback.
Ensure Transparency and Accountability in Digital Governance	National Human Rights Commission	Monitor and evaluate the government's engagement with marginalized communities via SNS.	Reduction in the spread of misinformation and increased fact-checking activities.
Address Digital Misinformation and Controversies	Press Information Department (PID)	Implement media literacy programs and fact-checking mechanisms on SNS.	

These policy recommendations will help the policymakers, NGO workers and government officials with deeper insights and relevant measures so that they can create a long-term plan for mobilizing civic engagement among marginalized youths.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes civic engagement among marginalized urban youth in Mymensingh City, highlighting the role of social networking sites (SNS) and identifying some key challenges hindering participation. While social media has become a global platform for networking and communication, expressing opinions, political discourse and participation in civic activities, marginalized youths are deprived of those benefits. Significant challenges such as language barriers, digital inequality, misinformation, online bullying or harassment or policy restrictions hinder their full participation. The findings of this study suggest that a multi-stakeholder approach is much needed to address these challenges, which will involve not only the government and civil society organizations but also educational institutions and digital platforms. As this study followed a cross-sectional approach, further research should explore longitudinal trends of civic participation through social networking sites. The effectiveness of policy frameworks and the impact of digital platforms should also be discussed in a broader manner.

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