

Why is the youth out of touch with Bangladeshi politics?

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In recent times, I have noticed my generation is very much in touch with international relations and politics but very little aware of news at home.

For instance, many of my friends know the history of the occupation of the West Bank but have no idea about the policies implemented for the ethnic and minority populations in Bangladesh.

Similarly, while Texan abortion laws are a hot topic in some of my friend circles, Bangladesh's section 155(4) of the Evidence Act 1872 and section 375 of the Penal Code of Bangladesh, 1860, are not. For context, the former allows a victim's "character" to be judged during legal proceedings for rape cases whereas the latter strictly defines rape as an act committed only by men against women only and denies the existence of marital rape for girls over 13 years of age.

Don't get me wrong. A violation of human rights anywhere is indeed a violation of humanity overall and deserves immediate global attention and response. However, policies at home that directly affect us and our loved ones here should obviously receive some extra consideration from us.

Media coverage plays a pivotal role in shaping people's stance on politics and more importantly, making them engage



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

with politics in the first place. In the USA, for example, there are countless political commentators who create content specifically for the youth on a range of social media platforms like YouTube, Twitch, and Instagram.

The online presence of both right-wing commentators like Ben Shapiro and Candace Owens and liberal ones like Hasan Piker and Natalie Wynn ensure

that people have access to very engaging content relating to different political belief systems and perspectives. Politics is not something limited to the dry language of newspapers and old-fashioned, boring talk shows there. In fact, even a comedy show like Saturday Night Live can sometimes be a great start to learn about ongoing American political crises.

Perhaps what stops the youth from

learning and spreading awareness about the Bangladeshi political scene is the state of freedom of speech here. With new forms of censorship being imposed every now and then, motivation to post about one's political views often takes the back burner.

This fear of unprovoked intimidation is possibly what leads to ageism when it comes to discussing politics in Bangladesh. Young people are often taught to avoid political conversations for "their own good" and also because it is often considered impolite in our culture. This restriction in open discourse only means that the youth often remain in the dark about their own country's policies and decisions. When they do want to learn about it, they usually are unable to find a reliable, engaging source to start with.

Politics, even when it doesn't look like it, affects us all. It affects things as sexual abuse case settlements and things as seemingly ordinary as our access to education. When we are the future of our nation, it is very crucial that space is made for us to know exactly how and what decisions have been made in our country so far, because ultimately, only an informed present can ensure a better future.

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Where film adaptations fall short

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"The book was better," said every person who read the book before watching its film adaptation. In most cases, unfortunately, this person is right. This rings especially true when it comes to film adaptations of books written in the first-person narrative.

If you have watched the Percy Jackson movies, widely known in the fandom as the Peter Johnson movies, you might have noticed that something was off besides the obvious inconsistencies and flawed setting, which was the absence of Percy's narration. Rick Riordan's worldbuilding is flawless and his characters are easy to love, and so I used to think that the job of the scriptwriters was made significantly easier.

However, the movies missed out on the witty narrations of Percy Jackson, which perfectly delivered the thought Rick Riordan had put behind the modern re-telling of Greek myths with the perfect dose of humour. Though the movies tried to compensate for this loss by adding another character for the comic relief, it unfortunately did not deliver as neatly.

The unique quality of first-person narration is that we experience the pro-



DESIGN: SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

tagonists' journey through them. When such books are adapted for the screen, we are already far removed from the character. This dilutes the intensity of events in the movie, because often the drama is dependent on the protagonists' misunderstandings.

The Princess Diaries perfectly illustrates this concept. Mia finds out she's a princess in the modern world, and has to deal with

being even more of a "freak" than she already is. Her over-the-top internal reactions, exaggerations and extreme sarcasm is what makes the readers flip the pages, despite the story's low stakes.

In the movie, Mia's unreliable and hilarious narration is gone, so every plot point is duller than in the book. The characters were already watered down without her lens, but the movie, for some reason

took it a step further.

Another hiccup that movie producers come across is the difficulty portraying the character's inner workings: their desires, fears, misbelief, and flaws. Whereas internal conflict in books can be conveyed through the characters' internal monologues, narration, dialogue or action, in movies, it can only be naturally conveyed through dialogue and action.

Both Percy and Mia were colourful on the page, yet bland on the screen, because we first experienced their stories through their unfiltered point-of-views.

The screenwriters also have the difficult task of imagining scenes which were skimmed over in the stories using witty narration, while staying true to the original material. The director has to make sure the audience sees what the characters saw in the corresponding books scenes.

In these cases, the book authors are fundamental to creating the movie. However, in most adaptations (such as those mentioned here), the authors had a minimal role in the filmmaking.

Complain to Zaheen about book to film adaptations at [instagram.com/tasfiazuhair](https://www.instagram.com/tasfiazuhair)