The "adivasi debate" in Bangla Blogosphere: The Case of Somewherein...Blog

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Abstract

This paper is borne out of an attempt to do a netnography of the recent blog activity concerning the phenomena we call the "adivasi debate." This discussion took place in different public spaces like seminars and symposiums and also in various electronic and print media. However, our focus in this paper is to look at how this debate has unfolded in the blogosphere of Bangladesh. In this paper, we have tried to provide a schematic account of how this recent debate took shape in the new and emerging blogosphere of Bangladesh. Needless to say, the transnational discourse of indigeneity and its "field of power" has worked as an overarching framework of this discussion. Adivasi rights activists are organizing accordingly in Bangla blogospheres. The blog posts show that this rise of what is often termed as "adivasi people's rights" is not without some dissent. It shows that a group of bloggers have strongly contested the very term "adivasi" in Bangladesh much like the government of Bangladesh in recent times.

Introduction

This paper looks into what we call the "adivasi debate" that has unfolded in recent years in what we call Bangla blogosphere. It attempts to understand the nature of this discussion amongst an emerging cyber community whose members wrote in popular forums such as social media in recent times. The paper tries to understand the nature and substance of this debate in the social media and in doing so,

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takes into consideration a selection of blog posts from a particular blog as its primary source.[1] As a new and emerging field of communication, we focus on blog sites for its potential to be a new public sphere for debate and interactivity. [2] Thus, what we call "Bangla blogosphere" is our field of focus and www.somewhereinblog.net as our sample blog to be representative in the Bangladeshi context. [3] The paper attempts to answer the following questions: What is the substance of "adivasi debate" in Bangladesh? Who are the people/actors involved in this debate? What is the expressed objective of this discussion? This paper is, in our view, an early attempt to develop a methodology to write on blog posts or what we operationally call "work" in the social media. [4]

Blog/weblog and the emerging cyber community in Bangladesh

There are many definitions of the blog. According to one definition, "A weblog is a hierarchy of text, images, media objects and data, arranged chronologically, that can be viewed in an HTML browser."[5] In recent years, for many social media users (i.e. Facebook is just one among them which is heavily used in Bangladesh), watching, reading and interacting with blogs have become a routine daily activity. Often, people access to these sites not only through their PCs but also through their phone sets and other devices which has access to the internet.[6]

To understand blog as a new interactive media, we need to understand the concept of cyber community. Papacharissi (2002: 21) argued that cyberspace is both public and private space, as it appeals to those who want to reinvent their private and public lives. It provides new terrain for the playing out of an age-old friction between personal and collective identity. Sense of community has been a key focus for face-to-face community researchers for some time. McMillan and Chavis have defined sense of community as consisting of the following four characteristics: 1. Feelings of membership: Feelings of belonging to, and identifying with, the community 2. Feelings of influence: Feelings of having an influence on, and being influenced by, the community 3. Integration and fulfillment of needs: Feelings of being supported by others in the community while also supporting them and 4. Shared emotional connection: Feelings of relationships, shared history, and a spirit of community.[7]

From our day to day participation in Bangla Blogosphere we feel that some of these characteristics are very much present for the

emerging cyber community of the Bangla Blogosphere as well. The Bangla Blogosphere is expanding rapidly. It has become a vibrant place for debate, discussion and activism with a growing virtual community, which crosscuts geographical boundaries and virtual and offline life.[8]

Somewherein...blog in the history of Bangla Blogosphere

The history of blogging in Bangladesh is not too long but so far it has provided some fascinating instances of activism and interactions. At the time this piece was written, there were more than 36 community blogs existing in Bangladesh.[9] However, it started with the pioneer blog Somewherein...blog from 16th December 2005. There was, of course, the presence of some personal blogs before the coming of Somewherein...blog. Hasin and Imran broke the barrier of using embedded editor in Somewherein...blog for Bangla platform. The development of Unicode writing in 2006 enabled Bangla writing on the web. This technological advancement provided a completeness of the whole Bangla Blogosphere both in community blogs and personal blogs. Within years community blogs developed in Bangladesh. On the contrary, Indian Bengali community mostly located in West Bengal did not develop in the same manner.[10]

Fig 1 The Front page of Somewherein blog

In Bangladesh blogging, from the beginning, meant community blogging, which started with Somewherein...blog in 2005. After that, other blog sites also emerged like Sachalayatan, Prothom Alo Blog, Amar Blog. Initially, these four blog sites were the most popular and most visited blog sites in Bangladesh. However, recently we found pro-Jamaat (Islamist political group) blog site like Sonar Bangladesh.[11] We also can find different topic-focused blog sites. For example, technology blogs such as Techtunes, and Projanmo Forum.

Sachalayatan identifies themselves as more of online writer's forum than a blog site. Likewise, Blog bdnews 24 [12] is more focused on citizen journalism. Prothom Alo blog is the first blog site from an established daily, corporate media giant the daily Prothom Alo with a strict moderation policy. Some blogs focused on literature like Shobdoneer Blog, Choturmatrik Blog, Ekushey Blog, and so forth. Some blogs based on shared history and close group are also there like Cadet College Blog, Amrabondhu Blog and so forth. A recent addition in the Bangla blogosphere is Thotkata Blog with a feminist agenda in Bangladesh.

Our paper focuses on Somewherein...blog as a site. Somehwrein...blog started as a venture of Somewherein net ltd., an outsourcing and data mining company established in January 2005. Somehwrein...blog runs from the income of Somewherein Net Ltd. The user demography of somewhereinblog shows some key factors: 1. Bloggers or viewers of Somewherein...blog are mainly dominated by men, 2.They are educated up to graduate level. 3 The dominant age range is from 18-24. 4. The browsing location is mostly from the country with few users from abroad. 5. Most of the users are of Bangladeshi origin with bilingual capacity. 6. The interface requires Unicode Bengali writing skill.

Understanding the frame: Transnational Discourses of Indigeneity

We begin with a general discussion of some international rights framework in order to show its constituency as an important "field of force" in Bangladesh.[13] It is within this "field of force" that we can understand the recent rise of "adivasi" people's activism and "place making" in Bangladesh. Our analysis of blog content indicates that the intense lobbying for the recognition of the term "adivasi" by indigenous rights activists is facing some opposition. It is coming from the nation-state's governmental apparatuses, and this has some "popular" responses amongst the emerging cyber community in Bangladesh. Before bringing the analysis of this material in greater detail, we here firstly focus on some transnational contexts within which the notion of indigeneity has gained some ground in recent years.

Recent decades have seen a rise of several important, what is often termed as, intergovernmental instruments with regard to questions of indigenous rights, identity, and self definition (Barsh, 1986, Kingsbury 1998, Bowen 2000). These conventions include ILO

Convention 107 (concerning the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Other Tribal and Semi-Tribal Populations in Independent Countries adopted in 1959 and was ratified by twenty-eight countries), the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, among others. While the preparation stage for the development of such conventions within the UN can be traced back to 1970s,[14] scholars agree that there seems to be a rapid change in the status of these legal conventions and intergovernmental discourses by the early 1990s.

The ILO Convention No. 107 is recognized as the first significant document, which provided a binding standard on indigenous rights. This effort had begun in the mid-1950s. According to Barsh, ILO Convention 107 not only recognized the right of ownership, collective or individual, of the members of the populations concerned over lands which the indigenous populations traditionally occupied but also "their customary laws regarding land use and inheritance, and their right to be compensated in money or in kind for lands appropriated by the national government for development purposes" (Barsh 1986: 370). A first instrument concerning the indigenous population, convention 107 was later criticized for having an "integrationist" element within it. A critique within the ILO has given rise to the new convention of ILO 169.[15] This latter document is perceived as more progressive on the pretext that it incorporated the "identity" element instead of the previous integrationist element into the discourse of indigenous rights.

Through these various instruments, a universal principle for indigeneity is sought, and this did not always have the approvals of scholars and researchers who had a long-standing interest in the subject. Commenting very specifically on this recent discourse of indigenous rights at the UN, Bowen (2000) a legal scholar noted that such declarations rested on a notion of time gap between an initial people and a subsequent conquest, which does not apply to Asia and Africa. As 'populations moved around and some absorbed others' Bowen (2000) found justification in the fact that a number of Asian and African scholars and state delegates to international forums argued that the category 'indigenous peoples' should be limited to the Americas and Australia.

It is important to note that such definitional/ academic issues/ observations did not stop the UN mechanism (most notably UN

Working Group on Indigenous Populations/ WGIP) throughout the 1980s and 1990s to respond by identifying as 'indigenous peoples'. Those groups seen as distinct and vulnerable (usually nomadic or pastoral in mode of life), groups labeled locally as 'tribes' (example: India), or groups in rebellion against the state (Bowen 2000). Bowen perhaps in a bid to note the "international politics" behind this provides the example of East Timorese who "appeared frequently on lists of 'indigenous peoples', but not the West Timorese, who had not coalesced into a group opposing the Indonesian state" (Bowen 2000).

However, for us, this effort by various UN mechanisms and its national/ local operations (via NGOs) amounts to an example of what is referred by Ghosh as the operation of a "global ethnoscape," a concept developed by Appadurai. By this concept, according to Ghosh, Appadurai means that being "[tribal] today can no longer be understood in terms of the local context and particular places. Rather, we have to look at how a global, deterritorialized imagination of indigenousness invokes and signifies new effects of locality" (Ghosh 2006: 519). In the following pages, keeping this conceptualization in mind, we will discuss how transnational discourses of Indigeneity has ensued a debate amongst the members of a virtual community in Bangladesh.

Two positions

In the academic literature, there is a debate on the appropriateness of the term "adivasi" or "indigenous" in the context of South Asia. Particularly in India, we see this discussion to take a sharp divide. On the one hand, we have some reputed scholars who do not subscribe to the term "adivasi." On the other hand, of course, we have rights organizers who have always found a reason to articulate the term "adivasi" for greater realization of rights and agency. It is pertinent to note that in Somewherein...blog we see almost a repeat of this debate. This discussion takes place in Bengali, the language in which Somewherein...blog is more known. There are two opposite poles of views expressed by the bloggers. Most of this debate took place at a time when the 15th amendment of the constitution was taking place in mid-2011. The content generated during this period can be seen as an enormous archive of information. This information consists a broad range of data.

On the one hand, we see a group of members who vehemently disfavors the very term "adivasi" but supports the term *upajati* and, of course, there is another group, which supports the term "adivasi."

Both sides of the debate have tried to argue in favor of their positions with a tinge of "academic flavor." What is, however, missed is the kind of extensive referencing system which we see in academic literature. In the cyber world where nothing is real and everything is a simulacrum, perhaps this is not a significant issue among its users (so you are allowed to steal!). The substance of these two positions will be touched upon in the following sections:

Bloggers who favor the term "adivasi"

Bloggers who favor the term "adivasi" have a very straight forward position. They usually rely on a number of conventions (ILO 107, 169 and lately UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights in 2007) which have been developed in recent years at the UN in order to safeguard the rights of the non-dominant groups of people in different nation-states of the world. Usually, this group of people is labeled as "Indigenous people" in this emerging discourse although previous terms such as "tribe" or "castes" are not altogether abandoned.

Amongst this group of bloggers (from our sample, it appears that this position is mostly forwarded by groups of Chakma students/ activists who are active in the blogosphere) the transnational framework of indigenous rights discourse is the framework through which they try to defend their position concerning this debate. Emphasis is given on naming. Much of this position, articulated by the bloggers, has a resonance with the recent rise of NGO discourses of Indigenous rights which came into prominence in the last two decades in Bangladesh. For example, the very term "adivasi" is accepted by these bloggers much like a number of NGOs of Bangladesh who operate in the country through different projects and campaigns in both plain and hill areas of the country. [16]

In this connection bloggers/activists supporting the term "adivasi" notes with despair how government is taking attempt to delete or deny whatever mention is there of the people called "adivasi" in various government documents. It lists all the documents such as special budgetary allocation for the "adivasis" in 20010-11, PRSP, and education policy as well as different national events such as SAF games and the inauguration of World Cup Cricket in Dhaka as examples of use and presence of the term in Bangladesh.[17] However, much to the despair of the blogger/ activists, it also notes that the Government of Bangladesh has given an instruction not to use the word "adivasi" in their activities.

In the wake of strong opposition from a group of bloggers who have vehemently tried to argue that the term is a misnomer, much like the Foreign Minister of the country in recent times, the bloggers have argued that there is an enormous misunderstanding between what is being tried to prove by the various nationalist-statist positions. Adivasi is not a term to claim a primordial connection to the land, they argue.[18] However, in the case of the CHT that can also be proved, argued another blogger. In the face of arguments such as whether the "adivasis" are really the autochthones of the land, some bloggers were theoretically equipped enough to bring in a constructivist perspective in it, most commonly found in critical academic literature.[19]

Blog posts in support of the term "adivasi" gave emphasis on the long history of this land and a lot of in-migrations to this land, which is seen as a cause of diversity. In such historical excursions, the focus is not necessarily on the CHT but the northwestern population of Rangpur, Dinajpur, Bogra, Pabna and Rajshahi and also central northern areas of Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Sherpur, and Netrokona. [20]

There is, of course, another set of general posts which have not necessarily taken up the debate but have introduced different facets of adivasi "culture"; often this literature stresses on the diacritical marks of a population through which the majoritarian population of Bangladesh has often come to know the "other." A good number of posts, of course, fall in that category, which introduces the language, and dress and other elements of "culture." In some cases, textual representations of the "adivasi" people come under vehement criticism.
[21]

Bloggers who disfavor the term "adivasi"

Much of the blog posts in this category bring the issue in the format of a debate. In most cases, this was made clear on the title page of the blog posts. Clarion calls of "danger or threats to sovereignty" are also made in blog posts that disfavored the term "adivasi." Often it is attributed to a particular "vested interest group" (indicating "civil society" groups attached to the NGOs) involved with this "deadly game."[22]

In this respect all the ethnic groups in the country, which includes the Santal, Garo and the different ethnic groups of the CHT people are discussed. However, it is of prime importance to note that historical review revolved around the CHT and not other areas of the country. In some cases, using historical sources, attempts were made to

prove that the CHT people were not the "original" (our emphasis) inhabitants of the region but the "native Bengalis" are. In another case, it attempted to prove that the "tribal" people were just recent immigrants.[23] Following snippet from a blog post is an example:

> In 1339, Sultan Mubarak Shah brought the CHT within Muslim rule. After this, up till 1580 a total of 27 Muslim Sultans kept control over the area. After this Magh King (the King of Arakan) were able to maintain control of this area till 1766. After this Mughal Subedar ousted the Magh rule and reinstated Muslim rule in the area. Mainly during this period, the real adivasi people in the whole of the CHT were the Bengalis, and the tribals were the outside immigrants. Thus, in the 1876 Hunter survey conducted during the colonial period, the inhabitants of the CHT were referred as tribals and the original inhabitants were referred as native Bengalis. In reference to this, in both the CHT act of 1900 and Hill District Council Act of 1998, these outside populaces have been clearly referred as tribals. In the peace treaty of 1997 too, these outside small ethnic groups have been referred as 'tribals' and JSS by signing this treaty, had agreed to this (Our translation from Bangla). [24]

This same blog post stressed on the recent government perspective, where the "adivasi" people's history is reduced to mere few hundred years whereas Bengali history is stretched over four thousand years:

> There are no adivasi people in Bangladesh; there are many tribals. *During the Mughal era, various tribal groups from neighboring countries and Mongolic groups, arrived in the CHT area and made their home for political and social reasons as immigrants.* From this account, the existence of non-Bengalis in the CHT area is just about few hundred years. Whereas, *Bengalis have been living in this area for about four thousand years.* (Our translation and emphases)] [25]

The notion that Bengalis are the "first nation" of this land was promoted in some blog posts. It is also important to note that in some widely circulated articles by renowned scholars the maxim of "first nation" often used and developed in the settler colonial states have been erroneously conflated with the local contexts of Indigeneity in Bangladesh.[26] In one occasion a blog post tried to provide a discussion to show how the term aboriginal or indigenous was not appropriate for Bangladesh but may have relevance in some settler colonial states such as Australia, Canada, and America. Categorically this post was against

conflating the term indigenous with the context of Bangladesh. Thus, these posts also did not support the terms "adivasi." [27]

Bloggers have also used definitions from the intelligentsia of the country. Quoting Dr. Ebne Golam Samad it reads:

> There is much doubt about those people who are being referred as the inhabitants of this area. Most of them have come to this area from the Arakan region during the Colonial period. In effect, these people are immigrants. These people cannot be a claimant of a separate nationality. They cannot be a claimant of nationality as per international law. However, they are claiming a separate identity, which cannot be validated (our translation). [28]

Similar arguments are found in the opinion of another Professor Dr. Hasan Mahmud who is also quoted:

> To those who want to apply the concept of the reserved area for the indigenous people found in many countries, one can say that the tribal of the CHT area are not the indigenous people of this area. ...Due to continuous land and many other reasons, there previously lived different language and ethnic groups. In addition to this, the theory of *Jumma* nationalism propounded on the basis of 13 tribal groups living in the area is also not theoretically correct. Before the establishment of the Kaptai dam in the 1960s, much of these tribal groups conducted their agricultural activities in the plain land (Naya Diganta, 17 July 2008). [29]

This same post talks of the country's Army as "patriotic" and remarks that even they have a "clear" idea of who are the CHT people and how they should be termed. It states,

> It is not the Tribals living in the three districts of the CHT but the Bengalis who are the indigenous people, commented Major General Mohammed Shamim Chowdhury, GOC of 24 Infantry Division of CHT. He made this comment at a press conference held in Chittagong Cantonment Divisional Headquarter on Wednesday. He said, "Adivasi means inhabitants of a population before history which means no one knows from when he or she has started to live in this region, from that account Bengalis are the indigenous people of that region. He also commented that tribals are outsiders. Historically they have come here. They have a short history. [30]

In another occasion, Major General Ibrahim (Retired) is quoted as an experienced officer who was in charge of this area during the

government's counterinsurgency strategy and afterwards wrote books. From this source too, the blogger claims that the inhabitants of the CHT are not adivasis. [31]

Some blog posts were very aggressive in bringing forth their point. In one occasion, this whole adivasi discourse in Bangladesh has been attributed to a kind of "conspiracy" where it has been assumed that some "West influenced" newspapers were taking an active part. Mainstream Bengali newspaper such as the Prothom Alo was also included in this list. [32] It is also assumed that some NGOs and India may also be involved in this conspiracy. With visual material showing the CHT being severed from Bangladesh with the support from EU, CHT Commission and Christian Missionaries on the one hand and UPDF and PCJSS on the other, blog posts often presented the case of the CHT rights issues as a threat to "national sovereignty" and "integrity" (see image 2 and 3 below).

Image 2

Blog posts often accompany images; this is one example where this whole discourse of "adivasi" people's rights is reduced down to a conspiracy theory and represented as a threat to national sovereignty and integrity.

Image 3

Blog post used markers to pinpoint Prothom Alo, a widely read daily Bangla newspaper. Copying the image (which shows a woman washing utensils) from the news paper, the blogger asks why this newspaper uses the term adivasi and nemargs. We know that they are *upajati*.[33]

The case of the CHT is of course prominently featured in this debate. But there are further twists in this discussion from bloggers. In one instance a blogger asks: twenty years ago from books we came to know that the Santals were the "adivasis" and the CHT people were referred as "tribes" (our emphasis). Such research puzzles are easily found in the blogosphere. [34]

Conclusion

As a general observation, we would like to note at this stage that blogosphere in Bangladesh has in recent years generated enormous hatred and anger. Since the beginning, "Liberation War vs. Jamaat" issue has been one of the prominent topic in Bangla Blogosphere[35]; most notable among some of the thematics from this period are: debates surrounding the atheists vs. the believers; the Awami League followers vs. the BNP/ Jamat followers; the pro-independence people vs. the pro-Pakistani people. Some of these debates have later culminated into offline clashes and was expressed in what is now

known as Shahbag Movement. One of the key developments in the post-Shahbag scenario, however, is the emerging trend of self-censorship among bloggers and activists. One may assume this is due to the continuation of killing of the Bloggers in Bangladesh in recent times.[36]

As far as the "Adivasi debate" is concerned, the debate is not altogether new to Bangla Blogosphere. This discussion can also be traced back to year 2006, and the very recent posts can be found till August 2014. So we can easily conclude that Bangla Blogosphere engaged with this debate almost from the beginning of Bangla Community Blogging. The nature of this discussion has its dimensions varying from the very "romantic" idea of the notion of indigeneity to crude Bengali nationalist hegemonic positions where Bengalis are claimed to be the "adivasis" or the autochtones of this land. As mentioned earlier, bloggers of the Bangla Blogosphere is dominated by male members, with the dominant age range of 18-34. But it is clear that they are the early adaptors of the new media with sufficient skill in computer and language proficiency. Most of the users use Bengali as the mode of communication. However, some of the contents indicate bilingual or trilingual proficiency of the bloggers. It is clear that Bengali bloggers are dominant as users, but there are "adivasi" bloggers from the very beginning of the Bangla Blogosphere. This is evident from the fact that the number of "adivasi" focused blog sites, web pages, Facebook pages, Wikipedia entry pages have also grown over the years. Moreover, in 2011, Adivasi blog (http://w4study.com/) won the best blog award in the human rights blog category in BOBS organized by Deutsche Welle). [37]

Through analyzing the content and debate of the bloggers, we find that most of the blog posts favoring the term "adivasi" are reproducing the dominant frames of what we call transnational discourses of indigeneity. At the same time, they are keen on unearthing historical references of the term, "adivasi" and through this trying to develop a historical account to validate the term "adivasi." Interestingly, we also find some sophisticated argument to support the notion of "indigeneity" as a concept and a tool for "adivasi" rights in Bangladesh (i.e. for example bloggers who argue for a constructivist position/ approach to the debate.) It shows a trend of a thorough search of information, which can be termed academic except for the fact that the blog posts usually do not follow a strict referencing principle. So it became apparent that some of the bloggers have a very

sound knowledge of the debate and related texts and discourses and the world literature on this issue.

We find some common pattern in the contents, which suggests that the blog posts may not be just different blogger's attempt to engage with the debate but may have links with other "vested interest groups" (for which, of course we could not accrue any evidence in the standard sense of the term!). Some of the blog posts clearly show that it is the reproduction of "Adivasi" right discourse carrying the essence of development discourse. On the other hand, some "nicks"[38] (with their history of blog activity) have purposive political agenda to manifest and thus reproduced the same contents and argument that are dominant in the mainstream political arena.

In these debates, the dominant bipolarity in our national politics (the AL-BNP saga if you like!) seems to have merged and found a common ground against the "adivasi" rights (read "other") We feel that this is the dominant nature of the debate as a whole. A subtle indication of military-civil administration interest groups and their agenda also can be traced. The "adivasi debate" mostly surrounds within the UN conventions but it gets its hype and tone based in the currents of new shifts of the debate (i.e. 15th amendment, terminological debate on Adivasi vs. Upajati). Along with the enthusiastic individual bloggers, we find reporters, analysts, and vested interest groups seriously involved with the discussion and the interactions clearly showing that most of the debate is in favor of dominant hegemony of crude Nationalism. The fascinating aspect of this space, however, is that it is very vibrant and engaging, a thing often missed in the academic discourse on similar issues.

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1   This paper is based on a research project that we undertook under the Faculty of Social Sciences Research Project by Jahangirnagar University. We are grateful to the Dean of Social Sciences, Jahangirnagar University for his support. We are also grateful to the audiences who took interest in the presentation we undertook as part of fulfillment of this project on 6th July 2013 at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Jahangirnagar University.

2   A recent study examines the emergence of Bangla Blogosphre as a new public sphere that started in Bangladesh in 2005. This study shows that Bangla Blogospehre is dominated by interactivity, open conservation, activism and also platform of social movement. In this emerging Blogosphere, Liberation war vs Jamaat issue has been one of the oldest and most vibrant issue of discussion and debate. See Chowdhury (2012)

3 The selection of the site could be debated as there are many other sites in Bangladesh where similar debates took place. However, two things have prompted us to focus on this site (i.e. somewhere in). In terms of number of members the site is fairly representative. Secondly, one of the co-authors of this study has worked as a moderator for a long time for this site; thus, we know that this debate was taking place and we thought some sort of familiarity with the site would give us an advantage to generate data for this study. For at least one of the co-authors, this research experience could easily amount to what we usually call "anthropology at home."

4 Methods and Material: For generating data for the study (i.e. data collection), we have relied on searching for key terms in the selected blog site. Following are some of the methods and strategies adopted: Population (N), content analysis: The population of this research covered 71 blog posts which can be termed as blog articles related to the "Adivasi debate" issue. This issue has been selected as it is the main focus of this study. From a huge amount of blog posts we have selected 71 blog posts among them through purposive sampling. In order to define the population we have downloaded the contents from http://www.somewhereinblog.net using its archival record of the posts in selected months. Time duration and Data collection: The time duration for the selection of contents in this study was fixed from April 2009 to November 2012. We adopted data searching methods like using the search box for contents of Somewherein...blog and only took the results of the first five pages. Due to huge content, we purposefully used this strategy. We have used key words search like, আদিবাসী (adivasi), আদিবাসী উপজাতি বিতর্ক (adivasi, upajati debate), ইত্যাদি (Saontal, chakma etc), ডিসকোর্স (acivasi right discourse), বাঙ্গালী ও বিতর্ক(bengali adivasi debate), জুম্মা (jumma nationalism), (15th amendment) etc. This strategy showed all entries from the last posts about this topic. After that, we have gone through the date and very time base selection but it was not effective. Finally, we have tried the manual, page by page options for relevant blogs and downloaded them. To determine our final sample on, "Adivasi debate" related blog posts, we have used systematic random sampling by selecting every (x)th unit from the sampling frame. We had the population (N) 71 units with a desired sample size (n) of 18; we have calculated the "skip interval." With the desired skip interval we have selected every 4th unit. The unit of analysis is the 18 blog

posts at the end. Qualitative content analysis: In order to develop this study further and come across the thematic outputs we have relied on qualitative content analysis of the selected blog posts/ contents. Though content analysis is often criticized as giving surface result of research understanding, it carries a "scientific" rigor of the research. On the other hand, qualitative research is often criticized as biased and subjective. Combination of the two methods gives a chance of balance in the research process. Our selection of Someherein...blog has been due to the fact that this is the biggest Bangla online platform of the world. Somewherein...blog is a vibrant space for discussion, communication, debate and activism. As the statistics indicates, Somewherein...blog is the best possible case for any inquiry to know how the Internet users in Bangladesh are creating a virtual community. This blog site provides quasi-open space for discussion and communication in any topic raging from politics, religion, daily experience, national issues etc.

5 What is blog? Weblogs at Harvard Law School.
http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/whatmakesaweblogaweblog.html. [Accessed 5th June 2013].

6 According to one study worldwide there are mainly five categories of bloggers. 1) Hobbyist: The backbone of the blogosphere, and representing 60%. Hobbyists say that they "blog for fun" and do not report any income. 2-3) Professional Part- and Full-Timers: These bloggers represent 18% of total group. They are independent bloggers who either use blogging as a way to supplement their income, or consider it their full-time job. 4) Corporate: Corporate bloggers make up 8% of the blogosphere. They blog as part of their full-time job or blog full-time for a company or organization they work for. 5) Entrepreneurs: 13% of the blogosphere is characterized as entrepreneurs or individual's blogging for a company or organization they own. From recent studies, it is clear that worldwide blogosphere is dominated by male. Majority of bloggers is in the 25-44 age range but a third is over 44. Majority of the bloggers are blogging from North America and South Asia have a small portion of the whole worldwide blogosphere. source: www.technorati.com/blogs/directory [Accessed 10th June 2013]

7 Blanchard, Anita 2004, Blogs as Virtual Communities: Identifying a Sense of Community in the Julie/Julia Project

http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/blogs_as_virtual.html. [Accessed 19 April 2013].

8   The most recent example of this intermeshing of what we call the virtual and the real in Dhaka comes from the recent uprising at Shahbag which had begun on 5 February 2013 and continues in much divisive form till to-date. The initial headways for this movement, later known as Gonojagoran Mancha (National Awakening Stage) was made by a number of networks belonging to the blogger communities; people who had for years debated on various issues of 1971 (mostly its history, and politics) in the cyberspace. The movement begun especially when Kader Mollah, believed to be a war criminal was not given the expectant punishment by the International Crimes Tribunal in Dhaka. Starting with only 100-150 people who were mostly involved in blogging and various newspapers, this protest later became an important event for the next few months in Bangladesh, an event which was participated by a mass of population who lived in Dhaka. For a brief commentary on some discomfort with this movement see Sumon (2013) An anti-essentialist manifesto of Shahbag: some discomforting thoughts. [Online] available at https://sumonmahmudblog.wordpress.com/2013/04/10/an-anti-essentialist-manifesto-of-shahbagh-some-discomforting-thoughts-2/ [Accessed June 14, 2015]

9   All Blogs and Forum directory, Bangladesh: http://www.abohomanbangla.com/Bangladesh_web_directory/Bangla_Blog_Site.html[Accessed 12 May 2013].

10   Rejwan, 2008. Evolution of Bangla Blogs and Possibilities.http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/pata/28840097[Accessed 5 February 2012]

11   This site has been banned after the mass mobilization called Ganajagoron which started on 5th February 2013, ref : http://www.dailyprimenews.com/details.php?id=6706, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_Shahbag_protests. [Accessed 15 February 2014]

12   Blog bdnews 24. http://blog.bdnews24.com/[Accessed 18 April 2013].

13   See Li (2000) for the concept "field of force."

14 The question of indigenous people's rights issue came as a labor rights issue as there remained discriminatory practices in some parts of Latin America in the 1940s. See Bowen (2000).

15 See Nelson 1999, especially chapter titled "A Transnational Frame-Up: ILO Convention 1969, Identity, Territory, and the Law" for ILO's unique structure within the UN and a discussion of the critique which has given rise to the new convention.

16 A bar by the government on the use of the word "adivasi" in recent years has restricted some NGOs to use the word "adivasi" directly in their project activities. Personal correspondence with an NGO official (the name of NGO is withdrawn.

17 http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/anisurrahman2015/29436901 [Accessed 11th July 2013]

18 Adong chakma, http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/odong/29441491 [Accessed 11th July 2013]

19 Adong chakma, http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/odong/29390725 [Accessed 11th July 2013]

20 http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/kenjia/29524032 [Accessed 12th July 2013]

21 http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/biplob_33blog/28704754 [Accessed 11th July 2013]

22 http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/montrok/29653217 [Accessed 15th July 2013]

23 http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/stpervez/29430432 [Accessed 11th July 2013]

24 "১৩৭৯ সালে সুলতান ফখরুদ্দিন মুবারক শাহ পার্বত্য চট্রগ্রামকে সর্বপ্রথম মুসলিম শাসনাধীন নিয়ে আসেন। এরপর ১৫৮০ সাল পর্যন্ত ২৫ জন মুসলিম সুলতান এঅঞ্চলের উপর তাদের অধিকার বজায় রাখেন। পরে মগ রাজা (আরকান রাজা) ১৭৬৬ সাল পর্যন্ত এ অঞ্চলকে নিজের শাসনাধীন রাখতে সক্ষম হন। এরপর বাংলার মোগল সুবেদার মগ রাজাকে উত্থাত করে পুনরায় এঅঞ্চলে মুসলিম শাসন ব্যবস্থা প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন। মূলত এসময়ে সমগ্র পার্বত্য চট্রগ্রাম অঞ্চলের প্রকৃত আদিবাসী ছিল বাঙালীরা; আর উপজাতিগুলো ছিল বহিরাগত অভিবাসী। তাই ব্রিটিশ ঔপনিবেশিক শাসনামলে ১৮৭৬ সালে হান্টারের সার্ভের জনসংখ্যার পরিচিতিতে পার্বত্য চট্রগ্রামের অধিবাসীদেরকে উপজাতি (এ্যবরনধয) ও মূল অধিবাসীদেরকে স্থানীয় বাঙালী (ঘধ্ররাব ইবহমধয) বলে উল্লেখ করা হয়। এরই সূত্র ধরে ১৯০০সালে হিলট্র্যাক্ট অ্যাক্ট ও ১৯৯৮ সালে হিল ডিস্ট্রিক্ট অ্যাক্ট দুটোতেই বহিরাগত এই

জনগোষ্ঠীগুলোকে পরিস্কারভাবে ট্রাইবাল হিসেবে উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে। ১৯৯৭ সালে স্বাক্ষরিত পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম শান্তিচুক্তিতেও বহিরাগত এসব ক্ষুদ্র নৃতাত্ত্বিকজনগোষ্ঠীকে উপজাতি হিসেবেই উল্লেখ করা হয়েছে এবং জনসংহতি সমিতিও এচুক্তিতে সই করার মধ্যে দিয়ে সেটা মেনে নিয়েছিল।''

http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/anisurrahman2015/29436901 [Accessed 11th July 2013]

25 "বাংলাদেশে কোন আদিবাসী নেই; বিভিন্ন উপজাতি আছে। মোগল শাসনামলে প্রতিবেশী বিভিন্ন দেশ ও মোঙ্গলীয় জাতিগোষ্ঠী থেকে রাজনৈতিক ও সামাজিক আশ্রয়ের জন্য অভিবাসী হিসেবে পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামে বিভিন্ন উপজাতি গোষ্ঠী আশ্রয় নেয়। এই হিসেবে পার্বত্য অঞ্চলে অবাঙালি এই জনগোষ্ঠীর অবস্থান মাত্র কয়েক শতকের। অথচ এই অঞ্চলে অন্তত চার হাজার বছর ধরে বাঙালিরা বাস করে আসছে।''

http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/anisurrahman2015/29436 901 [Accessed 11th July 2013]

26 For example Hasan Ferdous's piece in Prothom Alo from this period is a case in point from this period. Title: **আদিবাসী, আমাদের প্রথম মানব** Date: 03-06-2011.

27 http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/NazrulMinto71happy/29348206 [Accessed 17th July 2013]

28 যাদের বলা হচ্ছে এ অঞ্চলের অধিবাসী, তারা এ অঞ্চলের অধিবাসী কতটা, তা নিয়ে ঘোর সন্দেহ আছে। এরা প্রায় সবাই আরাকান থেকে ইংরেজ আমলে এসে এই অঞ্চলে তাদের পূর্বপুরুষরা উপনিবিষ্ট হয়। এরা হলো কার্যত অভিবাসী (Immigrants)। এরা কোনো পৃথক জাতিসত্তার দাবিদার হতে পারে না। জাতিসত্তার দাবিদার হতে পারে না আন্তর্জাতিক নিয়মানুসারে। কিন্তু এরা নিজেদের দাবি করছে পৃথক জাতিসত্তা হিসেবে, যার কোনো বৈধতা দেয়া যেতে পারে না।

http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/stpervez/29430432 [Accessed 17th July 2013]

29 কয়েকটি দেশে আদিবাসীদের জন্য সংরক্ষিত অঞ্চলের ধারণাকে পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের ক্ষেত্রে যারা প্রয়োগ করতে চান, তাদের উদ্দেশে বলা যায়, পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামের উপজাতীয়রা এতদঞ্চলের আদিবাসীও নন। ... ভূমি সংলগ্নতাসহ বিভিন্ন কারণে সংখ্যাল্প হলেও পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রাম ভূখণ্ডে আগে থেকে অন্যান্য ভাষা ও নৃতাত্ত্বিক বৈশিষ্ট্যধারী জনগোষ্ঠীর বসবাস ছিল। এ ছাড়া পার্বত্য চট্টগ্রামে বসবাসকারী ১৩টি উপজাতি সমন্বয়ে যে 'জুম্ম জাতি' (এক সময়ে জুম চাষে অভ্যস্ত) তত্ত্ব প্রচার করা হয়, সেটি তাত্ত্বিকভাবেও সঠিক নয়। গত শতাব্দীর ষাটের দশকে কাপ্তাই পানি বিদ্যুৎ প্রকল্প তৈরির আগে এসব উপজাতির অনেকেই সমতল ভূমিতে চাষাবাদ করতেন। (নয়া দিগন্ত, ১৭ জুলাই, ২০০৮)

http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/stpervez/29430432 [Accessed 17th July 2013]

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30 পার্বত্যাঞ্চলের তিন জেলায় বসবাসরত উপজাতিরা নয়, বাঙালিরাই ওই এলাকার আদিবাসী বলে মন্তব্য করেছেন বাংলাদেশ সেনাবাহিনীর চট্টগ্রামের ২৪ পদাতিক ডিভিশনের জিওসি মেজর জেনারেল মোহাম্মদ শামীম চৌধুরী। চট্টগ্রাম সেনানিবাসের ডিভিশন সদর দপ্তরের আজ বুধবার এক সংবাদ সম্মেলনে তিনি এ মন্তব্য করেন। তিনি বলেন, 'আদিবাসী বলতে যেটা বুঝায় সেটা হচ্ছে, কোন একটি স্থানে যাদের বসবাস ইতিহাসের আগে অর্থাৎ কেউ জানে না কবে থেকে তারা বসবাস শুরু হয়েছে, সেই হিসেবে বাঙালিরাই ওই অঞ্চলের আদিবাসী। তিনি আরও বলেন, উপজাতিরা বহিরাগত। ঐতিহাসিকভাবে তারা এখানে এসেছেন। তাদের ইতিহাস খুব অল্প দিনের।

31 http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/stpervez/29430432 [Accessed 17th July 2013]

32 http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/Ahsan31nayan/29841124 also see http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/Headsir/29435912 also see http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/stpervez/29430432

33 The blogger ask, why the Bengali daily Prothom Alo writes adivasi? As far as we know they are uapjatis. See http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/Headsir/29435912

34 http://www.somewhereinblog.net/blog/monihar_mm/29362773

35 From a survey on Bangla Blogosphere, Haq (2011) finds that 73.3% bloggers find this issue as the most prominent issue. The discursive nature of this issue carries nationalism, activism, religious beliefs, identity and most of all a particular Blog pattern. This issue thus carries long term interactivity and participation of the Blogosphere.

36 http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-32701001 [Accessed 21 June 2015]

37 http://thebobs.com/english/

38 Nick: The main identity of the blogger in virtual space is nick. Bangla Blogosphere gives space to open multiple nicks. It means that same person can open multiple nicks and maintain different personal blogs in the community blog. It gives bloggers the opportunity to discuss debate and act on any issue which is considered sensitive in Bangladesh. Hiding identity provides the safe guard for bloggers from government, law enforcement agency, other bloggers etc. But many instances of abuse of multiple nicks are also evident in Blogosphere.

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