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The Battle of Plassey: Evil British or Naive Nawab?

4,448,541 views • 1 month ago

It's 1757. The rising power of the Sultanate of Bengal is under threat with the death of Alivardi Khan, and the ascension to the throne of his young grandson, Siraj ud-Daulah. Threatened on all sides by family, friends, and the "questionable" business practices of the British East India Company, it all comes to head on a tragic summer day on the fields of Plassey.

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CHANNELS WE NEED

ALIZA RAHMAN

LITERATURE

If you have grown up in the 2000s, there is a high chance that you have seen *Thakumar Jhuli* on television or YouTube. It is mainly through videos that children get to learn about these Bengali folk stories.

In today's time, a host of channels exist that discuss books, both old, such as Wisecrack's "Thug Notes", "Crash Course Literature", TED-Ed's literature videos, and a few School of Life videos, and new, such as the various booktubers on YouTube. These play a vital role in people's lives, especially children, because they can introduce people to the works of writers who could have an important role in how they develop. However, videos discussing the works of Bengali or Bangladeshi writers are scarce. A brief look at the Ekushey Boi Mela and Dhaka Lit Fest shows that there is no dearth of literary work being published.

Therefore, the primary issue seems to be that many children, adolescents, and even adults do not know about the work being produced. This is where a channel on YouTube could help. Not only would it introduce people to the work of local artists, it could become important in discussing and criticising problematic work, both of established writers and those who are new, that would otherwise remain unexamined.

HISTORY

The first introduction people have to history is in classes, and more often than not, the classes seem uninteresting if not outright mind numbingly boring. This is unfortunate, not only because people develop a dislike for a subject they might have otherwise enjoyed, but because they end up underestimating the importance of history in their lives.

On YouTube, there are channels like Oversimplified and Crash Course History that takes its viewers through periods in history all the while being entertaining and informative. These often serve as an introduction for many people on topics they might have had no idea about. While there is historical fiction, comic books, movies, and even television series based on historical characters and events, there does not seem to be enough videos making use of the medium's special features. For one, YouTube allows two-way communication, so people can not only ask questions but people with more knowledge can suggest books, podcasts, documentaries, etc. on the topic.

Moreover, the channel does not have to be limited to discussion. It can display archaeological sites and interviews with historians, teachers, and archaeologists who shed light on their work. Not only might this help the young population become more aware of their past and learn about their identity, it might encourage students who may not have had been able to have access to history classes realise that they might want to pursue a career in history. In the future, they could become involved in the restoration or preservation of important historical sites or the researching and writing of a work that might revolutionise how we see not just historical figures and events but also our modern world.

PROFESSIONAL STORYTIME

You might have seen "A Day in the Life" videos or videos on BuzzFeed where people with different professions ranging from lawyers to wedding planners discuss the trials and tribulations of their day-to-day work lives. While tutorial videos in Bangla

exist, personal stories on what people go through, the details of which people might not find online, does not exist. Structured and planned videos by different professionals at various levels might give viewers insider information on how certain jobs really are.

This is relevant, because unlike other countries, Bangladesh seems to lack externship programmes or job-shadowing opportunities. It is in these arrangements that students can get first-hand experience of what a certain profession might be like without devoting the amount of time an internship requires as the former (externships and job shadowing) might last only a day or a week which is convenient for children in school.

Often students have little to no idea of what they might want to do in the future, or if they do, they sometimes have the wrong information or expectations about the field and get disillusioned when they do work in the job they aimed for. Such videos may therefore not only deter a student from pursuing a profession which might actually be unsuitable or not to their liking, but might allow them to learn and realise that they are interested in a profession or field that they might not have heard of before, or if they did, they might not have considered it. As a result, students can make decisions such as what subject they will study in university and what work they might do that improves their opportunities of getting a job they want later on.

If you have a channel that covers any of these topics, reach out to us at shoutds@gmail.com

Aliza is Matilda resurrected. Reach her at aliza.hridula@gmail.com

YouTuber Burnout Explained

THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE
SHOUT

RABITA SALEH

"I got burnt out. Once I had tasted the fame, I didn't like the limelight. I realised I wasn't built for that life."

– Rakin Absar, on why he did not become a mainstream celebrity

Since its inception fourteen years ago, YouTube has become a fundamental part of our lives. Not just for the youth but for people of all ages, it is an indispensable tool providing us access to video content from all over the world, be it instructional videos such as DIY tutorials or recipes, informational videos such as the latest news, especially with the LIVE option, free music, and all kinds of other entertainment. When you think about it, it really is an almost magical service that makes you want to say, "What a time to be alive!"

However, people for whom the magic of YouTube can be lost quickly are the creators who provide the users with all the content they love to gobble up.

Rakin Absar, previously popular for playing certain eccentric characters, introduces us to his initial struggles as a YouTuber, and how those struggles changed as he reached the peak of his fame on the platform.

"The initial struggle is not equipment or other logistics. The initial strife is to find your content and your own tune.

A lot of people start out only trying to do what they think others will like," he expresses, saying that this cannot lead to a successful YouTube career, "if you consider YouTubing a career instead of doing it as your passion, then you are highly likely to burn out. The constant pressure of staying relevant to your audience will feel like a chore to you."

However, Absar mentions that given the fast-paced nature of the platform, getting one video to go viral isn't enough. The true test is remaining on people's recommendation sections, and this is what generates an enormous pressure on the creators. YouTubers aren't only putting up their content on the platform. They are usually putting up a version of themselves online alongside their videos. Seeing as this is a version they want people to connect with, their YouTube selves often tend to veer towards a more "always-on" personality, as was the case for Absar.

"You have to put up a face that's not you. I realised I didn't want to do that all the time. 'Rekina' was a very active character. It was fun playing that character, and I don't regret it, but I don't want to play that again ever," he conveys.

Constantly playing a hyperactive character can take a huge toll on a person. Additionally, with such a rich medium of communication, people want to know anything and everything about their favourite YouTubers. The nature of the platform allows the obsession that traditional celebrities encounter to be amplified to extraordinary levels. Audiences tend to attach affections to their favourite YouTubers, in a phenomenon known as forming parasocial relationships. However, much of the fan base will never actually meet their subscribed YouTuber in person, and so the "relationship" is heavily one-sided. YouTubers that attempt to hold up their audiences' expectations in this regard end up investing immense amounts of their personal lives into their channels, leading to the generally inevitable burnout.

"Three years ago, I was very in-contact with my fans. I used to perform 'lives' regularly. I got burnt out bad. Now, I don't actively pursue that attention from social media anymore, or try to bridge that gap between my fans and I," expresses Absar.

Another reason behind their struggles lies in the nature of YouTube's algorithm. Salman Muqtadir, from SalmoN The-BrownFish, introduces us to the nature of the algorithm.

"Youtube's algorithm gets updated from time to time, and of course they don't let the content

creators know exactly what they changed. However, the last algorithm change made it so that when your videos were longer they would get boosted."

Rahat Rahman, creator of YouTube channel ButtFixx corroborates this saying, "When a channel creates videos frequently, YouTube considers that channel more active and thus understandably, sees potential for more ad revenues from the channel. Apparently, this leads YouTube to recommend videos from these 'active' channels more, providing more opportunities for these channels to grow." Combined, this knowledge simply means the more content you put out, and the more frequently you put it out, YouTube is likely to boost it accordingly, leading to further stress for creators.

"Even channels run by sizable groups tend to stagnate at times due to burnouts. To avoid this, a channel needs to reinvent themselves on a regular basis," states Rahman.

YouTube denies that this is the only way to get your videos into people's recommended sections, and while that may be true given the popularity of certain channels that only post short videos once every couple of months, it is undeniable that this is one of the well-known ways to reach greater audiences.

Keeping content creation aside, there are other struggles to being a popular YouTuber and maintaining one's subscribers. Continuously communicating with your fan base, facing the harshest criticism and always having to tactfully handle them, are all part of a YouTubers' daily toil.

When it comes to criticism, Bangladeshi audi-

ences are not known to hold back. Both Absar and Muqtadir agree that dealing with criticism is a skill one must master as a YouTuber. Both also agree that reading the comments is not a great idea, stating that they have stopped doing it completely.

"You have to focus on the positives. Many celebrities have fallen into depression because they entered the industry always expecting love and support, but when they came online they realised that they will also get negative comments and a lot of hate," relates Muqtadir.

When speaking about recovering from burnout, Rahman says, "Since I make content so infrequently, I haven't felt any burnout as of yet. But observing popular foreign channels, I would suggest anyone going through a burnout to pause and come up with something new. It might dip the views and channel activity for a while, but would benefit the channel in the long run."

Working with a group on YouTube can sometimes provide some relief, as Absar reveals. "When you're in groups, you can take their help. There are great opinions at work, and you have more resources. The pressure is divided and you can do bigger projects. However, individual projects are more fun because you don't have to worry about anyone else's opinions," states Absar.

Managing sponsorships is another aspect that adds more stress to an already overwhelming career. Muqtadir elaborates on this, saying, "Now that I am working for a network there is pressure to publish something every month which wasn't there before when I was with friends."

When asked whether he ever felt tired of being a YouTuber or was burnt out, Muqtadir responds, "Not exactly. However, it is becoming extremely difficult to make good content here. What I feel is that our perspectives are going backwards. I am not only talking about uneducated masses here. The tendency to get offended over the slightest circumstance holds true for a lot of educated people I have come across.

Our mindsets are not progressing as I had expected when I had first started YouTubing in the country. If we keep continuing like this, we can never go ahead. Our surroundings are just becoming more toxic by the day."

Rabita Saleh is a perfectionist/workaholic. Email feedback to this generally boring person at rabitasaleh13@gmail.com



"Buuurn!!"