

PHOTO: INDIA TODAY CONCLAVE

Aziza Ahmed voicing her views at India Today's Conclave.

Now, I do not. Whenever I understand that someone is trying to seek my attention unnecessarily, I do not even reply to those (tweets and posts). I continue to work on my agenda," she explains.

In spite of the negative propaganda that can be fuelled through social media against a positive, non-violent movement, Ahmed is still confident about social media. It is a tool for ensuring good democratic practice and making people's opinions heard. Ahmed's objective as an online activist has been to reach out to the international audience and portray a true picture of the Bangladeshi's youth uprising of 2013. The India Today conclave has offered her with that platform. She mentions how they have appreciated one of her observations and highlighted it as a key point of the programme. "I said that fundamentalists have their own network in every country. For example, Jamaat (Jamaat-e-Islami) is getting fund from such networks. But those of us who want to form a secular humanist society, where there will be peaceful coexistence of all religious beliefs, we do not have any global humanist network, which we must work on." We do require a global humanist network to support movements that are culturally rich and involves diverse group of people.

> The Shahbag movement was not just an impulse to follow on the footsteps of Arab Spring or Occupy Wall Street.



Well-known personalities participated in the Conclave.

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From the audience's panel which included people from different social groups, Ahmed received one particular question that she found difficult to answer. They asked about countering the opposition of a movement, when both the pro and anti groups are using the same social media tools such as Twitter and Facebook. Ahmed admits that often the tweet and re-tweet reaches a level where the main issue becomes lost amongst both parties launching on personal attacks. "This too is a part of the nature of the movement," she opines. "Initially I used to react and get into individual fights.

From the conclave, Ahmed brings back lessons of good democratic practices and how inquisitiveness and tolerance can run parallel in spite of difference in ideologies. She feels that Bangladesh too is in need of such assemblies which will give room for dialogue across various intellectual, political, cultural and social groups. ■