

No longer confined to just traditional media or YouTube's monologue-heavy vlogs, podcasts now offer an authentic, visually enriched platform that draws creators and audiences alike.

So, when did it start, what's driving this shift, and why does it resonate so deeply in our context? Let's explore through the lenses of three individuals who are shaping this space: Nafees Salim of the *2 Cents Podcast*, Neel Nafis of *The Blueprint Podcast*, and Sameer Ahmed, a pioneer of the field with *Scane Media*.

#### Authenticity at heart

Undoubtedly, one of their strongest appeals is their rawness. Unlike the glossy perfection of TV or radio, podcasts embrace imperfection. As Nafees Salim aptly puts it, "They are the new radio. What sets them apart is their authenticity. Unlike the polished and scripted nature of TV, video podcasts thrive on raw, unfiltered conversations."

This authenticity resonates deeply with a generation tired of overly rehearsed content. Sameer Ahmed of *SCANeDalous* — the podcast series of repute — notes that their content goes beyond superficial narratives



#### Neel Nafis of The Blueprint Podcast

to explore deeper reflections, tackling issues that traditional media often sidesteps.

"We offer a deeper dive into personalities and ensure the coexistence of long-form content with the bite-sized snippets that dominate our feeds," Ahmed observes.

Neel Nafis agrees, highlighting that imperfection is a feature and not a bug! "The imperfections are what make it unique. It's this rawness that attracts listeners seeking value-packed yet genuine content."

The podcasting world's charm lies in its ability to create a personal, almost intimate connection with its audience. Nafees Salim reflects, "Our listeners tell us that *2 Cents Podcast* feels like home...it's about being real, relatable, and most importantly, human."

This connection is not accidental but crafted through content that speaks directly to the listeners' lives.

Neel Nafis sees his creations as a platform for mentorship by proxy: "I bring mentor figures and let them straighten out my life; my viewers similarly put themselves in my shoes and take the advice as if it were for them."

The strategy works because it transforms the content from passive consumption to active participation.

#### Storytelling in a video-driven world

In a world increasingly dominated by video,



#### Blueprint Podcast

audio-only content was bound to evolve. Video podcasts — streamed on YouTube, Facebook, or TikTok — cater to Bangladesh's visually oriented audience.

Sameer Ahmed elaborates on the advantage: "Growing up in Australia, I saw how they dominated every social platform. When I moved to Dhaka, I realised creators here were still stuck in Facebook Lives, which they casually labelled as podcasts. At *Scane Media*, we took creators from basic setups to studios with a calculated strategy for distribution."

This shift has paid off, as some like *2 Cents* amassed millions of views.

Neel Nafis points out the scalability of videos: "You can turn a one-hour episode into multiple mini-clips and reels, ensuring

professionals.

Nafees Salim recalls the impact of an episode with Neel Nafis: "Listeners told us it inspired them to take charge of their careers. That's the power — sparking real change through conversations."

Rafayat Rakib, a content creator and entrepreneur, recently started his own show. Asking why, the driven individual shared that he believes in using his platform to inspire Bangladesh's youth to take charge of their futures.

Explaining his motivation, he shared, "Bangladesh needs direction from a top-rated professional and a certified seller! Among so many pseudo-successful freelancers, someone with a proven track record must speak to encourage the youth of the country regardless of their backgrounds or qualifications."

For Rafayat, it is a call to arms for those who feel side-lined by traditional structures. "Everyone deserves a second chance," he adds. "I want dropouts from corporate ladders, society, and universities to march forward to create job opportunities for more people like us in Bangladesh 2.0. Because if we don't do this, who will?"

Sameer Ahmed's *SCANeDalous* focuses on peeling back layers of its guests' lives, diving into failures and personal growth instead of surface-level success stories. "It's not about their latest movie or big win; it's about their heartbreaks, crises, and growth mentality," he shares.

#### Overcoming challenges

While the trajectory is promising, the journey is not without problems. One significant hurdle is production cost. Building a studio, ensuring quality audio-visual setups, and creating engaging content require substantial investment. Sameer Ahmed notes that despite the potential, some creators remain reluctant to invest in better production.

There's also the challenge of balancing personal passion with audience expectations. As Neel Nafis puts it, "I just create what I'm passionate about, attracting an audience that shares those interests. It's not about catering to them; it's about aligning with them."



#### Nafees Salim of the 2 Cents Podcast

Maintaining authenticity while navigating diverse opinions is a tightrope walk. Nafees Salim remarks, "We haven't had to host guests we disagree with yet, but if we do, the goal will be dialogue, not debate. There's always something to learn."

#### A cultural shift in the making

Currently, video podcasts represent a significant shift, one where authenticity, depth, and connection take precedence over traditional media's glitz. They represent shifting audience expectations and a rising need for in-depth discussions, making them more than simply a passing trend.

Video podcasts are already shaping narratives. Nafees mentions how an episode about his decision to return to Bangladesh sparked conversations on reversing the brain drain.

Ahmed adds that podcasts combat the 'brain rot' of high-retention, low-value content by offering thought-provoking discussions.

"The more we consume these conversations, the more they impact our perspectives and ideas," he says.

Neel Nafis envisions them as tools for personal growth: "Every podcast I host teaches me something valuable. It's like having a front-row seat to a masterclass with every guest."

The impact is reflected in the numbers. Platforms like *Scane Media* report producing over 200 episodes for 25+ clients, generating over a billion views. Nafees Salim's *2 Cents Podcast* alone went from 20,000 subscribers to nearly half a million in two years — a testament to the format's growing popularity.

Creators like Sameer Ahmed, Neel Nafis, and Nafees Salim are spearheading a movement as the industry matures, demonstrating that the potential is limitless when the proper balance of strategy, enthusiasm, and genuineness is put into play. In a country where every word carries weight, videos are giving voice to ideas that deserve to be heard, ensuring they resonate well beyond the screen.



#### Sameer Ahmed, a pioneer of the field with Scane Media.

wider reach. The visual element also makes them more engaging, giving audiences a chance to connect on a deeper level."

#### Bridging global trends with local narratives

The topics tackled by Bangladeshi creators are as diverse as the audience they cater to. From entrepreneurship and personal growth to culture and societal narratives, they bridge a gap. Episodes delve into everything from reversing brain drain to freelance strategies for young

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**Photo: Courtesy**