



"Digital media, especially social media, has played a central role in spreading the word," says Mahbub. "With comedians sharing reels, shorts, and videos online, it has noticeably boosted awareness and interest in stand-up comedy."

Thanks to this digital revolution, the reach of comedy was not only amplified, but audiences started to become aware of the format.

Echoing the same sentiment, Doha shares, "Truly, social media has been a game-changer for the comedians. Regular reels and videos rack up hundreds of thousands of views, helping us build fan bases far beyond Dhaka. On top of that, stand-up specials on OTT platforms have also brought Bangladeshi comedy to new heights."

With time, open mics became more frequent, and stand-up comedians gained visibility. Now, there are organisations like Naveed's Comedy Club (NCC) and Standup Dhaka that dedicatedly nurture new talents. The popularity and support those performers have received have paved the way for a growing talent pool, making it easier to organise regular shows not only in Dhaka but also in other districts.

A flourishing phenomenon

Today, the scene in Bangladesh has come a long way from its humble beginnings. We now see cities like Dhaka and Chattogram hosting regular events, ranging from intimate open mics to large-scale performances. Moreover, shows



Naveed Mahbub

are performed weekly and in our native language, which has made stand-up comedy more relatable to wider audiences and created a thriving community of enthusiasts.

Dhaka has become the epicentre of this cultural shift, as Doha details, "The city boasts multiple shows, thanks to relentless efforts from dedicated venues and organisers."

He highlights how the frequency of these events has fostered a sense of community among comedians and allowed audiences to develop a deeper appreciation for stand-up comedy as an art form.

Comedians now focus on everyday themes that the audience can connect with, from the chaos of Dhaka's traffic to



Poushi Razzaque

quirky family dynamics and the absurdities of bureaucracy and politics. These topics are mostly delivered in the audience's native language, which has further increased its popularity.

"I would say it is both a challenge and a thrill when it comes to tailoring jokes that cater to a diverse Bangladeshi audience," says Doha. The art lies in addressing shared experiences while respecting cultural sensitivities."

While people elsewhere might delve into edgy or provocative material, Bangladeshi performers often take a more discreet and sober approach, balancing humour with respect for societal norms.

Major milestones, such as Shilpkala Academy hosting its first-ever stand-

up comedy show in 2024, have further legitimised the art form. The show featured notable performers like Mahedi Hasan Toru, Akhlaq Siddiqi, and Shawon Majumder.

Events like these demonstrate that stand-up comedy is no longer confined to niche spaces but is becoming an accepted and celebrated part of Bangladesh's cultural landscape. Moreover, events like the Roast of Salman Muqtadir, which raised funds for flood victims, have demonstrated that Bangladeshi audiences are open to edgier humour, provided it is handled with sensitivity.

Another defining feature of today's stand-up scene is how people are experimenting with different styles. You may notice some using observational humour while others rely on self-deprecating humour and light-hearted commentary on societal taboos. This growing diversity is truly commendable and the best part about this is the development of a unique sense of community among comedians and audiences.

As the scene continues to expand, its role as both an entertainment medium and a social gathering phenomenon is becoming increasingly important. This shift highlights the broader cultural impact of stand-up comedy in Bangladesh. It's not just about the jokes — it's about bringing people together and creating moments of joy in a fast-paced world.

By Ayman Anika

Photo: Courtesy, Shadab Shahrokh Hai