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Understanding the Strategies and Practices of Facebook Microcelebrities for Engaging in Sociopolitical Discourses

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we study popular microcelebrities from the Global South to understand their strategies and practices on Facebook. Unlike traditional celebrities who gain their reputation through different types of physical performance, these microcelebrities attain their status by presenting themselves in a favorable way to their online followers. We conducted interviews with 19 microcelebrities from Bangladesh and analyzed our data using actor-network theory (ANT) and Goffman's dramaturgical analysis (DA) of human interaction. We discuss the complex socio-technical ecosystem of the microcelebrity and the roles of non-human actors, such as platforms and local internet infrastructure along with human actors' practices. We explain the microcelebrities' experience with the process of microcelebritification–the process of being a microcelebrity on social media through impression management, and becoming opinion leaders in local sociopolitical discourses as part of their online identity. Our paper contributes to the emerging literature on microcelebrities by highlighting the process viewed in the context of the Global South.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Human-centered computing** → **Empirical studies in HCI**; **Empirical studies in collaborative and social computing**; **Social media**.

KEYWORDS

Microcelebrity, Influencers, Social media, The Global South, Identity, Actor-network theory, Dramaturgical analysis

1 INTRODUCTION

The rise of network society and social media has been redefining celebrity characteristics, socio-cultural logic, and the boundary between celebrities' public and private lives. Through social media, the line of communication has become simpler as the celebrities can better control their message than in the conventional media [1, 2, 54, 65]. Studying Internet celebrities has been a recent interest in internet research, media studies, anthropology, and marketing [1, 2, 91]. Internet celebrities come in different forms and the most common types are the traditional celebrities (e.g., films, politics), reality TV stars, DIY (do-it-yourself) celebrities, and microcelebrities [2]. In recent years, there has been a rise of microcelebrities due to the wider adoption of social media platforms. The microcelebrities are the popular users of social media who got public attention on the World Wide Web by constructing their public persona as a commodity or a product, consumed by others through the use of technologies such as social networking sites and blogs [101]. Unlike celebrities in the traditional sense (e.g., actors, sports stars) – who gain public attention through their performances (e.g., acting, sports) or famous connections (the young Kardashians) [110] – microcelebrities have only their own presence on the Web. Their role, especially in the Global South, includes or is based on commenting on contemporary social and political events and issues [95]. For example, from the first quarter of the year 2020, the world has been struggling against the COVID-19 pandemic [37]. As health officials emphasize that millennials are the core group that could stop the virus [26], young Instagram influencers in Bangladesh have been trying to raise awareness and help flatten the curve [33]. Interestingly, the influencers with fewer than 100,000 followers are more successful in their effort, as general people find these "influencers" to have relatable lifestyles [33]. In this paper, we report our findings of studying microcelebrities on

Facebook in Bangladesh to understand their perspectives about the process of microcelebritification–becoming a microcelebrity.

The concept of microcelebrity[1] is fairly new in information science, communication studies, and human-computer interaction [1, 2, 91]. The term microcelebrity was first coined by Theresa Senft in 2008 [101], and since then, several studies have investigated the practices and strategies of microcelebrities to understand how they gain and maintain their popularity [1, 2, 110]. However, we observed three main research gaps in the existing literature. First, the findings of prior studies on microcelebrities have been framed primarily within the western socio-cultural contexts. The practices in the Global South are very much different from those in the developed countries in several ways such as users' perception and values about social media, Internet, and technology in general [7, 53, 56, 61]. Following the postcolonial scholars who have called for contextualization of computing research and strongly advocated against the universal notion of research due to the generative model of culture, uneven economic relation, and difference in cultural epistemologies [90], we argue that the findings from the western culture are not generalizable in the context of the Global South. In fact, prior literature shows empirical evidence that microcelebrity practices may vary depending on socio-cultural contexts. For example, Marwick et al. report that microcelebrities mainly use Twitter to increase intimacy with their fans in western contexts [85]. In contrast, a study conducted by [93] suggests that the main use of Twitter by microcelebrities in Indonesia is to articulate opinions and update the followers about their positions regarding various social and political issues. Prior works by Abidin et al. also found that satires related to social issues and discussions on religious views to be important parts of microcelebrity identity construction in India and Pakistan respectively [3].

Second, while the microcelebrities who commodify their identities for example through lifestyle videos on online platforms have been well-studied [1, 84, 101], the emergence of microcelebrities through their participation in sociopolitical discourses calls for deeper exploration. The preference and the use of social media platforms vary significantly based on the context, purpose, and objectives. For example, while Twitter and Instagram are more popular among the western microcelebrities [1, 84, 85], Facebook has the highest market penetration in Bangladesh [59]. Facebook is more popular in the developing countries for several political, social, and economic factors [43, 79, 103]. Unlike Twitter, Facebook offers the scope of creating a more customized space of privacy [43, 103]. As a result, it allows an individual to remain private from the invigilation of certain authorities, which is an important consideration for young users–a major demography in online social media platforms [103]. In addition, this makes Facebook more suitable for running activism campaigns and movements (almost 90 percent Egyptians and Tunisians who took part in a poll reported that they used Facebook to organize protests and spread awareness during the Arab spring) [12, 43, 57]. Such use of social media in sociopolitical discourses is very different from its use in daily lives. The social benefits of information seeking, socialization, entertainment, and the economic benefit of selling and buying products via Facebook

are some of the driving factors behind the wider adoption of Facebook in developing countries [79]. As a result, microcelebrities in Bangladesh are more active on Facebook than on any other social media platform [59].

Third, prior literature on microcelebrities in the Global South did not shed enough light on the role of the platform and technical infrastructures. We want to understand how the different technological availability and cultural epistemologies in Bangladesh influence the perceptions of the microcelebrities and their followers about the platforms on which they are interacting which can be of interest from an ICT for development perspective. Taking the fast changing local sociotechnical contexts into consideration, we found that the infrastructural development and changes in the recent years have influenced different aspects of the microcelebrities' practices–from something as basic as the frequency at which the microcelebrities post on Facebook up to and including their adoption of platforms with different modalities and functionalities creating a ecosystem to entice their followers.

In order to fill these research gaps, we conducted a qualitative study to understand the perspectives of the microcelebrities in Bangladesh about microcelebritification–what are different stakeholders and factors, how these are related, and how the microcelebrities experience the process at different stages. In addition to having to constantly "perform" on the digital platform for a careful impression management, microcelebrities in Bangladesh frequently comment on contemporary political, social, cultural, and religious issues, their comments or opinions become their "products" [101]. Thus, their celebrityhood is attained through these comments. Thus, in the Global South, microcelebrities have become "opinion leaders" or "gate keepers" [64] and the main topics of their discussion are politics and social issues. Therefore, we believe that understanding the practices of microcelebrities in Bangladesh will further the growing scholarship around the role of social media in shaping grassroots politics in non-western contexts, and thus, contribute to the ongoing relevant discussions in ICT for development.

In this paper, we investigate how the microcelebrities in Bangladesh perceive this entire process of their own product and impression management. To this end, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 19 microcelebrities from Bangladesh. Since we are interested to understand the process of becoming microcelebrity and maintaining that status, we adopted a framework for explaining the process instead of a thematic analysis of the phenomenon. We have used actor-network theory (ANT) to identify the associated actors and analyze the dynamics as a translation process [22]. We have also used Goffman's dramaturgical account of human interaction to explain the process [46]. Our results demonstrate a huge heterogeneity in the dynamics of microcelebrities and the process associated with gaining this celebrityhood. In addition to the process itself, we also describe the motivation of these microcelebrities and the impacts they create on the broader social and political landscape.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, we discuss the concept of microcelebrity and highlight the related works. In Section 3, we describe our methodology, and how ANT concepts (e.g. actor heterogeneity) can be leveraged to explain the process. Section 4 presents the findings of this paper: identifying different actors and showing how they are networked in the process.

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[1]The existing literature uses both forms: non-hyphenated (microcelebrity), as used by [102] and hyphenated (micro-celebrity), as used by [85]. For the sake of consistency, we use the non-hyphenated form.

In Section 5, we discuss the broader implications of our findings to ICTD, identity, and interaction design research. We conclude by reflecting on the limitations of our study and outlining our plans for future works in section 6.

2 RELATED WORK

2.1 Microcelebrities and Self-representation

Studying celebrities, Internet celebrities, and microcelebrities has been an important research agenda for internet research and related disciplines [2, 110, 113]. In the internet research and social media literature, they have been described as "influencers" or "stars"–people who motivate and inspire others on a mass scale [2, 38, 66]. Microcelebrities, in particular, have been gaining more recognition lately because unlike traditional celebrities, they construct their public persona as a commodity or a product that increases the likelihood of their persona to be consumed by others. Their opinions and beliefs–and the ways in which they express those–are their main capital whereas the traditional celebrities have other consumable attributes. Additionally, the pervasive nature of the Internet and the platforms that microcelebrities use–social networking sites, blogs, and so on–contribute to the increasing popularity of microcelebrities.

Studies related to microcelebrities have been centered around exploring their characteristics [1, 101], motivation for fame [2, 85], the process of becoming a microcelebrity which we are calling microcelebritification and maintaining the status that we are calling microcelebrityhood in western contexts [83, 118], interaction with fans and followers, market influences, and credibility and trustworthiness [84, 101]. Fietkiewicz et al. studied microcelebrities who stream different types of content to understand their motivation for fame [42]. Hearn described this phenomenon as a commodity sign, or a product to be consumed by others [50].

Senft linked the motivation and the process involved in gaining the microcelebrity status by describing it as the utilization of strategic intimacy to appeal followers. Djafarova and Trofimenko studied Russian Instagram microcelebrities and found that followers recognize the credibility of microcelebrities based on a set of online behavior and self-presentation criteria [35]. To describe credible Instagram celebrities, their followers often used terms such as classy, beautiful, elegant, sexy, knowledgeable, good sense of humor, authentic/original, successful, and unique [35]. The existing literature also points out how microcelebrities give audience or their fans access to their everyday lives [19] but with much control [115] in order to extend self-presentation. A fair share of the existing literature thus focuses on the practices more than the persons, and describes the microcelebrity phenomenon as a practice [85, 110]–it is what a person does rather than what a person is.

Duffey and Pooley highlighted three characteristics of the celebrities: self-enterprising, meritocracy, and authenticity [38]. They found that while many mainstream celebrities' Internet and social media usage are heavily focused on self-promotion and business venture, some care more about their authenticity and meritocracy [38]. Gräve conducted an experiment to understand consumer perception of traditional celebrities and microcelebrities [48]. According to his findings, with the increasing level of familiarity with consumers, the favorability of traditional celebrities decrease.

In contrast, microcelebrities remain popular by maintaining their authenticity and transparency, despite a higher level of familiarity with the passage of time [2, 48]. This reemphasizes Goffman's presentation of self in the context of microcelebrities–they continuously maintain the impressions they foster by managing a consistent identity [46].

2.2 Technicality and Choice of Platforms

Fietkiewicz et al. found that motivations for fame or financial gain among microcelebrities differ based on the platforms they use. This also means that motivations for engagement and celebritification using social media are influenced by the media community norms [42]. However, celebritification in social media is not only about following and maintaining the above-mentioned techniques and processes. It also includes an understanding of the embedded economic structure facilitated by the platforms that celebrities make use of. For example, existing works have discussed how social media business models, affordances, advertisement markets, and the microcelebrities altogether fuel industrial motivations and structures [54, 114]. The end goal of microcelebrities is to utilize these structures to present a consumable version of themselves. According to Norman, this could be in form of texts, images, or videos, depending on the platform [89]. Along with self-presentation, the measure of the status of microcelebrity also depends on the platform, e.g., through the number of likes, shares, follows, and comments [27].

The existing literature also focuses heavily on Twitter and Instagram as the platforms to study microcelebrities. They describe these two platforms as spaces for developing "parasocial relationships between celebrities and their fans" [118]. Twitter as a platform encourages the blurring of personal and professional roles [49]. This environment also encourages celebrities to give their fans access to their personal lives and scope to directly interact with them. A major portion of the literature studies traditional celebrities (e.g., singers, politicians, athletes) and their interaction with fans on Twitter [45, 51, 58, 62]. The common findings of these studies is that traditional celebrities use Twitter to increase intimacy with their fans. There is also a fundamental geographical difference in regard to the use of Twitter by microcelebrities. Compared to the Global North, the microcelebrities on Twitter in the Global South focus more on raising political and social awareness [93].

Some studies highlight Norman's view of multimodality and show how Instagram as a platform serves microcelebrities in a different way than Twitter does [83, 118]. Instagram facilitates the transformation of self-representation on the Internet from written form to pictorial performances. Ward points out a difference between the use of Instagram by traditional celebrities and microcelebrities [118]. In a recent work by [69], they have studied how general consumers are persuaded with visually complex ads and endorsements from the celebrities. While interaction with fans has consistently been the least frequent activity for traditional celebrities on Instagram, it is often highly valued by microcelebrities. This effort from microcelebrities–the task of managing and maintaining the status by pursuing immaterial labor–has also been reflected in the findings of the study by Mavroudis and Milne [86].

To summarize, microcelebrity is a relatively new area of interest in internet research and media studies. The existing literature does

not discuss the microcelebrity phenomenon in the context of the Global South. Additionally, beyond the microcelebrities who have become popular through the presentation of their every day lives, the scholarship in this field needs to focus on the microcelebrities whose process of gaining popularity originated from their participation in sociopolitical discourses. Although the literature recognizes the role of multimodality, Facebook–as a multimodal platform–needs to be studied to a greater depth in the literature. Finally, the existing literature mainly focused on the motivation of microcelebrities, while the process of gaining and maintaining popularity and the role of technology in this process have remained understudied. Our work aims to address these important research gaps in the current literature.

3 METHODS

The main objective of this paper is to understand the practices of microcelebrities in Bangladesh in the online community spheres. We are interested in understanding how (1) ordinary users gain and maintain popularity on Facebook and become microcelebrities, (2) how the social, cultural, political, and local infrastructures play roles in the process, and (3) how their lives and use of social media have shaped after becoming a microcelebrity. In order to answer our research goal, we conducted a qualitative study with Facebook microcelebrities in Bangladesh. We received approval from the Ethics Committee of the University of Turku for all study procedures prior to beginning this study.

3.1 Data Collection

We started recruiting our participants through purposive sampling [109]. Since we focused on understanding the popularity dynamics, we started looking for popular users on Facebook. We posted status updates on our personal profiles and also on several public and private groups to recruit potential participants based on recommendations of prior literature in similar context [41]. According to our criteria, a user is considered a microcelebrity if the following two conditions are met:

- The user has at least ten thousand followers on Facebook (this threshold was later revised to seven thousand due to low response rate).
- The user has gained initial popularity through Facebook activities.

For the first condition, we needed a threshold value for identifying Facebook users whom we can consider as microcelebrities. Marwick et al. used a threshold value of one to fifteen thousand followers for considering a Twitter user to become a microcelebrity [85]. We took this range as a benchmark and all the authors discussed and agreed upon setting ten thousand followers as the threshold for becoming a Facebook microcelebrity in the context of Bangladesh. The second condition filtered out all the traditional celebrities (e.g., artists, players, politicians) in Bangladesh who are active on Facebook. It also excluded people who are popular on social media because of their professional or social contribution in real life. For example, if a well-known journalist, doctor, or professor has over ten thousand followers, we did not consider that user as a potential interviewee as it is unclear to what extent their professional correspondence had contributed to their popularity. In other words,

we looked for those ordinary and previously unknown users who became popular solely because of their Facebook activities. This helped us to analyze the popularity dynamics by negating other external factors. After interviewing the first few participants, we started running a snowball sampling [47] to recruit more participants until theoretical saturation was met. We summarize the demographic information of our participants in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants

Identifier	Gender	Age	Occupation
P1	Male	35	Banker
P2	Male	26	Product manager
P3	Male	31	Data engineer
P4	Male	28	Executive
P5	Male	27	Entrepreneur
P6	Male	29	Entrepreneur
P7	Male	26	School teacher
P8	Male	30	IT manager
P9	Male	27	Software developer
P10	Male	27	Management trainee
P11	Male	27	Feature writer
P12	Male	28	Unemployed
P13	Male	33	Blogger
P14	Female	29	Govt. employee
P15	Female	35	Doctor
P16	Male	35	Chief executive
P17	Female	27	Research fellow
P18	Female	25	Volunteer
P19	Male	27	Service engineer

The first author conducted semi-structured interviews with the participants (15 males, 4 females) between November 2018 and March 2020. Since the participants were physically situated across different regions of Bangladesh, we conducted the interviews over Skype, Facebook messenger calls, or phone calls based on the participants' convenience. Participation in this study was voluntary. The interviewer read the participants an oral consent form. All participants verbally gave us consent to record the interviews. The interviews began with demographic questions, followed by questions about participants' general experiences on different social online platforms, how they gained popularity on Facebook, how their online and real-life experiences get shaped by this popularity, how they interact with their followers, etc. Our collected data resulted in a total of 991 minutes (average interview time 52.16 minutes) of audio recording. We transcribed the interview recordings, anonymized those, and translated them into English.

3.2 Data Analysis

We used a dual inductive and deductive approach to analyze our data, commonly used in qualitative human-computer interaction and social computing research [29, 68]. For the inductive analysis, we used a grounded theory-inspired approach [108]. We used QDA Miner Lite[2], a qualitative data analysis program to code the interview transcripts. In the open coding step, we identified abstract

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[2]https://provalisresearch.com/products/qualitative-data-analysis-software/

representations of objects, events, and interactions which repeatedly appeared in the transcripts. We associated quotes from the participants with the corresponding open codes such as Facebook newsfeed algorithm, Shahbag movement (detailed in the findings section), ideology, monetary values and costs, etc. The first author carried out the first round of open coding and continued to meet with the other authors regularly to discuss the emergent codes. Because of the contextual nature of interview data, McDonald and colleagues [87] argued that grounded theory on such data does not require reporting inter-rater reliability score. A few cases of disagreement among the authors were brought into consensus through discussions.

Because of our participants' focus on identity, impression management, and self-presentation, we found interactionist identity scholar Goffman's work [46] on dramaturgical analysis (DA) very relevant to our study. This guided our analysis of the identity-related data during the open coding step. Beyond the identity expression of the microcelebrities, our interview data led us to insights about multifaceted factors that are involved with their practices with human followers and non-human technological platforms. Therefore, in the deductive analysis step, we chose to use a comprehensive theoretical framework that can account for the relationship and agency of different kinds of actors and entities. Researchers have used Actor-network theory (ANT) [71, 72] to study people's practices on sociotechnical systems. We identified the relations among different actors and the process of their interaction to understand the overall actor-network. We used the relational flat ontology of ANT that does not differentiate between human (e.g., microcelebrity, followers) and non-human (e.g., platform, policy) actors [71, 73]. This essentially means that instead of counting the states of microcelebrity status, we focus on the network of all the stakeholders or actors in ANT terms, and the constant flux of relation. Looking through ANT lens allows us to understand how the complex dynamics of microcelebritification–the process of becoming a microcelebrity and microcelebrityhood–the status of being a microcelebrity operate with respect to different actors' motivations, roles, and associations. Thus, employing ANT in our data analysis, we can understand the visible and hidden relations in the socio-technical network among different actors. Such combined approach of using both inductive data analysis and theoretical framework is commonly used by HCI scholars [68, 100]. However, for broader readership of the paper, we explain the ANT framework and Goffman's idea of DA in the following subsection.

3.2.1 Actor-network theory.
We draw on actor-network theory [20, 22, 71, 73, 74] as a theoretical framework to study the microcelebrities in Bangladesh. The fundamental goal of ANT is to explore how networks are built or assembled by the actors to reach a certain objective [73]. ANT provides a methodological tool through which the complex interactions of heterogeneous actors (including human and non-human actors) can be analyzed [71, 73].

In ANT, an actor is defined as "any element which bends space around itself, makes other elements dependent upon itself and translates their will into the language of its own" [22]. In practice, it means that an actor has an effect on other actors. Consequently, an actor is defined by its own effects on other actors, rather than being defined by its internal qualities.

ANT does not make a priori distinction between human and non-human actors because they both can have effects on other actors [72, 74]. Thus, actors can be humans as well as computers or social media platforms. In ANT, the term "social" is a mere association among other relations. Technology creates and runs on a bunch of relations (conventionally called "social" and "technical"). Thus, for ANT, technology can be seen as a vibrant mesh of connecting and disconnecting relations through which different actors communicate, affect, facilitate, block and work with each other. Therefore, examining such complex relations that include humans and technology is a self-evident starting point for ANT [73]. Accordingly, any actor – human or non-human – is equally important in creating a network [72]. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of the actors and their roles. We employ three key elements of ANT: punctualization, translation, and actor heterogeneity in our analysis.

Punctualization. ANT emphasizes the network and assumes that nothing lies outside it. Thus, each actor can be defined and understood only in relation to other actors in the network [75]. This implies that an actor can be considered as a collection of other actors and this collection is formed based on the relations that they establish. For example, a microcelebrity is an influential user on a social media platform who presents a consumable identity of self, using combinations of actors such as practices, ideology, strategies, etc., so that followers view microcelebrity as an actor without considering such nuances. Thus, the performance of a microcelebrity – an actor by its own right – is enacted by its relation with other actors. While the social media platform itself is a complex system that contains many lines of codes, electronic elements, etc., as actors, those underlying actors are hidden from a user such as a microcelebrity or a follower, who simply uses it as a single object/actor. ANT refers such simplification as punctualization [21], which allows the conceptualization of a network at different levels of granularity or complexity.

Translation. We apply the concept of translation from ANT to describe the process of an individual becoming a microcelebrity. Translation is a process that creates a temporary stable social order as the network assemblages gain more credibility. There are four phases or moments in translation: problematization, interessement, enrollment, and mobilization [20].

In problematization, the focal actor (the key actor behind the process of gathering other actors' support for a change initiative) defines a problem and frames an assemblage as a vital way of addressing that problem, in which the actor establishes itself as indispensable. The second phase of translation is interessement – the strengthening of the network among actors and other support structures through incentives. Successful interessement leads to enrollment that involves defining the roles of each actor in the transformed or the newly created assemblage. This enrollment is temporary and actors not abiding by the agreements during the enrollment is a possibility [98]. However, if the actors enrolled in the network adequately represent the masses, enrollment manifests as active support and mobilization occurs.

For example, a user who is not a microcelebrity, i.e., does not currently have a lot of followers, identifies some social issues and the associated group of users (problematization). Next, that user

posts his opinions as an organized writing on social media, which might attract a good number of users from the targeted group to interact (e.g., react, comment, and share) on that post if they perceive that post to be of interest to them. This opportunity to organize their own opinions and get their voices heard works as an incentive to them (interessement). This stage might go through several iterations before the actors (e.g., microcelebrity, followers, platform) are defined into their corresponding roles. Then, eventually many other users start following that new microcelebrity without any commitment of following him/her forever. This growing number of followers makes that user an established microcelebrity on that platform (enrollment). With the growing number of followers, the microcelebrity is likely to have users from different social groups in his/her follower base. Thus, the microcelebrity gets wider acceptance and at this stage, his/her status as a microcelebrity becomes potentially irreversible (mobilization).

Actor heterogeneity. Heterogeneity is the quality or state of being diverse in character or content. The concept of heterogeneity maintains a fundamental stance in the actor-network perspective [73, 74]. One of the recognized strengths of ANT is that it emphasizes on the importance of human-nonhuman actor symmetry, i.e., both human and non-human actors play equally important roles in the construction of actor-networks [105]. ANT recognizes that the social is materially heterogeneous and the technical is socially heterogeneous [20]. In ANT terms, the interaction between microcelebrities and followers is nothing other than patterned networks of heterogeneous actors and generated effects in the network.

3.2.2 Dramaturgical Analysis. In order to understand the process of achieving a microcelebrity status and maintaining it, we need to situate each actor involved with this process in relation to other actors and pay attention to how they interact. The prior literature on microcelebrities has termed the interaction from microcelebrities to their followers as "consumable identity" [2, 48, 50]. This closely relates to Goffman's dramaturgical account of human interaction [46] where he argued that humans enact different roles controlling and staging their appearance as they are concerned about how they are perceived by others. Dramaturgical analysis compares social interaction to enactment at a theater, where individuals take on various roles and act them out for their "audience". Therefore, the concept of self is a key idea for dramaturgical analysis.

The idea of "self". There are two different views on Goffman's presentation of self: sociological and psychological. Sociological perspective focuses on the development and expression of self based on social interaction whereas psychological perspective deals with the aspects of the individual's personality. In this paper, we will be using the sociological perspective, which examines how the self develops through interactions with other people. To instantiate, we can think of the human belief system. Interaction with family members and friends shapes one's beliefs and attitudes, which consequently controls one's behaviors and actions. This essentially means that an individual's identity (or in Goffman's term, self) can only be understood in relation to the individual's social relations and interactions. Goffman suggests that when engaging in social relations with others, people invoke a process called impression management, which we describe next.

Impression management. Goffman views social life as a process where humans constantly try to control the impressions that others have about them, which he terms as "impression management". This is a way to understand how humans behave in social settings. In this process, an individual puts up a more carefully improvised version (in Goffman's term, face) of self to manipulate how he/she is seen so that he/she can gain acceptance or preference from others (the audience). This aspect of self of an individual is called the "front stage". Here, the personal front of an individual consists of all the elements that an individual consciously or unconsciously uses (e.g., appearance, manners, style, etc.) on his/her front stage to facilitate impression management with the audience. Individuals decide on how to present these qualities depending on social settings, creating and juggling among different front stages. The other side of Goffman's theory about self is called the "back stage". This is a more private understanding of the self of an individual in the absence of a social setting. However, there is not just a single solid line between these two sides of self. There might be a small group of social relations that brings out one version of self from an individual that includes some elements from the back stage version of himself/herself, while there might be another version of self that the individual never reveals to others. In the context of microcelebrities, we can say that the "consumable identity" of microcelebrities [2, 48, 50] is a front stage performance played by them through public social media posts for the followers. Only the real-life friends of microcelebrities might have an access to a version of them that is closer to their back stage face.

3.2.3 How does ANT cooperate with DA?. Both actor-network theory and dramaturgical analysis put higher emphasis on the relations or associations among the actors or individuals, rather than their internal characteristics. In ANT, we can define and describe an actor only based on its effects on other actors. In other words, an actor can play different roles in different assemblages. Likewise, for Goffman, there is no single true self of an individual. It is the set of roles that defines the self – a single individual can put out different front stages depending on his/her social settings. One can include more back stage qualities in one's face for a group as they become closer, e.g., for family members and friends. As back stage is more personal and less dependent on perception of others, it is more stable, yet, is subject to change. This resembles the translation process in ANT. A potential or want-to-be microcelebrity may try putting on different faces on social media platform in order to find out which one is more acceptable or consumable to his/her peers (friends and followers). Through this negotiation, they rectify both their social media identity and peers as they learn what kind of expression of their identities are welcomed by their peers. For example, some microcelebrities in Bangladesh post contents on contemporary events/topics and they decide the narrative of the content in different ways – parody, constructive discussion, or fact-based – depending on the demand of their followers. This helps them recruit more like-minded peers. Again, they also restrict some social media users due to various reasons. Thus, even though the network around a microcelebrity reaches an apparent stability, it might undergo changes later – through his/her identity and/or peers. ANT can also extend the concept of "social" for DA. By considering non-human actors such as technology (e.g., social media

platforms), ANT creates the opportunity for individuals to make the transitions and juggling among different faces or identity more frequent and fluid.

3.3 Reflexivity Statement

While conducting research on identities especially in the context of underrepresented communities such as in the Global South, scholars [78, 99] have suggested that researchers' own identities can bring certain affinities into perspective into the data analysis. All authors of the paper except the fourth one (who is Finnish by nationality) were born and brought up in Bangladesh and native Bengali speakers with professional proficiency in English. The researchers being familiar with the contemporary social media trends in Bangladesh as well as the current social, political, and religious issues, their perspectives are shaped from the point of view of the Global South.

4 FINDINGS

From a high level overview, we identified three key actors in the microcelebritification process: microcelebrities, platforms and followers. However, as we delve into our data, we can identify many other actors. The actors such as microcelebrity or platform are the results of collective interaction of those other actors, ranging from individuals, their ideologies, and their profiles on social networking sites to their diverse interests in mass media, government, religion, political parties, and so on.

4.1 What are the different actors in Microcelebritification?

The relationships among numerous human and non-human actors form the actor-network. These actors can have broader social, political, technological, and economic dimensions [60, 104]. The seminal work by Ackerman [4] describes technology as a social construct. Recognizing this claim, we argue that there can be a significant overlap between social and technological dimensions. For example, an algorithm is an actor, which is generally perceived to be a technological entity, can also have social implications [25]. This essentially means that an actor like an algorithm may have some aspects that can be explained from a technological viewpoint (e.g., how to implement the algorithm in a system) [18], whereas some other aspects of the same actor can be better understood from a sociological perspective (e.g., how an algorithm can promote social injustice) [25]. This rationalization illustrates the nature of actors' heterogeneity. We note that a microcelebrity is not only an actor, but also a constantly moving and changing socio-technical network, which involves heterogeneous actors such as ideologies, platforms, labor, and emotions. A microcelebrity can establish this socio-technical network only if they can utilize a platform to reach their followers. This means that the microcelebrity actor can only be understood with respect to its relation to other actors like platforms and followers. Thus, through ANT lens, it is difficult to single out an actor from the actor-network. When looking at from a high level, punctualization encourages us to view microcelebrity as a single actor and ignore all the nuances or details. Similarly, the actors like platforms and followers are also the results of interaction among many other actors. In the following subsections, we describe those actors and explain how their collective interactions help us understand the concepts of actors such as microcelebrity, platforms, and followers.

4.1.1 Microcelebrity. The first key actor that we are going to discuss is microcelebrity – a popular user on the social media platform of Facebook. From the social perspective, microcelebrities are individuals and they have certain practices and ideologies, political positions, and religious views. Prior works in the context of developing world also found these views and ideologies as important parts of microcelebrities' identities [3]. From a technological point of view, these microcelebrities use social networking sites as their platform to gain the status of microcelebrity by presenting themselves in a consumable manner. However, it is the news feed organizing algorithm of the associated platform that decides who can see the presentation and thus determines the success of that presentation. The economic aspect of the microcelebrity actor is related to consumable self-representation. Microcelebrities put labor to gain their follower count and receive incentives through increased visibility, responses, and interactions. We describe the social, technological, and economic dimensions in detail below.

We observed that the social **identity** and **ideologies** of microcelebrities play an important role in their process of gaining popularity. For example, while some of our participants mentioned that they got their popularity by writing about religious events and interpretations, others reported that writing from a secular point of view helped them gain popularity. In fact, we have seen such an instance where the microcelebrity (P9) gained his initial recognition through secular writings but later went through an ideological transition phase and started posting contents with religious connotations. He mentioned:

> "I used to write secular posts during my first and second year at [institution name], which brought me a lot of followers. Later, I studied a lot of Islamic references and followed lectures from scholars. Those influenced my writing pattern on Facebook, which you see now. Nowadays, I write mostly about Islamic issues. Some people may not follow me anymore but I don't mind. Some people ask questions about my new perspectives of writing. I engage more with these people." **(P9)**

According to him, although a number of followers might have unfollowed him after noticing this transition, a large number of audience who started following him for his secular writings remained in his follower base, maybe because either they had not noticed the change or they had become interested in his newly acquired views to potentially have constructive arguments. Ideology is usually a part of a person's back stage identity according to dramaturgical analysis (DA). A microcelebrity presents a certain identity on social media through a negotiation between their audience and their ideologies. In other words, the identity that a microcelebrity puts on social media is shaped through a simultaneous act of both impression management and stage/audience selection. The aforementioned participant P9 mentioned that he had to post a status explaining his change of view. If irregular followers who used to follow the microcelebrity's secular writing, finds his religious writing contradictory, he can use that status as a token or receipt. This

practice is similar to the findings from the existing literature about microcelebrities' receipt culture [3, 84].

We also found that some of our participants (P3, P8, P13) became popular in 2013 when the "Shahbag Movement" took place in Bangladesh. The movement was held at Shahbag in the capital city Dhaka, demanding the punishment of the war criminals of 1971 [9, 32, 112]. These participants mentioned that there had been a rise of anti-liberation war sentiment during the previous two years. They had always felt the urge to protest against this and the Shahbag Movement offered them an opportunity to make their voice heard. Some of the participants were active on other blogging forum before being active on Facebook (P3, P8, P13, P16). In most cases, they continued writing about similar topics on Facebook, as they did on other blogging sites. In essence, they brought in and established certain **practices** for their follower base. One of them said:

> "I was very active on "Somewhere in Blog"[3] where I used to write posts containing factual information, historical clarifications, and contents that would encourage the young generation emotionally. My first post that got unexpected high response was the one in which I quoted Dr. Zafar Iqbal's[4] speech from his visit to Shahbag the day before. I don't remember how many likes or comments I received, maybe couple of hundreds overnight. It was huge compared to my regular posts [then]." **(P3)**

As **individual beings**, microcelebrities experience both the dark and the bright sides of their popularity. P8 and P13 reported that they were admonished for their writing on social media, including threats to harm family members and even death threats. Both of them now live abroad and cite their microcelebrity status as the reason behind leaving their country and their lives being turned "upside down". In addition, P13 restates the fact of having a large number of followers with opposing views was extremely challenging to handle. He said:

> "My activity on Facebook led many people to know me. I don't know if I should call that popularity. This is what turned my life upside down. ... I used to get death threats in my inbox. I had to come to [a foreign country] leaving my homeland for the safety of myself and my wife and my child's lives." **(P13)**

The same frustration was reflected in P8's statement. He said:

> "You may know how much sensitive people of Bangladesh become when it comes to religion. I was young then and not afraid about my life. But I was always worried about my parents, thinking someone might harm them for my activity on Facebook. Now that I am out of country, I feel safer and can write more freely. I am still worried about my parents at home though" **(P8)**

However, many of our participants (P1-P4, P10-P11) reported that they enjoy different benefits in their real life due to their microcelebrity status on Facebook. These benefits include getting one's

works done faster in a bureaucratic establishment, special treatments like reduced price for movie tickets, access to premier shows, and receiving free food at restaurants. P11 shared his experience:

> "When the Avengers Endgame movie first came to Cineplex, they asked me if I am interested to attend the first show while many people were struggling to get those tickets. ... I took one of my friends with me to the show." **(P11)**

In contrast to P8 and P13 (who gained popularity during the Shahbag movement), P3 (another such microcelebrity who gained popularity during Shahbag movement) mentioned that one of his followers offered him to stay at his/her house and show him around the city when he was visiting abroad. When we asked these participants whether they share these good or bad experiences with their followers, they agreed on the point that they usually share such individual life stories with their followers, but not in detail. This again resonates with DA's concept of difference between back and front stage versions of the self. In DA's terminology, microcelebrity's experience from their every day life is one of the elements that form their back stage identity. Microcelebrities choose only to share a snippet of that with their followers in their front stage performance, which we can depict as their impression management.

Some of our participants (P1-P4) reported that their activities on other social networking sites accelerated their popularity on Facebook or gave them a head start. For example, P3 said:

> "... Most of the people who are popular from our generation came from Samu ["Somewhere in Blog"]. ... [Addressing the interviewer] you might be aware, there was a blog run from your university, maybe Shorob (another blog site) that I think came later." **(P3)**

Whereas P3's popularity on a blogging site gave him a head start, other participants (P1, P2 and P4) think that their popularity got boosted from being active on multiple platforms. P2 sees this practice as a way to take advantages offered by different platforms. He said:

> "I recently started uploading my comedy videos on YouTube as well. People who are not on Facebook or cannot see my contents due to privacy settings can easily watch my videos from there." **(P2)**

Many of our participants commented about the news feed algorithms that social media platforms use. They often come up with **folk theories**–lay, socially constructed conceptions of how the algorithms work. Extending the findings on the role of folk theories in self-representation [34], we found that these are important to the microcelebrities to make the performance visible. Even though the stage and the performance are there, it may not get the intended audience if the algorithm is not interpreted by the microcelebrities in a correct way. Many of our participants (P1-P4, P7, P8, P10-P12) mentioned that they observe a relation between the number of reactions and comments they get on a post and the timing of the post. As P1 mentioned:

> "... Although people are active on Facebook throughout the day, it is scattered. In the evening, they are on Facebook and talk with their friends, or browse the

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[3]A popular blogging site in Bangladesh: https://www.somewhereinblog.net/
[4]Dr. Muhammed Zafar Iqbal is a popular Bangladeshi writer, physicist, and activist.

news feed. I think the time in evening before dinner time, say before 9 or 10 p.m. is the prime time. People of all ages are active on Facebook at that time. If you post something at that time, you are likely to get high visibility." **(P1)**

The microcelebrities (P4, P7) who have a follower base situated in different parts of the world also consider the time zone differences. They decide the appropriate time for posting according to the target audience and compromises the visibility they could get from the Bangladeshi audience in lieu of attention from a more global audience. For example, P7 described his strategy in the following way:

> "Most of my followers are from Bangladesh and some countries in Europe. They are mostly young people of our age range [indicating the 20-30 age group]. These people are generally active on Facebook from evening till late night. So, I usually post between Bangladesh time 11p.m. - 3a.m., which is around evening in Europe. In that way, I can capture both locations of my followers." **(P7)**

They also described several similarly interesting heuristics that they follow. For example, participants (P4-P6, P8, P10, P18) think that a written post gets more visibility than sharing a link. As a result, if they want to share a content they found elsewhere, they copy and paste the writing, or download and re-upload the video/image with credits to the original content creator. In this way, they get more traffic than they would have got from only sharing the link to the post. These folk theorizations might be completely different from how the platforms actually operate [40], however, can positively drive the microcelebrities engagement with the systems. Many of our participants emphasize the importance of using **images** along with texts for increased visibility. In some cases, our participants (P2, P4, P5, P7, P12, P18) come up with an ideal number of posts they should make within a time period to optimize the visibility they get in total. As P7 explained:

> "I think Facebook determines a cap visibility you might get from the way they organize your followers' news feed. If you post, say, three status updates in a day, your visibility will get divided among three posts. But if you post one status update each week, the algorithm will think that the content is important, and you'll accumulate more visibility." **(P7)**

This understanding of the algorithm assumed by our participants is different from that in the existing works. Whereas prior works report the importance of posting frequently [10], our participants view the relationship between visibility and frequency of posts as an optimization problem. Some of our participants (P2, P4, P5, P16, P18) also think that the news feed algorithm prioritizes contents posted from **pages** to give more visibility than the ones from personal profiles. To take advantage of this aspect, they often create a Facebook page and post important contents from both the personal profile and the public page.

The **labor** incurred by microcelebrities varies in nature and it is related to their competition for gaining the attention of the followers. They put a significant amount of effort in their social media usage. As our participants reported, they have to try to be

one of the first during any significant event, be that natural events like earthquake or political events like movements. As one of our participants said:

> "... When there is any important event for the community, for example, a new [computer] game release, I have to do a review about it – what I liked about the game, and what I did not. The sooner you post your review, the higher the chance you have for more engagement." **(P7)**

The microcelebrities compete by being vigilant about recent events and bringing their posts in a **timely** manner on social media platforms. The importance of timeliness was highlighted by P9 in the following quote:

> "If there is an earthquake, some people deem it more important to post about that on Facebook than to go to a safe place. Because, if you are the first one to post about it, your post is more likely to get more traffic [of interaction]." **(P9)**

The participants also reported that they have to give a fair amount of effort to cope with the **demand** of their followers. In many cases, when the microcelebrity is not familiar with the topic that is on demand, they have to study before they can post about that certain issue. Many of our participants (P1, P4-P9, P11) mentioned that they had been requested or urged at some point to write or post about something that was not their primary area of interest. In order to satisfy follower demands, they had to study diverse ranges of topics, ranging from ancient Islamic history to film industry to pet behaviors. While the western microcelebrities are dedicated to create contents on a specific domain, the domains of content creation for microcelebrities in Bangladesh vary widely across various social, cultural, and political topics according to audience demand. By meeting followers' demand, microcelebrities receive **incentives** in forms of reactions (e.g., like, love, etc.), comments, and shares on Facebook. These incentives keep them motivated to continue their efforts. One participant described his efforts in the following way:

> "I recently joined a [Facebook] group on taking care of pets as I adopted a cat. Many of my followers from the gaming community knew me over there. ... Now, I collect information about taking care of cats from Google and write about those in that group. ... Group members appreciate those. Now, I try to collect information over the week and post one informative writing every week." **(P7)**

Another participant mentioned:

> "I am interested about films and have some experiences and involvements in this industry. Some of my friends suggested me to write about films and I was also interested. But when I started writing about those, I did not get as much response as I usually get. I put a lot of efforts searching for interesting and correct information. But not everyone can give proper value to it. I do not write about that anymore." **(P8)**

Our participants reported that they often gain popularity on social media platforms by presenting their **talent** in the first place.

They can create both informational and emotional contents. Some of them (P3, P6-P9, P11) believe that their followers like them because of their fact-based writings. For example, P6 writes about ways of learning programming languages, P7 writes about computer gaming and pet care, P11 mainly writes about historical events. However, they all agree that the presentation method is as important as the content itself. They stress the importance of connecting with the followers on a friendly level. In fact, some of our participants use emotional contents as their primary way to connect with their followers. In this regard, P9 mentioned the first post that brought him popularity overnight:

> "I wrote a post on how one should take care of his wife during her pregnancy. Many women die during childbirth in rural Bangladesh. Also, in many urban families, pregnant women have to take care of their household chores even at later stages of their pregnancy. I wrote about those things in my post. I got a huge response on that post. People liked and commented on it, some even thanked me personally in the inbox. I think people could relate to that post emotionally." **(P9)**

Some of our participants (P3, P9, P11 and P12) feel that they have certain limitations on what experiences they can share on social media. In their opinion, they cannot always share what they feel or experience if that may harm their consumable image on that platform. For example, they cannot share posts about personal life if there is another trending topic being discussed on social media. Because, followers expect posts on that particular topic and they appreciate it more than updates about their personal lives. These findings are consistent with prior findings that reveal discussing a non trending topic often results in decreased amount of response [17].

While microcelebrities try to put an appropriate or consumable version of their front stage self to their followers, sometimes it becomes necessary for them to negotiate who get to be their audience [39, 116, 117]. Thus, they undergo an invisible labor for moderating their follower base. When they need to limit their interaction, they sometimes use different privacy settings on their posts to control the visibility. As one of our participants said:

> "Sometimes I like some memes on Facebook that I want to share to make jokes with my friends. But you never know whom you might hurt with those memes. ... At times I am concerned if the meme aligns with my public image." **(P10)**

Prior works in the western context have found that this type of practice often leads to the creation of an alternative fake space for microcelebrities [119]. However, when asked, none of our participants said that they maintain any such "fake" profile.

Some of our participants mentioned that they have to keep an eye on their inbox messages in order to be responsive to their followers. Because of their popularity, the volume of messages they receive is quite high. Moreover, some of them consider that it is their responsibility to respond to those messages. As P12 said:

> "I regularly make sure to check my filtered inbox messages. Since I cannot connect with all my followers in my friend list, many of the messages from people do not show up in my primary inbox. I often receive requests for help and appreciation messages when I check my other inbox. Sometimes I receive negative messages too." **(P12)**

4.1.2 Platform. The second key actor in our discussion is the platform or the social networking site. Boyd et al. [16] identifies a wide range of platforms as social networking sites, including photo or video sharing sites (e.g., Flickr, YouTube), blogging sites (e.g., Blogger), platforms with private message functionality (e.g., Facebook), and so on. Platforms involve other actors of different dimensions. From socio-technical viewpoint, different types of accounts such as individual user profiles and public pages use social media platforms and network with one another. From a technological point of view, platform comprises of functionalities to post multimedia contents, local language support, and accommodation of local demands. If we look from an economic dimension, the cost associated with using Internet and business models of it are associated with the social media platform.

Social media platforms help their users through different features to make their social identity and network visible. Facebook offers two different types of account: individual **user profile** and public **page**. Most of the features available on the Facebook platform are the same for both types of account (for example, use of multimedia, channels of communication through public posts and private messages). However, profiles can create both bi-directional ("friends") and uni-directional ("follow") connections, whereas pages can have only uni-directional connections with their followers. Again, pages can pay Facebook to "boost" their posts – to prioritize posts from those pages in the news feed organizing algorithm. In addition, posts from a page are always public, and thus, those contents reach a larger audience as there is no privacy constraints. From our interviews with microcelebrities, we found that some of them (P1, P2, P4, P5, P11, P16, P18) use this capability of Facebook pages for a greater visibility. This assumption leads to different types of decision making. For example, P4 uses his user profile for posting updates about his personal life, whereas his page is dedicated to his works, which we can see as the division and selection of stages. As the participant said:

> "I use my profile for sharing stuff about my personal life as well as my paintings. But posts on the page are always about my work. In some cases, I boost the posts if I think that they might appeal to many users." **(P4)**

As a technological platform, social networking sites allow individuals to construct a public/semi-public profile within a bounded system, to articulate, view, and traverse a list of other users with whom they share connections [16]. Social networking sites contain technical features through which microcelebrities can get visibility to their followers. In this way, the platform gives microcelebrities and followers an opportunity to create digital identities. The users can provide information about their work, education, places where they lived, and other relevant information, which facilitates the creation of "measurable types" of those users [25]. Furthermore, Facebook asks about the users' preferences on topics and public figures when they join the platform for the first time. This initial data evolves with the users' interaction with contents on that platform

that is often augmented by the commercial data that the platform collects from other sources (e.g., Web history collected by cookies). The platform uses the measurable types of the users to create their inter protocategorical identities [25]. The platform's news feed organization algorithm is a recommendation system algorithm that operates based on those inter-sectional identities. The categories of the users are fluid, depending on their online interactions during a certain period of time and the algorithm constantly adapts to this. Through this audience controlling effect, the algorithm becomes an important actor in the network that microcelebrities deal with. Here, the **news feed organization algorithm** – a non-human actor – influences the way of communicating the message, e.g., in terms of audience, timing and such. The algorithm is a mediator and controller with which the microcelebrities seek to negotiate through different tactics (e.g., timing, frequency of updates, re-releasing pictures instead of linking them) based on their self and socially constructed folk theories, as we discussed earlier.

According to our participants, the availability of different features helps the interaction. They think that they need the **functionality for using multimedia** contents to better suit their needs for expressing themselves. As we mentioned earlier, many of our participants (P1, P2, P4-P8, P10, P13, P14, P18) consider images to be more effective than text-only status updates and all of them agree that multimodal posts create a better scope for interaction with other users. This opinion from our participants also aligns with the findings from the literature in the western contexts [83, 111, 118].

All of our participants reported that the number of friends they have on their Facebook profile have either reached or almost approached the threshold of 5,000, after which Facebook does not allow accepting new friend requests. Many of them said that they often get requests from followers to add them as friends.

> "People often ask me to add them as friends. If you do not do so even if you have spaces in your friend list, some consider it as your arrogance and stop following you. If that person is often active on your posts, you cannot afford to lose him/her." **(P7)**

Some microcelebrities we interviewed are happy about the threshold because they can use it as an excuse to not accept new friend requests from their followers. This practice is unique to Facebook, compared to Twitter and Instagram, which are usually studied in the existing literature [84, 85].

Many of our participants mentioned the role of **localization of technology** in the microcelebritification process. As P8 said:

> "When we wrote in blogs, there was no easy Bengali keyboard. Only a few people knew how to use 'Bijoy' (the first Bengali keyboard layout). It took me some time to learn it. Many people wrote Bengali contents by using English fonts, and things often got confusing. When Avro (the first Bengali phonetic keyboard) came out, expressing one's thought became easier. ... Nowadays, everyone has Bengali keyboards on their phones." **(P8)**

The participants agree that after the Bengali typing methods became more comfortable, they were more inspired to write. Previously they were demotivated by the thought that many might not even read a post written in English fonts. They also think that the

availability of phonetic keyboard in handheld devices like mobile phones and the standardization of Bengali keyboard [106] played a key role in accelerating their popularity.

Our participants think that the **price of Internet** and other economic factors create a barrier to become popular on Facebook. With the decreasing price of Internet packages and increasing market penetration of mobile devices, access to Internet has become easier. In P3's words:

> "When I got admitted to [college name] in [city name], I got familiar with this new trendy writing style. I started doing it regularly when I was in university but did not gain many followers quickly. Internet price was very high back then. ... Nowadays, everyone, even school or college students have smartphones. Many people are now aspiring to become celebrities on Facebook." **(P3)**

In Bangladesh, 80% of the total Internet users are on Facebook [59]. Since Facebook is free to use, people do not need to incur any monetary cost. Furthermore, many mobile phone operators have started offering less expensive promotional Internet packages in recent years. When Facebook started the free "basic internet" campaign, it attracted a lot of users to join Facebook because the obtained benefit outweighed the cost. According to recent studies, although users are concerned about their privacy being invaded by other users, privacy invasion by the platform was rarely mentioned as a concern [5, 6, 55]. This might relate to people's apparent perception of higher **benefits-to-cost ratio** regarding the platform.

4.1.3 Followers. The final key actor that we will be discussing is *follower*. In this paper, we try to understand the followers from the viewpoint of our participant microcelebrities. The followers are the general users who follow microcelebrities. By acting as the consumers, they place microcelebrities in a position of higher power. In consistent with our description of microcelebrities and the platform, we will discuss the role of followers under three broader themes: social, technological, and economic.

In essence, both microcelebrities and followers are **individual users** on Facebook and **individual beings** in real life. Almost all of our participants reported that they also follow some other microcelebrities. Punctualization of ANT explains such practice – every actor is defined with respect to their relation with other actors in the actor-network. Here, a microcelebrity who has many followers on social media can also act as a follower of another microcelebrity. While doing so, they exhibit characteristics according to their corresponding identities. Whereas some of our participants think that they have a diverse follower base with respect to **age**, **gender**, or **social or educational status**, others feel that users with a certain topic of interest subscribe as their followers. Catering to this specific domain is critical in maintaining the popularity, which has been reflected in the responses of many participants. Among our participants, P2, P7, and P16 identify the followers from the young generation to be the most active in their follower base.

Most of our female participants think that the gender of a microcelebrity acts as a catalyst to gain more popularity. Among them, P15 and P17 share contents about sexual abuse among other topics on Facebook. Also, P17 thinks that some people follow her not because they support her ideology but to express opposing views.

She shared her experiences of receiving offensive messages from male followers and positive feedback from female followers for being vocal about women rights on Facebook. She mentioned some instances when her parents were contacted by strangers, asking them to make her stop writing on Facebook. She thinks being a female microcelebrity can be more challenging in a patriarchal culture. She shared one of her experiences in the following way:

> "... Once I was returning home walking. It was around 8-9 p.m. when I reached near [a location] and over-heard a group of men. One of them was asking, 'Isn't that [P17's name]?' Another agreed. I was scared and quickly walked away. I don't know what their moti-vations were. But I don't think male microcelebrities have to deal with a similar situation." **(P17)**

Another participant shared some contents (writings and sketches) on abuse towards men. She found that people were very support-ive to those posts. In her opinion, the impact of the message that was delivered through those drawings, i.e., the front stage of the microcelebrity, was catalyzed by the gender of her followers, as male followers especially welcomed such contents. She said:

> "If you go through my profile, you will see that I have recently posted a status and a pencil sketch where I tried to say that men get abused too and women can also abuse. People, especially male followers thanked me. They told me that usually people do not talk about this perspective. Female followers were also welcoming. I think I got more response than a male microcelebrity if he would have written about this. Followers appreciated that despite being a woman, I raised voice for men." **(P15)**

From our interviews, it is apparent that microcelebrities' posts about middle class lifestyle often help them gain increased popular-ity. Our participants think that the underlying reason for this is the fact that the majority of followers can relate themselves to those posts. Some microcelebrities (e.g., P2, P10) try to depict the day-to-day lived experiences of the middle class population. In those posts, followers find an outlet to make their voices heard. Again, some microcelebrities (e.g., P5, P14) think that they act as a motivator for many middle class people. For example, P14 is currently studying at a world-renowned university in Europe. She often uploads photos of her visiting many famous places in Europe. In her opinion, her followers – especially girls from middle class families – take her as an inspiration to pursue their dreams. She said:

> "A few years ago, I did not have many followers on Facebook. ... I used to upload my photos with makeup like some of my classmates did. But I did not feel comfortable that way and did not continue. Now that I am at [university name], many people follow me and my traveling photos without makeup receive many likes and comments." **(P14)**

The educational background of the followers also play an im-portant role in this regard. For example, P1 is more popular among university graduates; P2 and P11 are popular among school, college, and university going students; whereas P6 identifies engineering students to be his dominant follower group.

As general users, followers join Facebook to facilitate **commu-nication** with others. However, this communication is regulated by the platform's technical functionalities and norms. In this context, the followers' communication with the microcelebrities is shaped by the functionalities of Facebook. For example, any friend requests that are not responded to or friend requests beyond the threshold of 5,000 automatically gets redirected to the follower list. As P16 explained it:

> "I am very close to my maximum limit of five thousand friends. I am saving some spots to accept requests from people whom I know in real life. So, I am not accepting new friend requests now, if I do not know that person. If I do not accept the request, Facebook automatically adds him/her to the list of my followers." **(P16)**

Since users on Facebook generally want to connect with people whom they know in real life [70], when new users join Facebook, the algorithm suggests the people whom they may know. It also prompts them to follow popular users' profiles and pages based on their topics of interest (e.g., entertainment, science, etc.). Usu-ally, these recommendation systems are designed to grow social networks by maintaining **preferential attachment** [11]. This es-sentially means that when a new node/user appears, it has a higher probability of getting attached to a node that has a high number of existing connections. In the same way, when a user creates a Face-book account for the first time, he/she is likely to be prompted to follow microcelebrities since they have more followers than others. P1 shared this similar experience:

> "I was one of the earliest users of Facebook in Bangladesh. Some of our friends opened a group where we shared short stories. I usually wrote sarcastic posts or jokes. Even after Facebook got more popular, that group re-mained active and grew in size. ... I kept getting more followers who appreciated my sarcastic writings." **(P1)**

Our participants (P7, P9, P10, P18) also hypothesize that people who are from the same location or of the same age group as theirs might be suggested more often to follow them. Thus, the consider-ation of homophily into the platform's recommendation algorithm determines who would follow a certain microcelebrity.

We discussed above how the reduction of Internet price encour-ages users to use Facebook. All of our participants appreciate this increased user participation on social media. Microcelebrities help their followers **organize their opinions** [63] on Facebook. Sev-eral of our participants assisted in organizing contemporary move-ments in the country. For example, P8 and P13 were involved in the Shahbag movement [32], while P18 participated in the Road Safety movement, a student-led series of public protests in Bangladesh advocating improved road safety in 2018. [14, 92].

Microcelebrities create **entertainment** contents too, as revealed by some of our interviewees (P1, P2, P4, P8). For example, P1 and P2 said that contents that capture current contemporary events in a comical way (i.e., satires and parodies) are appreciated by their followers. They think that sarcasm plays an important role to gain popularity, which is consistent with prior findings [3, 28],

All of our participants reveal that they often try to do some **al-truistic** activities by leveraging their high visibility. They facilitate

the search for blood donors, coordinate fundraising events, and help their followers seek higher education and job opportunities. They also acknowledge that these altruistic activities make followers attracted to their persona on Facebook. To share her recent experience, P18 said:

> "I have been trying to collect funds for the last few days so that we can arrange a relief program for the working class people in this time of COVID-19. ... So far, from our [volunteer organization name], we have distributed hand sanitizers among the students in the dormitories of [a university's name]." **(P18)**

For receiving these benefits in forms of entertainment and altruism, the followers need to incur some cost – following microcelebrities, reacting to their posts, and interacting with them. Therefore, this higher **benefits-to-cost ratio of following** encourages general users of Facebook to follow microcelebrities.

4.2 How are the Actors Networked in the process of Microcelebritification?

In the previous section, we discussed different actors involved in the Facebook microcelebritification process in Bangladesh. We identified the major actors involved in the process, conforming to the punctualization concept of ANT.

ANT argues that nothing lies outside the network and an actor in the network can be understood in relation to other actors. Although the concept of network is at the heart of ANT, it is important to draw a boundary [76] while constructing the network to differentiate the network of ANT from that of social construct of technology that assumes social and technical actors to exist in a seamless web. In our analysis, we tried to avoid including actors in the network that were stretching the relation during explanation.

Moreover, our discussion in the previous section shows the actor heterogeneity in the network. We argue that the complete network is made up of smaller patterned networks of heterogeneous actors. These socio-technical networks and the associated assemblages encompass both human and non-human actors. We argue that these heterogeneous actors in smaller assemblages compete for agency with each other. In the case of the microcelebritification process, different actors in smaller assemblage, after competing for agency with one another, achieve equilibrium and present that assemblage as a new communication space [23].

Our participants also mentioned that many users seek microcelebrities' explanation on a certain topic or issue. According to our participants, their followers find those views *"unbiased"* **(P11)** or at least *"providing a new perspective"* **(P8)**. For example, our participant P11 writes notes or blog-like posts on Facebook about Islamic history. According to his view, many of his followers appreciate his writing since those are informational and include references. His followers find those more reliable as opposed to what they hear in their corresponding small circles of friends, family members, and neighbors. This same view was echoed in interviews with participants P1 and P6-P9. For example, P6 mentioned that his writings on Facebook about learning programming languages often offer his followers a fresh perspective compared to what they experience in traditional learning. P1 mentioned that he sometimes talks about

job interview preparation and his followers find those suggestions very helpful.

Microcelebrities also exhibit the function of opinion leaders and their followers are influenced by their views. As P4 said:

> "After any particular issue/incident, I receive requests from my followers to write about my point of view. I try to explain any particular incident from my understanding of what I know." **(P4)**

In many cases, when followers are in confusion because of the absence of adequate information from reliable sources or conflicting information from multiple sources, microcelebrities shape their followers' opinion. Many of our participants reported that they had been pursued by different actors to convey positive impression about those actors on social network. Examples of these actors include restaurants or cinema theater owners, new book writers, home delivery services, online shops, to name a few. They request microcelebrities to promote their business, service, or product through photos or check-ins. In exchange, microcelebrities receive offers or incentives such as tickets, free products or services, or even cash money. All of our participants reported that they do not take money to do such promotions, while some consider receiving any such incentive to be an unethical practice. They also said that they only promote a particular product or service if they are personally satisfied after using it. A few of them had even been approached by political leaders. For example, P18 shared her experience where the president of a political party requested to take a picture with her during an event. She denied and many of her followers appreciated her courage.

Microcelebrities operate not only as influential users but they also establish themselves as an obligatory passage point for a group of users in some cases. This particular dynamics can be explained through the translation process of ANT [73, 105]. During the problematization phase, microcelebrities choose a certain topic to talk about. As we discussed earlier, they employ other actors like talent, labor, time, ideology, platforms, and so on for creating a brand or identity of themselves that is consumable by their followers. At this time, they compete with other microcelebrities for mind share of general users. They become a node in the social network that general users think of as having certain values – by topics or perspectives. This transition occurs suddenly for some participants and for others, it happens gradually over time. As we discussed earlier, some participants mentioned that they had received their initial recognition from one particular post. However, all of our participants acknowledge that they post on a regular basis. This provides their followers with incentives in form of their writings or other sorts of contents. Besides, these microcelebrities help their followers organize their thoughts to some extent that followers might view as an incentive as well. Such incentives initiate the interessement and followers come to know about their role in their relationship – or assemblage in ANT's term – with the microcelebrity. After interessement, enrollment happens. In ANT, as part of the enrollment step, the commitments of enrollment can be recorded in a shared memory through inscription. In general, an inscription is the result of the translation of one's interest into material form [21]. On Facebook, the platform itself keeps such a documentation of the general users who intend to receive a microcelebrity's updates

as "followers". After a successful enrollment, the followers receive updates from the microcelebrities, and interaction among these two groups of actors takes place. The followers provide active support to the microcelebrities via their interaction, which is called mobilization in ANT. Most works on microcelebrities [1, 84] focus on this state.

However, due to the Facebook news feed organizing algorithm, followers might be on that list and still not receive any updates from a microcelebrity due to not reacting to his/her posts over a considerably long period of time. The reasons behind not reacting to a microcelebrity's posts might include development of ideological differences. At this stage, the inscription falls off and three different scenarios can emerge: (a) some followers noticing the change may leave the previously built assemblage, (b) some followers, after noticing the change and difference, may choose to remain in the assemblage in a new role, for providing with and knowing about the opposing views, and (c) some followers may show indifference and over time, despite being listed as "followers" by Facebook, may become inactive members of the assemblage who do not play an active role in the assemblage.

These followers shape how the microcelebrities behave and present themselves on the online platform. Goffman's dramaturgical account of self can explain how microcelebrities strategize their identities. Figure 1 shows how the actor-network of the microcelebrity phenomenon situates across Goffman's dramaturgical concept of front stage/ back stage impression management.

A microcelebrity, like any other human in the society, has a personal life, which is – in terms of performance – lived mainly at the back stage from the followers' point of view. They, as many other users of social media, might want to share incidents of their daily life with their friends and family members with whom they are connected. However, a microcelebrity has to be more cautious about his/her privacy because of having a higher chance to expose his/her everyday life in front of his/her followers. One of our participants described his concerns about followers knowing too much information about his daily life:

> "If I go to Nilkhet (a place) to buy some books and put a story of that on my profile, people might know that I am here and ask me to meet them, which is hard to say no to. That's why I use privacy so that only my friends can see it." **(P11)**

We discussed how microcelebrities feel that they cannot be candid about sharing their honest sentiments on social media at times because doing so might be inconsistent with the impression that they seek to convey. In other words, the performance on the front stage and the opinions on the back stage might become discrepant. These are all parts of microcelebrities' effort to present an acceptable version of their selves in front of their followers. They perform "impression management" as they carefully present a specific portion of their real identity in front of an audience. This well improvised version of microcelebrities' self is stable only for a period of time. According to Goffman, the self emerges through performances. This essentially means that the identity that a microcelebrity puts in front of his/her audience or followers is subject to change. This change can occur due to different reasons. We have discussed how some of our microcelebrities have changed their ideologies and

their topics of content over time. A change in their back stage identity, which includes their interests and beliefs, gets reflected through their posted contents. As a result of this change in the front stage identity of the microcelebrity, they also observe a change in their audience base. As we can see, for a stable front stage identity, a microcelebrity achieves a temporarily stable group of followers. These followers sometimes can rectify what the microcelebrity does on social media – what topics he/she writes about or what content he/she shares. However, if there is a significant amount of change in the microcelebrity's back stage identity and beliefs, that induces change in the previous assemblage and the actor-network reorganizes itself with new sets of followers for that microcelebrity.

Microcelebrities have their own hypothesis about how Facebook's algorithm organizes using their news feed which we referred to as folk theories earlier. Their own understanding in the back stage impacts their practices and norms about how they interact with their followers. For example, several of our participants emphasized the importance of including photos in posts for increased visibility. They also talked about how posting very frequently can also harm the visibility. Therefore, they come up with different strategies, including maintaining a certain time interval between two consecutive posts, posting a collage instead of multiple photos, etc. As participant P18 said:

> "If you want to get visibility, you have to make it easy for your followers to interact. If you post three-four photos, only a few people will click them one by one. I make a collage combining multiple photos so that people see them at once. This gives that post a high visibility." **(P18)**

Microcelebrities' understanding or hypothesis also dictates the norms and practices for their follower base. Some microcelebrities respond to any comments from their followers, others respond to only a subset of those. They also improvise a lot as P7 said:

> "I go to the comment section of my post to like and comment on some of those so that Facebook shows my post again on the news feed of my followers. This makes my post visible again and the followers who missed it earlier can also see it. I do that before I create a new post." **(P7)**

Moreover, many of our microcelebrities have a very specific mode of contents that they post regularly – videos, real life photos, cartoons, sketches, or textual descriptions. While some of these are simplified or critical synthesis of recent events or topics, others are entertaining contents. These often require back stage efforts from microcelebrities such as video/photo editing skills, extensive readings, etc. The resulting contents or messages constitute the front stage performances of the microcelebrity. The voluntary follows, likes, and comments – in short, the interactions from the followers – act as the token of acceptance from the audience.

Not only the microcelebrities perform impression management, but also their followers do the same to some extent. Both of these actors, i.e., microcelebrities and followers use the other actor platform as the front stage and their inter-relationships define the roles of the actors. As our participant microcelebrities described, the followers inform the Facebook about their topic preferences and their social circles. This information from the followers is a curated segment
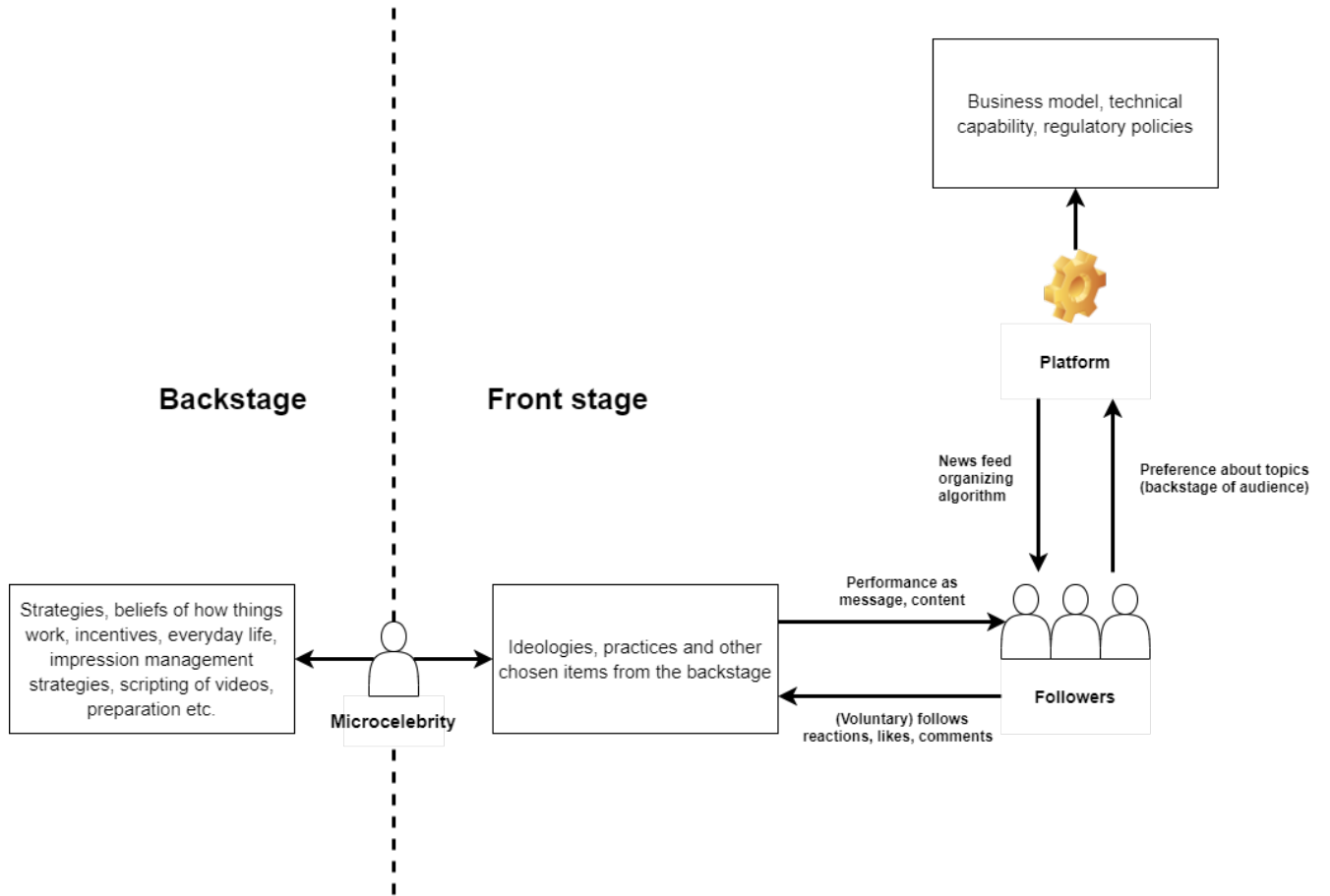
Figure 1: Relationships among different actors of microcelebrities in Bangladesh.

of the followers' back stage selves. Based on that information, the platform's news feed organizing algorithm then controls which posts would appear in front of the potential followers. However, the strategy of the followers is beyond the scope of this paper.

5 DISCUSSION

The purpose of our study is to examine how Facebook microcelebrities wade through the process of microcelebritification, configure their audience and performances, and exercise power in leading opinions in sociopolitical discourses on the platform. To answer these questions, we have conducted a qualitative study on microcelebrities who got popularity through their Facebook activities in Bangladesh. We have analyzed the interview data in depth by considering the roles of platforms and followers as well. We have used ANT as an analytical orientation to identify the actors. This, in turn, has allowed us to understand how these actors relate to one another and interplay in this process of becoming a microcelebrity on Facebook and retaining the status. In particular, we have used the translation concept of ANT to explain this process [22]. Moreover, we have used the concept of actor heterogeneity and punctualization to depict the holistic picture of this diverse network, involving different human and non-human actors. By using Goffman's theory

of the presentation of self, we have complemented our ANT analysis by bringing in the associated psychological and sociological discourses in this process [46]. Our findings demonstrate that the process of gaining and maintaining the microcelebrity status and the associated dynamics constitute a network of heterogeneous actors. While there are differences in how microcelebrities gain their popularity, there are underlying similarities in their practices for maintaining that. Although the microcelebrities have an advantageous position to influence their followers in many events, the followers along with the platform control the topics, modes, and norms of discussion for the microcelebrities. Therefore, the dynamics involving the microcelebrities on social media platform can be seen as a complex social system related to technological intervention.

5.1 Contributions to ICTD

In this study, we address several gaps in the existing literature. The existing body of work on microcelebrities focuses on their practices in the western contexts, especially on the microcelebrities who earned their popularity through commodification of their identity and performances by engaging in activities such as makeup, gardening, DIY projects, cooking, etc [83–85, 101]. Contrast to that,

microcelebrities who engage in sociopolitical discussions remain under-studied. Recently researchers have started studying microcelebrities' emergence and roles in discourse around issues like COVID-19, climate change, vaccines etc [8, 30]. They have studied how the microcelebrities have shepherded the ideological stands of their audience and perception around science and misinformation. Still, the Global South as a site remained less explored to understand the strategies and practices of the microcelebrities despite its long running history of media activism [12, 57]. With the increasing use of social media in politics, scholars have studied its role in elections from computational social science perspectives as well as the reflection of sociocultural realities onto social media sphere from a discourse analysis point of view [24, 94]. We saw a recurring theme in our study that the microcelebrity process in Bangladesh is highly centered around contemporary social and political issues and topics. Though there are a few emerging microcelebrities in Bangladesh who got popularity through their commodified identity expressions, the microcelebrity actor-network in the country is still so concentrated on sociopolitical discourses that would have been significantly disrupted if these social or political issues had been removed from consideration. Thus, it would be fair to say that the social and political climate in Bangladesh enact microcelebrities. We also observed a closer connection between their online and real lives through participation in many real-life events, including social movements, altruistic fundraising activities, and in some cases fearfully migrating to foreign countries.

5.2 Relation to Identity Literature

We also draw attention to invisible emotional labor on part of the microcelebrities, which has not been reflected much in the prior literature [83, 85]. We follow the conceptual framing of emotional labor as the silent work of evoking and suppressing feelings [52]. Our participants usually decide on the topics of their contents according to the suggestions from their followers. Their responsibility does not end with posting the contents. After posting, when the followers interact through comments, microcelebrities have an additional labor to incur–to reply with a simple thank you note or at least to react through a like emoticon to those comments. This practice also extends to inbox interactions. Moreover, several participants shared their difficult experiences of handling follower interactions. They usually try to respond to the negative remarks that are directly addressed to them in a logical way. However, some participants said that they had received extremely negative remarks from their followers in comment sections and inbox messages on several occasions when they failed to resolve in a polite and logical manner. All of them block those followers from seeing any of their future posts. These microcelebrities have to incur emotional labor to moderate their followers' posts, similar to a space like subreddit, and thus, appending to the prior works on emotional labor in moderation of online communities [36].

Our study has highlighted how the microcelebrities' popularity on social media platforms can cause overwhelming and distressing emotional states that they need to handle as well as accommodate the demands of their followers [8]. We found that microcelebrities at times cannot freely communicate with their friends as their followers try to join the conversation without knowing the appropriate context, which leads to context collapse [31]. Their efforts to reduce context collapse often involve using different privacy settings for their posts. However, while creating a public facing post, it is difficult to ideologically distinguish among general audience on the platform who might or might not be already following a microcelebrity and creates a possibility of ideological conflicts. Similar to the findings of the recent studies of anti-vaxxers threatening influencers [15], we have found that microcelebrities in Bangladesh have been threatened online. Given the incidents of killing several bloggers a few years ago [96, 97], such threats have caused fear and panic in their real life. To cope with these, microcelebrities adopt different strategies to continue publishing contents that meet their followers' demands and their identity as content creators, while navigating through the regional, often difficult sociopolitical circumstances. Additionally, our study reports other emotional labors that are unexplored in the current literature, such as safety concerns for female microcelebrities. This configuration of emotional labor has remained understudied in the literature.

5.3 Implications for Interaction Design

Another important contribution of our work is the adoption of ANT to understand the microcelebrity process which helped us identify the involved human and non-human actors. Prior literature mainly looked at a single dimension of this whole process at a time (for example, self-representation of microcelebrities, multimodality of the platforms and contents, etc.) in isolation with others. While the existing literature [1, 85, 101] highlights the self representation aspect of microcelebrities, we consider these acts (e.g., commentary on sociopolitical issues) as one of the several social aspects of the microcelebrity actor. Thinking from the perspective of post-userism [13, 107], scholars have urged for a reconceptualization of not only the user, in this case the microcelebrity, but also what it means to interact and what constitutes the computing systems. We argue that there are other non-human actors such as social networking sites and the news feed algorithms, which play vital roles in the whole process. Discussing other roles such as control of visibility, localization, and communication in addition to multimodality that highlight the role of technology and non-human actors, we have explained how the interactions between the microcelebrities and their followers are mediated by the functionalities of sociotechnical systems. In such a hybrid network comprised of both human and non-human/material actors, these actors have their own agency and statuses [73]. In such cases, human agency is typically defined as the ability to form and realize one's goals. On the contrary, material agency is the capacity of non-human entities that users cannot completely or directly control [77]. We have found that for the microcelebrities, these agencies enact simultaneously where they have to contend with the material agency of the Facebook platform. Facebook as a technical platform exhibits its agency through its various features and constraints. Again, the local technical facilities and limitations impact the interaction among microcelebrities and their followers. They utilize different features while operating under the platform-imposed constraints, e.g., the number of maximum friends, message filtering, structure of posts, etc. while navigating through the local technical landscape.

We also highlight the impact of persuasion, which plays an important role in this regard. Gaining widespread popularity and maintaining it involves persuading the followers to elect an individual as a microcelebrity. As we have seen in the prior literature and in our study, presenting a consumable identity to the followers is an important aspect of this process. Microcelebrities present a personality that the followers from middle socio-economic class can relate to, a large portion of their follower base. As Fogg suggests, persuasion has three important factors: motivation, ability, and prompt [44]. All of these cannot be controlled by the microcelebrity alone on a social media platform. For example, in most cases, the platform regulates the ability of persuasion through various technological features, modalities, and by controlling their visibility. While a microcelebrity has control over his/her motivation for getting that status, the followers also have equal, if not more, agency for awarding an individual user with the microcelebrity status. Similarly, contemporary social issues and events can act as a prompt in this process. This implies that we need to consider human and non-human actors altogether to understand the process of becoming a microcelebrity and retaining the status. Therefore, we argue that our study considering the social relations of both human and non-human actors under the ANT framework along with the sociological theory about self-presentation gives a more holistic view about this process.

6 CONCLUSION: LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORKS

As we have described, the majority of our participants are male microcelebrities. Due to the presence of fewer female microcelebrities on Facebook in Bangladesh and the conservative culture of the country, we could interview only a few female microcelebrities. This might result in a lack of adequate representation of their views in our findings. In future directions of our work, we will focus on including more female participants to understand the gender-specific issues more deeply. Moreover, our participants belong to a narrow age group ranged between 26-35 years. Studies have found that there is a tendency among the users from young generation to migrate from Facebook to platforms like Instagram, TikTok, etc [80, 88]. This explains the small variance of ages among our participants recruited from Facebook. While the government in Bangladesh has legally banned several platforms (e.g., TikTok, PUBG), many young people are using VPNs to access those platforms [81]. Research focusing on these young users' perception of platform bias and preferences and their practices would be interesting, however, their recruitment can be difficult given their practice of circumventing legal constraints. Additionally, we will also pay attention to recruiting more participants with marginalized identities (e.g., underprivileged socioeconomic statuses, LGBTQ, religious and ethnic minority communities, etc.). Second, our findings can be further extended using a content analysis based netnography [67] study to analyze the posts and contents shared by microcelebrities. Observing the participants' candid practices on Facebook with their followers might lead to a different conceptual model. Finally, the perceptions of followers have not been fully explored in this paper. Although the perspectives from microcelebrities gave us some insights, there is room to explore the perceptions of the followers

in detail by studying them closely–what these followers expect and how their expectations affect their relationship with the microcelebrities and the platform [82]. Given the possible complexity of the perceptions of the followers, we have addressed those only from microcelebrities' point of view in this paper. How individual followers give rise to a collective expectation of the follower base still remains an understudied topic. We plan to provide an in-depth analysis of this issue in our future work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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