



# **News Literacy**

## People's Perception



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# FOREWORD

Bangladesh media has emerged as a vibrant sector over last two decades in terms of its size and diversity. Rapidly increasing numbers of newspapers, TV channels, FM radio and online news portals are producing news and views incessantly and reaching an audience never done before. Technological advancement has brought the receiving device out of the four walls. Mobile phones are now being widely used to watch TV, listening to the radio, reading online newspaper and also online version of print newspapers. Social media and digital applications have wide opened the horizon of a virtual world to a point never thought possible a decade away.

This is the happy scenario of technology aiding volume of information flow and media products. But the other side of the coin which deals with quality and ethical standards of media products, however, gives us a different picture. Ethical aspects are often ignored and violated in media reporting. Quality and in-depth analysis of reports hardly meet the desired standard or audience expectation. Media management does not seem to care much about needs and expectations of the audience. Meanwhile, the audience is unaware of the difficulties and constraints which media faces in making media products and distribution. The gap between the producer and the consumer is high.

Several measures can be taken to improve the situation. Firstly, media managers and journalists can be assisted to develop their capacity to produce quality reports that are ethically positive. Secondly, appropriate resources should be made available that allows production of such products. Thirdly, media producers and consumers can be involved in an inter-active process of capacity building and awareness creation to enable both to create an ethical media environment without an unnecessary conflict situation. Both need to be aware of their roles, responsibility and value structure. To be effective, both require to learn about each other and from each other. This is termed as media literacy or news literacy.

The concept of news literacy as an academic terminology is rather new in Bangladesh. Still it is obvious that the audience have some sort of awareness on and understanding of news and media. This level of awareness and understanding needs to be assessed for designing a programme on developing news literacy of media consumers and producers as well. As children and youth constitute the most vital segment of the country's population, emphasis has to be given on this group.

MRDI, in partnership with UNICEF, has been working on maintaining ethical standards in media reporting on and for children for last few years. Capacity of the reporters has been increased through training and fellowship programmes. Lately, a guideline on ethics in child reporting has been developed in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). Leading newspapers of the country acknowledged the guideline as an effective tool.



In continuation of partnership with UNICEF, MRDI is now implementing the "Exploring young mind: News literacy and ethics in child reporting" project addressing the demand side of media intervention. As a part of the project, a situation assessment of news literacy standards has been conducted.

This assessment study aims to identify the existing situation of news literacy and ethical conception of readers with particular focus on young people and generate recommendations to improve the situation. Quantitative methodologies like interviews of media stakeholders and key informants and qualitative techniques like focus group discussions and consultations with experts have been applied to conduct the study. A framework based analysis of media and news literacy in Bangladesh has been done.

We are thankful to UNICEF Bangladesh for continuing partnership on promotion of ethical standards in media reporting on and for children, this time addressing the audience perspective in terms of their media literacy. This research, we feel, has created the need for further intervention to enhance knowledge of the audience on news literacy. We believe joint efforts by UNICEF and MRDI will go a long way to address the need.

We express our gratitude to NHRC for the support that inspired us to undertake this study in continuation of intervention. We hope this support will continue.

Researcher and communication specialist Afsan Chowdhury has developed this report based on the field data and findings of discussions. We are thankful to him for this wonderful job.

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs, Chairman of NHRC, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University, media editors and other key informants have spent their valuable time in responding to the questions of the research team. We express our thankful gratitude to them.

We are also grateful to other respondents who took part in the questionnaire based interviews, FGD sessions and consultation meetings. Colleagues at MRDI worked hard for data collection, organizing sessions/events, data input and providing technical support to the consultant. They deserve special thanks for this.

This report, we believe, will help develop interventions for improving news literacy standards of Bangladesh media consumers. It will also hopefully be used by researchers as a benchmark document to conduct further studies on news literacy. We hope the assessment will meet its purpose.

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# Acronyms

<b>ALWO</b>	Access Toward Livelihood and Welfare Organization
<b>AVAS</b>	Association of Voluntary Actions for Society
<b>BITA</b>	Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts
<b>CLA</b>	Casual Layered Analysis
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>CSR</b>	Corporate Social Responsibility
<b>DOPS</b>	Development Of Poor Societies
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GoB</b>	Government of Bangladesh
<b>HEEDO</b>	Health, Education & Economic Development Organization
<b>HSC</b>	Higher Secondary Certificate
<b>JSD</b>	Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal
<b>KII Key</b>	Informant Interview
<b>MRDI</b>	Management and Resources Development Initiative
<b>NGO</b>	Non Government Organization
<b>NHRC</b>	National Human Rights Commission
<b>OWDEB</b>	Organization for Women's Development in Bangladesh
<b>PFC</b>	Process Flow Chart
<b>RDRS</b>	Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service
<b>SoMaSHTe</b>	Society for Media and Suitable Human Communication Techniques
<b>SSC</b>	Secondary School Certificate
<b>ToR</b>	Terms of Reference
<b>UNCRC</b>	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
<b>UNICEF</b>	The United Nations Children's Fund
<b>YWCA</b>	Young Women's Christian Association

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Summary of findings, observations and opinions of Media Literacy Report

The Executive Summary of the Report is based on key finds of the report from both quantitative and qualitative findings. Quantitative data reflects audience reaction based on a survey. Qualitative data is based on FGDs, Key Informant Interviews and Consultations.

Quantitative data is more about perception and expectation while qualitative data is about opinions and observations. Some major findings are mentioned below-

- Media is vibrant but audience confidence is limited. The drift is towards broadcast and online media as well as online platforms such as mobile handsets which allow greater access to the consumer. However, print media is consumed by a more influential and opinion maker section of body making it very relevant for opinion forming.
- As per data, 90% do watch TV, and the areas of focus on news are politics 21%, entertainment 24%, crime reports are 16% and 27% stated they liked child related editorials. This trend is general everywhere but the high citation on child related news could be influenced by the nature of the survey.

Chart 1 : Type of news that grabs attention first

Topics	Numbers	Percentage
Politics	30	21
Crime report	22	16
Business	9	6
International	6	4
Sports	2	1
Child related editorials	38	27
Entertainment	34	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100</b>

- The issue is about trust and credibility. MRDI data on news and current affairs acceptability says that only 14% fully believe, 28% saying they "somewhat believe" and 42% in total are in the positive side. However 57% are more or less unsure. It means some sort of natural media literacy skills are being applied to filter news and the producers are being looked skeptically.

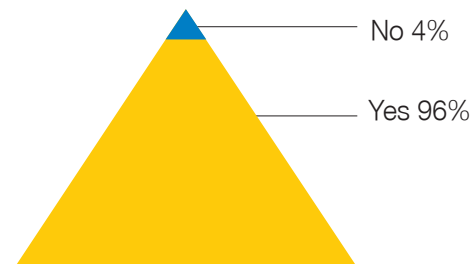
- There is a general lack of satisfaction with media's commitment to quality news making. The feeling is that media is driven by commercial interest so objective news making can be a casualty in this process. This needs understanding on both producer and consumer's side to reach more satisfactory levels of performance and realistic levels of expectations.
- According to 27%, media reports don't cite sources at all while 49% say "sometimes" cite sources making it an overwhelming 76% of media not being fully reliable. Hence professional standards are an obstacle and the audience is more sophisticated and skeptical than is thought of generally.

**Chart 2 : Types of sources mentioned in the news**

Type of sources □	Number □	Percentage
Sources are not mentioned most of the times □	38 □	27
Sometimes mentions source as authentic □	69 □	49
Has interview of all related people □	12 □	8
All above □	22 □	16

- MRDI data says that 96% of the consumers want ethical value based reporting. However, respondents mention that only 35% of the media follows an ethical code. This discrepancy gap between expectation and deliver is 61% which is so staggeringly high that one is struck by the communication gap between the two sides of the fence. If media is held so low in the eyes of the consumers, the question of providing ethical value becomes a much bigger challenge than expected.

**Chart 3 : Whether journalists should follow code of ethics for reporting**



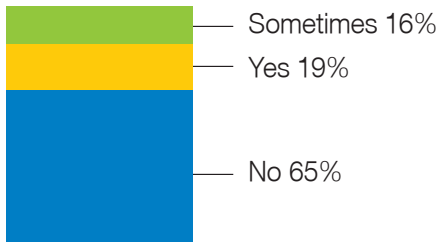
## Children and Media

Media's treatment of the children issues is a part of the study. Qualitative and quantitative findings derived from the responses are mentioned below-

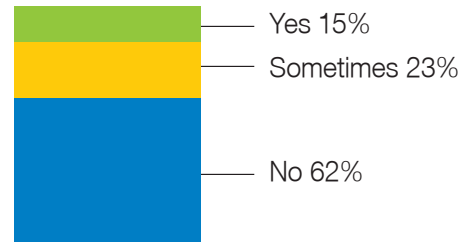
- Respondents felt that media's treatment of children issues and the way children are presented in media is hugely inappropriate. Respondents are against "insensitive" reporting on children and this high percentage of dissatisfaction is a major finding which needs attention. It shows the need for media education of the producers is a high need.
- The general feeling is that future of child victim is not kept in mind by media while reporting with only 15% saying "Yes" and 39% saying "No". "Sometimes" was cited at 46% so obviously the majority are not saying that the interest of children occupy media mind. When asked if the impact of the report on children is considered when reporting, as high as 79% said "No", which qualifies as a vote of lack of confidence in the media sector as a whole in this regard.

- As per Chart 4 65% are not concerned if the report has any negative impact on children. Perhaps all data presented should also be read keeping in mind Chart 5 which says that 62% of the respondents felt that Child Rights are not kept in mind when reporting is done.

**Chart 4 : Whether factors of a report may influence child readers in unhealthy practice or any criminal activities**

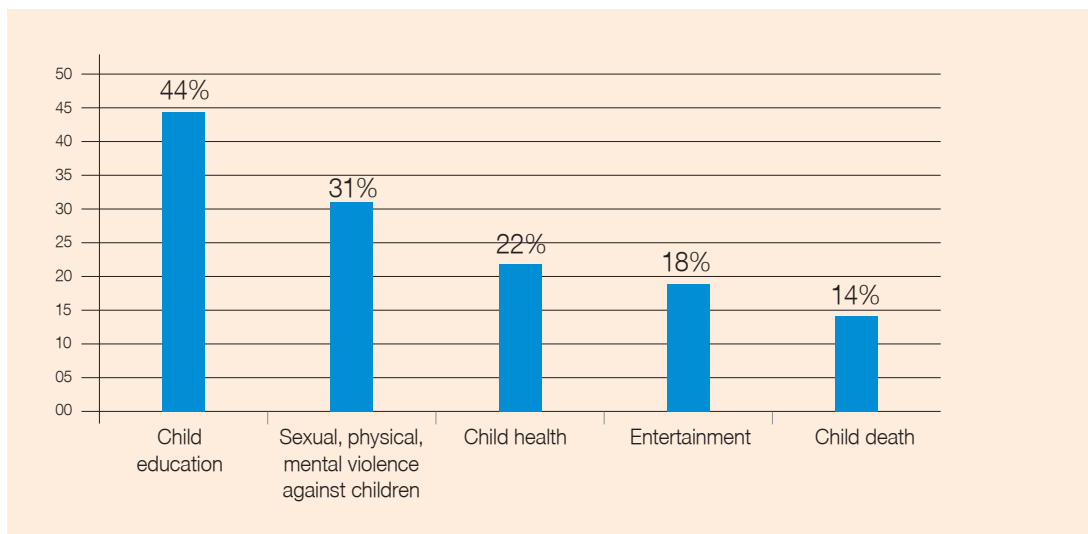


**Chart 5 : Whether Child rights are kept in mind**



- The responses point to the structural problems that prevail in media as well as consumer practices. There are no industry standards and guidelines and there is no audience demand of an effective nature for ethical reporting due to lack of any such intervening body. It's not a surprise that lack of communication is the biggest problem in the social communication sector. This absence determines the function and nature of the situation.
- The structure of functioning including in relation to child rights and child friendly media has always been an unchanging issue. Some of the reason for lacking adequate data is the lack of a secure and sufficient baseline. Nor are there any significant guarantees that the responding sample is also constant and representative over time. Children have also not been the focus of such queries. It's considered an issue of concern but not a sector for attention and action.
- The following chart shows the programmes the respondents said they watched on children, so it's about self-description as well.

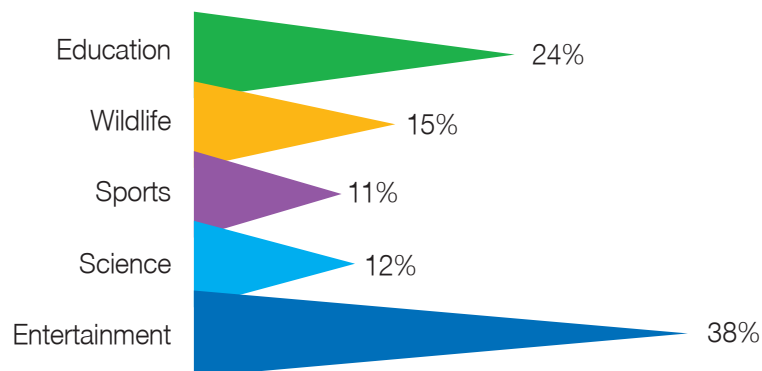
**Chart 6**



The data says that 45% of the news content that draws media attention are related to violence and death so it also reflects on the kind of focus that media has. However education and health related issues account for 66% of the respondent interest. This is a positive citation of interest pattern but also has to be read in the overall interest and credibility of media. While they may be watching such programmes or wishing to, it's not an indicator of satisfied programming.

- Chart 7 shows the areas of interest in programmes which respondents think should be produced for children. Interest in entertainment programmes is 38% although in practice, they cited only 18% as being able to draw consumer attention. While education does show high area of interest - 24% - it contrasts sharply with the actual rate of watching which is 44%. So the percentage for an ideal chunk is lower than what is viewed now. It points to more education related media products but often packaged in entertainment form.

**Chart 7 : Responses on news worthy issues for children**



- The most important part of the issue raised is how media portrays the child as perceived by the respondents. Dominantly, the child is portrayed as a victim (74%) which given the nature and conditions of our society is impossible to avoid. But the issue is whether it's a balanced portrayal. 43% of the portrayal is rather the opposite - the child as sweet and innocent- which is also not a realistic one. Data says 26% show children in negative situations and 9% show them as promising.
- Technically speaking, none of this has to be totally correct but they reflect the general trend of social subjectivity when portraying children. Media is not the source of information only and when that is the case, they push the "sensational" button. At that point it is no longer reporting on children but on victimization, violence etc. On the other hand the "sweet and innocent" vision is also not balanced and this "cute" view is unrealistic and probably not in the best interest of children either.
- What is missing in such a scenario is the objective imaging about who the child is at different stages of life. The eternal cherub is an artificial image as is the "child demon" so striking a balance is the simple but most effective response in imaging the child. In the extreme representation, both positive and negative, the child may actually be lost and the purpose of child in media will be lost too.
- A child is not just about providing entertainment to all through rosy or grey hues of who they are. Media and the other stakeholders should be able to present a view and vision that empowers the child, family and society. From the data it does seem that this has not been possible because media literacy in general and on both sides is weak in all the sectors concerned.

# Opinion Based Findings

## Summary of Findings: FGDs, Interviews and Consultations

The purpose of the FGDs and other qualitative data findings was to explore the concerns and assessments of social leaders at various national levels. They acted both as validations of survey finding and additional perceptions on the relations between media and the consumer.

## KII Responses

Key Informants included cabinet Minister, Editors, NGO leaders and social activists.

### Summary of Key Informant Interviews (KII)

- Media needs to understand consumers' perspective better. A study can be commissioned to identify their interest and priority. Less focus on sensational items, more on positive news.
- When dealing on children, special attention must be paid to ensure their safety. News on violence should be treated sensitively.
- Newspapers can introduce readers' opinion poll to understand readers' perception about news. Consumer feedback is critical but an ignored part of media sector.
- Readers/viewers forum can be developed to act as perspective provider to media. Visits to media houses to learn about news making and such activities are good.
- Journalists need orientation on ethical reporting laws/rules/regulations. A formal Code of Ethics should be developed and published.
- Media units and associations should organize review of their own performance. Focus on ethical journalism is necessary both within and outside media.
- Different advocacy materials on news literacy such as poster, leaflet and booklet can be developed and distributed to consumers. Schools should be involved in news literacy campaigns.
- Awareness groups and activists can be encouraged at the district level through which awareness campaign on news literacy can be created, if necessary as part of the formal curricula.
- There is a shifting pattern from focus on traditional to new media. Media also can't be the only source of information. Social and natural sources are important also and the best value teacher is the family.
- Quality journalism is also necessary along with ethical media. Editorial judgment on what is publishable and how they should be treated is important.

## Key FGD Findings

### News Content and presentation

- News is the main media attraction. Politics, sports, crime, editorial, post-editorial and feature stories, cultural news are also of interest in general. Talk show over TV also gets attention.



- Vivid descriptions of murder and other crimes offend the consumer. Pictures of decomposed face or dead body create negative impact in mind.
- Negative news is preferred over positive ones. Headlines are often confusing. Competition among media houses leads to publishing sensitive news and picture without considering ethical aspects and readers' perspectives.
- News stories on indigenous and other left-out communities are ignored or carelessly done. Some media outlets, particularly the FM radio are polluting and distorting the national language.

### **Reporting standard and credibility**

- Not enough concern about the accuracy of reports and standard of language is in media. Standard of TV news presentation needs improvement according to the audience.
- National and local newspapers, except few, lack in credibility in publishing news.
- Both print and electronic media are profit driven. They want the media to serve their business purpose. So maintaining quality and ethical standards may not be easy for the journalists.
- Media often violate ethical principles while reporting, particularly on sensitive issues. Average score on ethical standards of media rated by the participants is about 5 out of 10.

### **Children as subject and audience of news media**

- Media reports have psychologically affected many children. As children are vulnerable, so such reports may provoke abnormal behavior of children.
- Media should note that children's involvement in criminal acts is the failure of family and society. Children are not responsible for such acts.
- Media is unaware of ethical reporting though many journalists are aware of the limitations and pressures placed on them.
- Media is unaware of the principles of reporting on children in media and requires education on this matter.

### **Developing news sense and awareness**

- NGOs can monitor violation of Children Act in media. Awareness programme on legal provisions can be organized. Interactions of readers should be organized with reporters and editors including on child rights.
- A campaign on quality and ethical media reporting can be organized producing drama, songs and developing advocacy materials.
- Overall ethical values have to be created in the society through moral teaching and cultural activities.
- Relevant clauses of the Children Act can be published in the newspaper as advertisements to remind journalists about their ethical responsibilities.

## Two consultation meetings with media and representatives of audiences

Summary of consultation meetings are given below:

### Media and News Literacy

- Academic study on news literacy/media literacy and study on consumer expectations are needed to establish baseline.
- Newspapers are not the only source of information now. Receiver of news has also now become news source particularly due to social media. Need to monitor audience reaction to gauge news literacy and ethics.
- Media/news literacy should be included in educational curriculum. But child friendly media will be possible only when society and state are also child friendly. News literacy is linked with cultural literacy and social literacy. Instead of time bound projects, sustainable actions are needed for practicing ethics in reporting. News literacy can't happen in isolation.
- Social media has both positive and negative impacts. Sometimes social media guides the mainstream media. Social media education is important.
- More interactions are required at the policy level. Local media industry needs special analysis and attention including forming media literacy forum at district and upazila levels.
- A national media guideline is required. Indicators of quality and standard have to be set. Press council should be involved with the process.

### Ethics and Media

- A comprehensive broadcasting policy can facilitate ethical media reporting. Ethical standards have to be set in the social context.
- Ethics in editorial administration is important. Higher demand for quality workers exists but market supply is inadequate. Training opportunity on ethical reporting is inadequate.
- Social media should also be brought under the purview of ethics. Teaching children ethical values is more important than curriculum study.
- Media sells audience to advertisement providers. Ethics should also be followed in the advertisement sector.
- Maintaining ethical standards is a matter of commitment. Only law cannot solve problem. Changing mindset is important. Ethical journalism will only be possible in an ethical economy and ethical society.
- Media houses have to be involved with ethics in media initiative. Media also has limitations which should be recognized. Media is often confused about the borderline between ethical and unethical practices.

## Conclusion and suggestions for action to improve media and news literacy in Bangladesh

Based on quantitative data, FGDs, KIs and consultation remarks the following statements may be summed up as necessary for developing, improving and implementing media and news literacy. They refer to both structural and incidental aspects of media.

- A clear code of ethics must be developed and distributed to both producers and consumers in order to quickly refer to a nationally developed guideline. This needs to be done as a joint activity as there are constraints in all sectors and lack of communication between consumer and distributor is obvious. Research needs to be taken on all sides to identify the difficulties that affect media sector in general and shared with the audience for better understanding of the situation by all on issues of ethical and acceptable quality of media products and if not why this is happening.
- Once a code of ethics is finalized, its application process should also be developed. There should be a body which should ensure media ethics is followed. Monitoring groups at all levels from the national to the grassroots need to be organized including NGOs to ensure representative public opinion on media ethics particularly concerning children. A set of data should be considered as baseline and used by all as a common point of reference for measuring progress or decline of media and news literacy over time.
- Media news and ethics guideline should be developed as a curriculum with syllabus and learning outcomes for different segments. There should be producers, consumers and facilitators guidelines which require a new structure to improve and implement media and news literacy. Given the widely divergent media sector- print, broadcasting, online platforms including mobile and smart phones etc- the training package and monitoring guidelines should be custom designed.
- Guidelines on the role of organizations both official and commercial involved in reporting on children should be clearly spelt out and developed after extensive consultation and review of the organizational capacity of the interested party. Training delivery on the issue should be a key part of the new regime.
- As legitimacy of such a sensitive issue is paramount, it has to flow both from the public and the official space. It means the GoB must agree with the concept, outline and recommendations of the said report in the best interest of the children of Bangladesh. This implies that all the official bodies including the Press Council should be aligned on the matter of media literacy and ethics.
- A code of ethics should not be used as a toll to brow beat media. Consumers are not familiar with the structural and incidental problems of the media sector. So greater transparency there is on the issue from both sides, higher the chances of media and news literacy. A code of ethics should be developed for the advertisement sector as well.
- Regular consultations between producers and consumers should be set up as part of a new initiative. An agency may be commissioned to develop and publish an ethical media review every quarter, positive and non- confrontational in nature, which can help both parties concerned.
- Some sort of individual and collective reprimand system must be put into operation when the Code of ethics is violated. This method of detection/complaint, investigation and reprimand should be decided through joint discussion. Consumers often feel helpless as there is no formal body to listen to their grievances.

# BACKGROUND

## Introduction

At this age of superabundance of information, it is imperative that citizens learn to judge the reliability of news reports and other sources of information that is passed along their social networks and other media outlets. The concept of news literacy has emerged from this feeling. News literacy enables citizens to ask smart questions about the information they will use in a rational and methodical dissection of news reports.

It helps people develop higher-order thinking skills and critical reasoning to judge the reliability and credibility of news reports from all media: print, TV, radio or online. Thus the audience/readers are prepared to make informed decisions.

Better news literacy will enable readers question reliability of news reports. Violation of ethics in reporting on and for children will also be questioned by the same readers. This will make the newspapers more accountable to its readers. So now it is time to work on aspects of news literacy.

Since news literacy is a new issue in Bangladesh, the current situation in this area needs to be assessed through a methodical study. Conceptual understanding of the issue, expectation and reaction of the readers on reliability and ethical practice in reporting should be assessed and interventions applied for improvement. Children being a sensitive segment of the population and the most potential change makers of future Bangladesh, special attention has to be given on news literacy in the perspective of ethical reporting on and for children.

This study has been conducted to assess news literacy and ethical conception of readers involving adolescent and youth groups, media professionals, activists, academics and civil society members. Gender equality has been maintained in selecting participants and respondents.

## Purpose of the study

This study on news literacy standards aims to identify the existing situation of news literacy and ethical conception of readers and generate recommendations to improve the situation.

## Methodology

Following methodologies have been applied in carrying out the assessment.

- **Interview with questionnaire :** Interview of 140 (70 young boys & girls and 70 from other segments of the population) were taken with a set of questionnaire to identify their perception of news value, reliability and ethical aspects of reporting. Dhaka and six divisional towns were covered.
- **Focus group discussion (FGD) :** A total of 7 FGD sessions were organized in Dhaka and six divisions involving different groups including journalist, children, indigenous community, cultural activists, parents, young professionals and NGO representatives. Participants were different from the respondents of interviews.
- **Consultation meetings :** Two consultations comprising 30 participants in each were organized in Dhaka involving heterogeneous groups consisting media owners, newsroom managers, activists and civil society members on news literacy. Representatives from three divisions participated in each meeting.
- **Key Informant Interview (KII) :** Interview of thirty five key informants from both the media and the citizen readers were taken with a semi-structured set of questionnaire to collect their views on the current situation of news literacy and potential interventions for improvement. Newspaper editors, academics, politicians, intelligentsia and civil society members were involved in the process.
- **Report publication :** Based on the one to one interview, FGDs, KII and consultations a report has been prepared for distributing among media and different stakeholders. The document will act as a benchmark and come up with a way forward for such initiative.

## Limitations of the study

- The concept of news literacy is rather new in Bangladesh. The issue had to be explained to most of the respondents before floating discussions or taking interviews.
- Some of the respondents found it difficult responding to some questions and participating in discussions due to unfamiliarity of the topic.
- A bigger size of sample respondents would probably generate more ideas and comments on news and media literacy situation.

# MEDIA AND NEWS LITERACY IN BANGLADESH: A FRAMEWORK BASED ANALYSIS

## Context of media and news literacy in Bangladesh

- Each age defines media and news literacy based on communication inputs and the media and social environment that exist in that society. Every stage of history has produced dominant and subsidiary media streams. Media literacy is about decoding and applying skills to understand what is conveyed by media to society about the various issues that matter to the consumer and the social environment. It is about responding to inputs to ensure quality, safe, objective and society friendly information streams.
- This literacy of decoding and internalizing information which we call media /information literacy are also context and culture specific. Each medium supplies information that is the product of the objective of the provider. Hence, there is no "non-involved" supplier of information and neither is it "neutral" in the conventional sense. Therefore, it's the responsibility of the consumer to decode the media product and learn what it says and how that may serve or harm.
- Media literacy exists within a greater media environment which again is part of a wider information society world. For better understanding of the topic our references to media will mean only the produced media products and human and social interaction with them. However, all are contextualized within the lived in built world.
- In general media means the conduit and processes through which individuals, groups and families communicate with each other. It can be between individuals, families and groups as well as larger constructs and among themselves. It is often two-way but the supplier and recipient identity varies greatly depending on the situation. Nor are these identities concrete and constant. Groups communicate between groups but individuals also communicate to groups depending on the situation and purpose. With emergence of more complex socio-economic transactions, media is constantly redefining itself as a result of which media literacy too is going beyond conventional parameters.
- In general there are three elements that define this process. At its simplest they are: A. Mass media B. Inter-personal media C. Cross and convergence media. However, as the last category suggests, it's not water tight compartmentalized and they inter mix. Within the categories there are variations also. With the rise of the virtual media, we see social media as a significant player changing the shape of media in general. But none are overwhelming as yet since every socio-economic streams as well as age groups have their own signatures and footprints. Thus the focus is not just about which media sector the transactions of information are taking place but the rate and level of inter-action that is in occurrence and in relationship to other media.

- Media and news literacy is about equalizing the balance between the producer and the consumer and reaching the optimal level for both. But it's also an asymmetric relationship since the distributor often has the edge. Thus media and news literacy is about empowering the consumer with the skills which will lead to better product choosing and better consumer behavior leading to better production as well. It is an interactive process and helps establish the rights of the consumer and develops standards which assist the producer to develop better media goods.
- Media in today's world is not just about the channels, modes, methods and delivery systems of information but the entire environment in which such inter-actions take place. Media therefore is a multi-dimensional reality where all of the elements intermingle to create and help create several realities. To navigate through this ever complex and multiple world, we need to be media literates in our own interest.
- The issue is also influenced by the emerging issue of technology and media literacy. The retreat of older media forms - print media etc- and the rise of digital media where the consumer can also be the supplier has generated new dimensions if not "virtual" reality. It has led to new market shapes and both supplier and consumer are influencing each other at a rate not seen in media history before. This has led to new demands for new media literacy apart from the older one and a literacy reality that is perhaps reflective of the present time more faithfully.

## Media literacy and social values structure

- Media is also a system through which culture and social values are transmitted through generations and among generations. In the production and transmission of such values, media is perhaps the most powerful player. Media is the prime supplier of cultural products. Since societal systems depend on values to determine the worth of knowledge that is adopted, it ultimately becomes the benchmark that is used to measure if the consumer community in general has the media literacy to be an effective consumer or not.
- Media literacy therefore should have objectives beyond learning to decode information products. Otherwise, mere learning limits the consumer's role to being a passive recipient. Media literacy should be able to empower the consumer to influence the media market.
- Media literacy is a process to enable people to pick through various media products and become media educated. However, in a globalized world, product sources are manifold. To be most effective, it's important to recognize the cultural context of such products and their appropriateness which is also where media literacy can play an important role. Otherwise products may overwhelm local and immature media markets and diminish media diversity as well as choices of the consumer.
- Without media diversity, the right to choose can be severely affected leading to loss in other sectors including economic ones. Rational economic choices depend on product knowledge and how such information is placed may lead to bad and unhealthy choices. Life and lifestyle decisions taken on the basis of media information are increasing rapidly in every sphere and because of their range they affect value structures as well. This brings in the issue of globalization as a force of diversity or promoting one global mono-culture.
- Globalization is a great challenge both positively and negatively which is why any reinforcement of ideas and messages, form and content need addressing by media literacy. The scope of media literacy therefore goes beyond conventional development programme paradigms and becomes a part of the greater rights narrative including culture and value building.

- Navigation through the world of negative and positive tradition is a major point in question. Audience size may influence decisions of the media producers and the messages of tradition may end up pushing rights denial issues or denying of traditional values in the name of socially non-contextualized new rights. In such cases, media literacy becomes a facilitator of rights in the cultural field as well. Apart from its guardian role in advancing new positive cultural rights and values which strengthen positive traditions, it serves as a conduit as well for promotion of critical thinking.
- Ethical and rational values of society becomes very important as consumers are concerned about the values media transmit particularly so when it deals with children. It goes deep into how society looks at itself and how it would like to look at in future. Once, media literacy is understood as a society building tool, the issues raised in this report become easier to appreciate.

## Media, information and news literacy application

- While the term has gained considerable currency recently, there is no final book on the topic and it depends on a variety of factors to gain a face. But it is not just an informal exercise but a structured one whereby media literates form groups, clusters and ultimately civil society bodies who monitor media products and spreads education about it. Media literacy intends to diminish the control producers may have over the market and create a more ethical relationship between the two.
- Its application can be at multiple levels and it exists like all literacy programmes from the national to the individual consumer level. There are generally several initiatives and entry points but they need to follow a structured pattern to be effective.

There are several stages of the process:

- a. Ongoing constraints and gaps analysis process. Stating in clear terms the objective of the media literacy initiative
  - b. The levels and stages as well as learning outcomes of the literacy achievement exercise
  - c. Literacy based competencies by stages and assessment tools to determine that
  - d. Areas of application and methods to apply and sustain media literacy
- The application domain will therefore include a multiple series of learners having skill sets at various levels. To understand the level of the primary learner, media literacy tests need to be developed which will allow the tutor(s) to understand the existing level of media literacy and then expose them to a variety of learning tools, and methods to deliver content and organizational activities.
  - Media literacy like conventional literacy learning means people are at different levels and stages of understanding, have different capacity for critical thinking and its application in determine the nature, worth and quality of media products. Hence a layered curriculum and audience specific content is needed.



## The media framework and literacy: Social Background

There are many types of media in a sector but a broadly layered model would show several of these arrangements stated below.

- Traditional media arose in early stage of agricultural societies of the region when village life, its pleasures and challenges, reflections and wisdom were channeled largely through songs and theatre. They reflected every aspect of life and are still alive but face many competitors from audio-visual broadcast media. Content of songs and theatre have also changed and expanded.
- Theatre as media is performed both collectively and individually. Thus rural theatre continues in various shapes and forms under different names such as Jatra, Natok, Pala gan, etc. Essentially, they are psycho-social activities presented in entertainment forms and helps people to cope with different challenges of life and celebrate festivals.
- As rural lives have changed there is information flow from outside into the villages which are from stronger sources than tradition and have often overwhelmed older traditional content. However, the forms in rural or peri-urban life have also been re-shaped with contents that are different in challenges and coping methods. A new focus on sexuality and romance have also arisen which are inevitable as other concerns beyond the immediate livelihood gathering emerge. Thus, this is a critical area where media literacy is essential since everyday concerns of challenge managing of the consumer and commercial concerns of profit making of the producer without social responsibility come in conflict.
- In the wider national and sub-national scene, print media is very influential though in physical decline due to competition with broadcast media and online media. However, print media still reaches opinion and decision makers more, have a longer shelf life and can be accessed whenever needed in any given day. It also carries three kinds of media items — a) News b) Opinion pieces c) Lift items from other global media. This combination keeps print media despite its ageing profile quite effective. The demography also matters. While the younger people are less drawn to print media, the older generation is closer. This generation is also the head of households, the decision makers etc. That is why despite its limited and stagnant reach, it remains very powerful.

## Broadcast media Radio and TV, FM etc

- Radio has declined much in the rural areas with TV making a strong impact but in the urban areas radio has been re-born with a youthful audience due to the rise of FM stations. Producing a new "language" using jargons, mobile phone text based jargons, style based expressions and focus on new interest and directions particularly lifestyle issues, they have emerged as a critical part of new media that was not anticipated even a few years back. As a consumption driven market segment, with an aspiration based lifestyle, they represent a new frontier for media literacy. At the same time, there is a cultural backlash from traditional listener groups who see FM as "distorters of language".
- Television is the biggest growth sector and where large investment has rushed in as investors look for both economic and extra-economic benefits. The combined reach is the highest in the country and its product offerings are endless which makes it the most significant source of media information. However, because of its high dependence on advertisement, broadcast timings are based on commercial considerations. But given that it's audio-visual and entertaining, this is the dominant sector at the moment. This includes both satellite and terrestrial channels; private and public sector, which together make up the largest chunk of general media information products.

- Online media has been a relatively recent phenomenon and is both a content relay medium apart from a content provider through mobile phones and computers. However, 3G systems have revolutionized the market and all online products of non-online platforms such as print media and TV are available making access much higher than ever before. This development impacts on production and consumption arithmetic both.
- Online media units are also infinite in variety often creating a virtual media world. Within online media the main products are websites, online print media, online video stations, and music and entertainment products, Facebook etc. One of the reasons why this sector will continue to grow is because of its simplicity and low cost of operation which makes an explosion of online media inevitable. This high access also leads to production of high percentage of negative products, both sexual and political. But its flexibility and huge demand and supply situation makes it the most potent media sector in the world including Bangladesh today. Low investment also contributes to greater opportunity for people from different economic sectors to participate in media democracy.
- Two other issues are also very cognizable. One is convergence of modes in a single media platform - radio, TV, print- such as in websites and other online platforms which makes conventional division of distribution of media somewhat obsolete. Future looks to be heading this way as it's the most convenient for the consumer.
- Perhaps the best example is the mobile phone which is now increasingly dominating the online media market. Since it's portable, has strong signals and addresses the individual customer, the opportunity for greater market share is inevitable. However, risk for the non-media literate consumer is also higher. Most media products are now being designed to be mobile platform friendly making new negotiation terrains inevitable.

## Media Literacy and advertisement

- One of the greatest influences on media production is advertisement and this is a relatively ignored area of media literacy. Since media production is not possible without funding, the relationship is complex. Two relationships in fact act in operation separately and in tandem. One relationship is between the advertiser and media outlet. The other is between the media outlet and the consumer. So, no direct linkage between the consumer and the advertiser exist making consumer influences difficult to exert. However, public rejection of an advertisement may mean that the product will sell less but in this equation, media literacy plays a minor role. Yet media literacy is about media behavior and how the consumer inter-acts and it responds. It's about the rights of the consumer.
- This puts up a more difficult question about the economic rights of the media outlet. The consumer pays a small fraction of the cost that is spent for bringing the news home but it wishes to exert information on all the economic sources of media. It has often put media and the consumer advocate into conflict positions.

This conflict actually expands the boundaries of media literacy because unless the consumer knows about the production process and costs, it's impossible to make rational demands on media. It would mean that at least a section of consumers should be able to know about the internal functioning of the media system in general and recognize the economic, investment and labour market aspects of media to determine what should be effective and rational demands to be placed by the consumer.

- The issue certainly is complex as much of the commercial relations of media are determined by the objective of the investment and the maturity of the market. Hence, an investment to gain clout will not be affected by advertisement needs and that outlet may be relatively free of dependence on adverts. But, a quality media unit paper, which by its very position has made major market players antagonistic, will be dependent on whatever adverts it gets to survive. The cost of independence needs to be calculated as well and identify who is ready to bear that cost in seeking ethical media.
- Freedom of media is therefore a complex and often a complicated topic and the inter-sectional space between the rights of the producer and rights of the consumer needs to be chalked out. It's a dynamic process which implies that it's shifting, circumstantial and multi-stakeholder driven, a process that aspires to reach a compromise or a optimal space between profit for investment, production of transparency of both public and private sector as well as reaching objectives of the various stakeholders concerned.

## Sky media: A new literacy?

National and international media is a new dimension that makes demands on media and news literacy. Most concepts on media 25 years back were national in scope but now it's always international and expands to include both international current affairs and entertainment programmes. The influence of satellite broadcasting is the most profound and it is something outside the control of the local consumer. As a result, media literacy useful for coding and decoding messages, interpreting the positive and the negative and ultimately advocating for better quality media products can't apply to sky broadcasting. It has opened up a new area of influence and even threat over which there is no consumer control.

This literally top down arrangement has become a major source of concern as even the high media literate can't negotiate with this form of broadcasting. It may be recording the limits of media literacy and at what point the issues of literacy ends and the issue of public safety begins.

Finally we come to the issue of social values and rights and how they are negotiated in a media environment. While media literacy empowers the consumer, there is limit to what empowerment alone can achieve. Unless the overall governance is positive, media literacy impact will be limited and the consumer rights will also not reach any significant stage.

Media literacy therefore can't happen in isolation. It is a corporate action that brings in a whole set of actors and players to create a level field for all the participants. It's not in the end about media only; it's also about participation in democracy. It's the most positive challenge the production of media faces for social achievements.

## Structuring the Issue and its implementation based on audience response survey

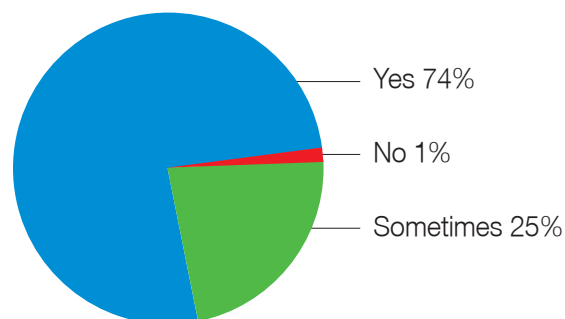
In defining and then designing media and news literacy, few aspects need to be addressed.

- A basic profile of the media market and its audience accessibility. Which media sector and units dominate and which are the prime audiences.
- Whether such media products generated by the units are generally considered social friendly or not.

- Do ethical guidelines and media standards and the consumers' position on ethical media exist? What can be done to improve the ethical standard of products through producer-consumer inter-action?
- Ethics and media for children — Present and the future
- What are the tools through which audience opinions can matter and how they can be empowered through media literacy tools?
- What are the organizational structures which can be envisaged in playing roles in enhancing media literacy particularly the children?

## Profile of the media market and its audience accessibility

- Most of the media related data that is in hand or available in the market focus on print and TV media. These are two critical media as most of the social or political players are involved in these two sectors. Research data is therefore influenced by the perceptions of political processes. They are also by category middle and upward classes. Hence, media, both production and standard maintenance are held by a small number of people. However, the data collection is also influenced by advertising focus since the maximum percentage is consumed by these two sectors. Some attention therefore would be useful particularly on online and social media where the access of the younger audience is high.



Having stated the limitations the data is as follows. The following chart shows the preferred print media profile.

### Preferred newspapers

Newspapers □	Readers □	Newspapers □	Readers □
Prothom Alo □	100 □	Manabjain □	2 □
Bangladesh Pratidin □	20 □	Jai Jai Din □	1 □
Kaler Kantho □	11 □	Purbanchal □	1 □
The Daily Jugantor □	11 □	Amader Shomoy □	1 □
The Daily Star □	10 □	Chandpur Kantho □	1 □
The Daily Naya Diganta □	8 □	Mathabhanga □	1 □
Shamokal □	8 □	Desh tottho □	1 □ □
Ittefaq □	4 □	Juger Kotha □	1 □
Sylheter Dak □	3 □	Jamuna Probaho □	1 □
The Daily Observer □	2 □	Azadi □	1 □
Bonik Barta □	2 □	Juger Alo □	1 □

**Note :** Number shows multiple response

- MRDI data on news and current affairs shows that acceptability is not high with only 14% saying they fully believe and 28% saying they "somewhat believe" and 42% citing some sort of positive note. Data says, 57% think they create queries in mind which means that they would like to learn more and negatively, they would like to know more because they have questions.

But when more than 50% are unsure about the credibility of the news, it deserves serious thought. As this is across the audience response, the need to put media content veracity becomes a matter of concern. Media literacy is not just about improving news content so it becomes an issue. It's important to learn which is their favoured channel of news which they trust or if they are keen about news at all.

Such information has implication for media literacy campaigns as the issue of literacy could well extend beyond unpacking of products and their content but packaging of the same which may unduly enhance or diminish the quality of media products.

### **Whether such media products generated by the units are generally considered social friendly or not**

- There is very little analysis of social content and value in media though MRDI has extensively sought opinion on this which is stated in the report. While the political focus of media is high, it's seen as distributor of information which is related to governance and that sector is defined by its political nature. Thus the gap is largely of what constitutes governance in the media mind. And this again links it to media ownership and objectives. Three players emerge out of this scenario. A. Government. B. Owner and the media unit. C. The consumer.

- This brings into notice the role of media owners and the products they support. The print media has one major player and other smaller units and it's a business investment too but partially. It is much bigger in terms of social returns for economic investment. So great is its hold on the market that it leads or reflects public opinion more than others. But the political space it caters to is limited; the result is resistance to its role by the political players. Thus, other media unit which has a much smaller readership profile begins to have a share of the opinion market too.

- But social roles need to be owned by all sections of the people and all classes too. Print media's limitation is its very limited social access due to educational literacy issues. Thus class and community both become factors. Hence social media products preparation will also require market and media segmentation.

To that extent, TV has wider reach and it is where social values can be focused on in terms of reaching a wider audience. But the study findings and data on credibility can't be ignored and that is why a balance is required depending on where it can have high impact. That also means targeting several media spaces/ sectors.

- There are several reasons in today's media market where high quantum investment is made. The following quote is illustrative:

"The business model of using media to gain economic, social and political capital is with what the big boys play. Most of the top business houses in town, fully or partly, own TV stations. Few make money but none goes out of air. Permissions for stations are given almost entirely to connection capitalists who invest to achieve three goals. i). Create clout that is useful for protecting money already made from various threats including scrutiny and facilitate new investments elsewhere due to the clout such ownerships bring. ii). Own media units that allow exercise of power and proximity to the powerful hence both protection and smoother business operations. iii). Create socio-political profile that can be leveraged into gaining monetary and extra-monetary profits. This model suits the connection -capitalism system best. Profit is calculated not from the

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investment in a particular media unit only but the profit that results to the investment group as a result of owning the unit. "

"So it's not a conventional media business model that is in operation but one that reflects the general nature of the profit making system in Bangladesh. Thus media in such economies is not just a producer of transparency as a principle but it may be used to protect lack of transparency as well in practice". **(Media business models in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Business Report)**

- Hence the social role of media has to be contextualized where media investment is also about social capital gathering. The CSR model has become quite popular in Bangladesh recently. But such approaches are present in the economic profit driven sector. Since a significant or most of the media market is social capital driven, conventional approaches may not be effective in negotiating for socially relevant media products.
- This lack of uniform nature of mass media means more customized media literacy initiatives and strategy. It involves designing more targeted approaches to media literacy in niche audiences including not just the planners and producers but owners as well. That implies a more detailed gap and needs analysis of media and news literacy packages reaching the traditional consumer. Thus, it's about sectoral literacy rather than of one side only. In the absence of any stringent regulatory body media literacy plays the role of quality control, social awareness and consumer protection too must step in.

## Some Vital Questions

*Do ethical guidelines and media standards exist? And what is the status of implementation of the same? And what is the consumers' view of such products? Do they have any forum to negotiate with the producers? What can be done to improve the ethical standard of products through producer-consumer inter-action?*

- This part of the report relates to the ethical guidelines, quality of reports and the ability of the media products to inter-act with the audience. It also shows the existing ability of the audience to "read" media products and the level of satisfaction. Two interlinked elements are involved in this part both about the quality of media standards and the level of ethical media. As data suggests, ethical media products matter to the consumer, more so to parents of children.

News gets maximum attention according to various data but that doesn't necessarily imply credibility. To that extent media starts on a back foot and is already facing a slightly skeptical audience.

**Chart 1 : Type of news that grabs attention first**

Topics □	Number□	Percentage
Politics □	30 □	21
Crime report □	22 □	16
Business □	9 □	6
International□	6 □	4
Sports□	2 □	1
Child related editorials□	38 □	27
Entertainment □	34 □	24
Total □	141 □	100

**Chart 8 : Extent of belief in the news over the media**

Response □	Number □	Percentage
Totally believe □	20 □	14
Somewhat believe □	40 □	28
Some news content□ create queries in mind	81 □	57
Don't believe at all □	0 □	0
Total □	141 □	100



- A major concern is that of news sourcing which some parts of media may not have passed with flying colors. According to 27% respondents media reports don't cite sources at all while 49% say "sometimes" cite sources making it an overwhelming 76% of media not being fully reliable. This is hardly a statement of achievement and needs more consideration by media.

**Chart 2 : Types of sources mentioned in the news**

Type of sources □	Number □	Percentage
Sources are not mentioned most of the times □	38 □	27
Sometimes mentions source as authentic □	69 □	49
Has interview of all related people □	12 □	8
All above □	22 □	16
Total□	141□	100

- But it also means that given the responses, the expectations from media itself may be unrealistic as far as ethical standards are concerned. The internal dynamics of media reporting is such that it often means operating under a great deal of pressure where performance and standards are often compromised. It's a realistic assessment of the sector and the pressures that push both industry and ethical standards down are several. From the qualitative findings of the report it appears that three factors are responsible for the situation.

- Inadequate planning and support
- Lack of technical guidelines for quality reporting.
- No standardized industrial standards or regulatory mechanisms for quality.

In the absence of a general rule or bar for all, media industry works in a world dominated by the immediate need. There is not much beyond the immediate and so the demand and scope for long term planning is low. This includes developing acceptable guidelines for media reporting.

- Another factor that works against quality media performance is competition. Since, the media outlets are not functioning as a result of an investment decision and the entry is largely about non-economic profit, the objective of the station /unit is to gain leverage based on determined objectives. Thus even a cursory glance at the media functioning shows a profound preponderance of 'ad- hocism' which means a reactive and not a cause driven media.

Locating quality and standards in a "fluid and uncertain" space is difficult for media. Hence the issue needs addressing in both structural and functional terms. Without determining the boundaries and parameters of the media sector and its capacity to respond to calls of higher value addition of media products, pushing for ethical values in broadcasting would not be very useful.

- Yet the situation of the promotion of ethical values as far as media reporting goes is not positive compared to the aspiration of the consumers.

Chart 3 states that 96% of the consumers said that they want ethical value based reporting which implies a total demand. However, in comparison to the demand, respondents mention that only 35% of the media follows an ethical code. This discrepancy gap between expectation and deliver is 61% which is so staggeringly high that one is struck by the communication gap between the two sides of the fence. If media is held so low in the eyes of the consumers, the question of providing ethical value becomes a much bigger challenge than expected.



- This issue of lack of ethic in media again as stated before are both incidental and structural. The Incidental involves the process of reporting which in case would involve following the grammar for good reporting and choice of subjects. When doubts are raised about sourcing information and a significant percentage find the area unclear, doubts are planted in the mind of the consumer that the report itself could be doubtful, hence not full trustworthy. The value of the report radically declines and as a result the report itself becomes a non-media product. In that case, engaging with an inadequate quality media becomes a challenge.

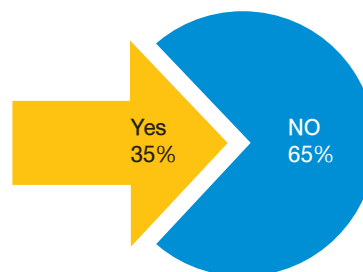
## Structures and tools for ethical media and news reporting

- This brings up the question of the structural aspects of media and its role in devising ethical products. The issue is not so much about what media is expected to deliver as it's clear what has to be done but whether the system within which media operates is actually sensitive to ethical questions. Much of that problem lies in designing the objectives of entry into media by the owners. The financial capital investment and rate of returns, whether economic or social profits- has increasingly become the determinants in what may be considered as ethical and what is not. Thus the value of ethics doesn't impact policy or functioning of media.
- This structural problem is wider than thought because the gatekeeper of media is the Government, who in one form or other, does function as the regulatory body. At the end of the day, the rules of engagement between media and the public official body determine the levels of ethical intolerance or not.
- The process of determination of ethicality is therefore dual. One is the official description and the other, the social description. Obviously, our data shows that social lack of satisfaction is low but the fact that there is no pressure on media to be more ethically responsible means the formal authorities do not have any problem with the socially perceived lack of ethics in media.
- We therefore face a situation where social values are in clash with official perceptions and the gap between the two is increasing. There is a need to recognize this dichotomy both in values and the language of values that seek to define ethics in media. The absence of any formalized rules of thumb needs to be developed and simplified into rules that require to be followed by media in production. In the absence of such rules of observance, we are left with vague descriptions of ethics that cause discomfort and lack of satisfaction with media while the authorities have no rules to refer to as far as media ethics goes. This absence of a common space where the Government, media and the consumer can sit together and determine a common frame of reference agreed to by all that is missing making it an exercise that makes little progress. However many accusations of low ethical products making against media are made.

## Children and Media products:

- The core part of the study focuses on the relationship between children and media keeping in mind the vulnerability children face due to their lack of negotiating power, their low psychological filters, and dependence on adult decisions when it comes to media products. The most significant point is the gap between the consumer and producer on which contents can be shown and which image distributed in the context of family and mental health are considered negative.
- MRDI data Chattr 9 and 10 illustrated this concern well. On asked if pictures of teenagers who had confessed their guilt could be shown, 65% didn't want it to be shown. But the causes cited for their choice also needs to be analyzed. Reasons cited for showing their images are the following:

**Chart 9 : If three teenagers have been arrested on allegation of murder of a friend and they also confessed to the police, are there any needs to publish the photos of alleged teenagers?**



#### Justification for the above answer

##### Justifications for Yes-

- This will make other teenagers refrain from similar crimes- 46% respondents
- It will create awareness among parents so that they keep a check on their children-42% respondents
- It will aware the society about the alleged teenagers- 12% respondents
- That such images will make other teenagers refrain from crime.
- It will create awareness among parents.
- Viewers will learn about such criminals.

##### Justifications for No-

- It will destroy their future- 64% respondents
- They will be socially stigmatized even if found not guilty- 25% respondents
- It will hurt the alleged teenagers psychology and may lead to mental disturbance-5% respondents
- Once the photos are published, they will gain some unwanted popularity which may attract others of similar ages to commit crimes - 6% respondents

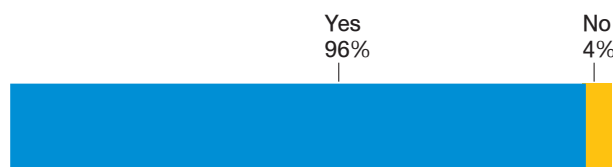
- Majority of those opposing the images said that the future of the teenagers will be negatively affected. This includes stigma even if later found not guilty etc.

What is interesting is that both groups are motivated by the same concern for the welfare of children. It's a matter of perspective as to how they see it.

It also means that media is not looked upon as a simple provider of information and generator of transparency but as a social service provider able to make a difference to the lives of children. An adult accused of crime is therefore fundamentally different from a child accused of the same. And the purview of such actions goes beyond media and enters the social space. This is the entry point of "media news literacy", when children are concerned.

- Headlines also are a matter of concern since they are by definition sensational and integral to media marketing. But the negative impact of a negative respondents felt was ignored. A headline like "father strangles child to death" is vehemently opposed by almost all respondents. An overwhelming 96% opposed this on the ground that the child will be traumatized and the child's relationship with the family will be affected.

**Chart 10 : Will a child get affected by headlines like- "heartless father strangles child to death over rift with wife"?**



### Justifications for Yes-

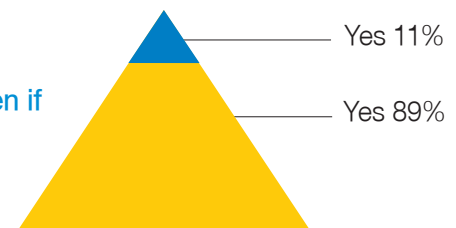
- Child will get traumatized-52% respondents
- May get misconception about own father- 24% respondents
- This type of headline or news content seems unethical and will affect society as whole- 9% respondents
- Will create unwanted fear of their parents and eventually create distance between the children and parents- 15% respondents

### Justification for No-

- None

- As high as 89% of the respondents are also opposed to identifying a child even if the said child is accused of "sexual crimes". The issue of the right to anonymity of the child even in such situations is extremely high in the public mind. Data shows that this almost puts the media sector under question about its perceived role of responsibility as far as reporting on children are concerned.

**Chart 11 : Will it be ok to publish identity of a child or a teen if they are involved with any crime like sexual harassment, murder, drugs, drug peddling, etc.?**



### Justifications for Yes-

- The alleged child will lose courage for any future crime - 49% respondents
- If the victim is handled according to the law, this will bring good to him.- 49% respondents
- To create awareness about the alleged child in the society- 1% respondents

### Justifications for No-

- The child may lose the will for correction or atonement due to the release of such information.- 30% respondents
- It will destroy the child's future- 56% respondents
- May inspire other children- 4% respondents
- May inspire the alleged child to commit more crime- 10% respondents

**Chart 12 : What is your opinion on publishing identity or photo of a child alleged of crime?**

#### Opinion against publishing-

- The child will become a victim of social stigma
- The future of the child will be jeopardized
- His/her education will be ruined
- Media should practice ethics while publishing any identification
- The child may become an outcast from society
- The child will further indulge in criminal activities on losing faith on system
- Blurred photos can be published

#### Opinion for publishing-

- Can be published for police investigation purpose or for law and court matters
- Just think it will be right!
- Not only photo but interview of the victim should also be published to help investigational work

### Chart 13 : Should photo and/or identify of a child victim of rape, torture be published?

- Identity should never be published
- Will jeopardize the entire future of the child
- Will make the child suffer more due to societal interference in personal life

- The concern is that how a stage could be reached when the distance between the producer and the consumer could be so large on such issues. It seems that there are weaknesses on both sides. The media has a variety of pressures working on it which includes competition and the need to make it more consumed to retain social and economic capital. In this approach, the unit or the owner's interest is assumed to be public interest. Popularity ratings are the only yardstick available in the market and value or ethical valuation as a functioning social tool is not there. The result is that the media itself is not aware where the boundaries are and when it may be crossed. The industry regulation is very weak. This is a structural weakness of governance and media shouldn't alone be blamed.
- Equal cause for concern is the state of consumer protection and activism. Media consumers are considered as a passive recipient of such products and it's only the popularity factor that is taken into account. Thus, as audience preference shows up in popularity charts, the producers ignore other factors involved in the issue including ethical issues. The audience seeking better ethical products doesn't communicate and there are no channels either for doing the same. The result is the kind of isolation that is a burden for both as one doesn't speak and the others doesn't listen.
- Hence the problem takes on the shape of blame-game, directly or otherwise. But the issue of inter-activity between the producer and the consumer is not about the limitations of one sector but about the system and lack of attention to understand the functioning of all three in a common space. This is neither the producer nor the consumer's fault. It calls for an understanding of media's role and dependence on consumers but the general apathy of them as well. That is why it can be argued only within a governance management space and beyond that of media activism.

Can there be a verdict on the role of media reporting on children?

### Children in media as victim and consumer

Public opinions on several major issues have become critical submissions of concern.

- Do the future of child victim kept in mind by the media while reporting? Only 15% said "Yes" and 39% said "No". "Sometimes" was cited at 46% so obviously the majority are not saying that the interest of children occupy media mind.

When asked if the impact of the report on children is considered when reporting as high as 79% said "No", which qualifies as a vote of lack of confidence in the media sector as a whole.

Chart 14 : Is the future of a child victim kept in mind by the media while reporting?

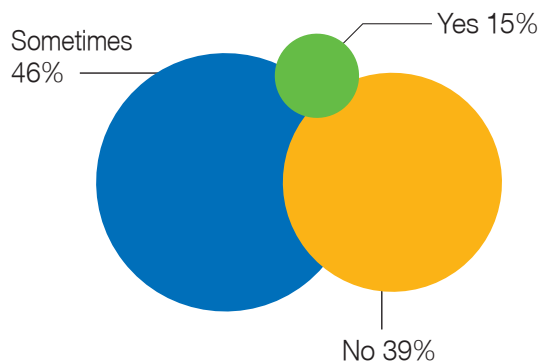
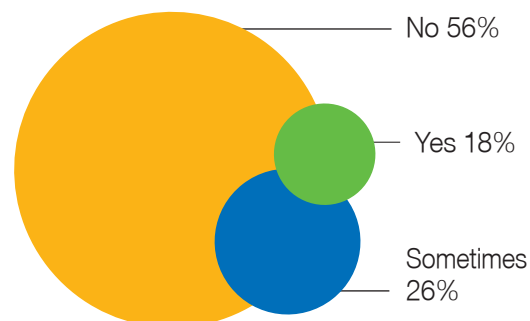
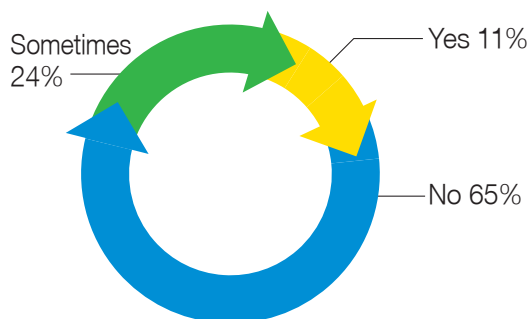


Chart 15 : Is the impact it will have on other children taken into consideration?



- When asked if reports are prepared with the child audience in mind the audience responded with 65% saying NO.

Chart 15 : Are the contents of the news prepared with the child readers in mind?



- It's even more alarming when one looks at the data which says that 65% are not concerned if the report has any negative impact on children. Perhaps all data presented should also be read keeping in mind MRDI Chart 5 which says that 62% of the respondents felt that Child Rights are not kept in mind when reporting is done. The information is almost an indictment of the media situation and child reporting as is generally understood.

Chart 4 : Whether factors of a report may influence child readers in unhealthy practice or any criminal activities

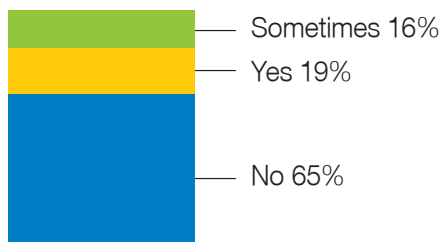
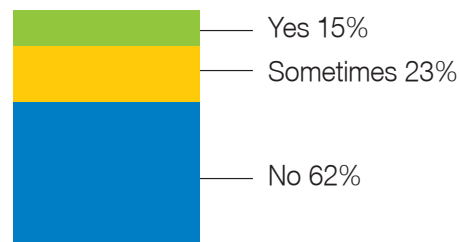


Chart 5 : Whether Child rights are kept in mind



- The responses again point to the structural issues that prevail in media as well as consumer practices. There are no industry standards and guidelines and there is no audience demand of an effective nature. It's not a surprise that lack of communication is the biggest problem in the social communication sector. This determines the function and nature of the situation.
- Over time, many surveys and reports have been done and the responses have also been relatively similar. More responses do not significantly add to the knowledge we have of the sector. Nor has the trend diverged over time once commercial media has stepped in and the officially owned media has lost its solo space.
- But the parameters of functioning including in relation to child rights and child friendly media have always been an unchanging issue. Some of the reason for having such data is the lack of a secure and sufficient baseline. Nor are there any significant guarantees that the responding sample is also constant and representative over time. Children have also not been the focus of such queries.
- Two methods remain necessary which are parts of many structured analysis. One is a Causal Layered Analysis that tried to identify the issue and develop a Problem Tree and secondly, develop a process flow chart (PFC) that emerges out of the analysis. In its absence, most data threatens to become anecdotal in nature. The solutions and suggestions are also under pressure for being somewhat reactive and anecdotal. No matter what the quality of findings are, the process of analysis remains less than adequate.
- This has not been because of lack of skills or capacity but need and demand. The both for media literacy has always been weak as the media sector has moved through a series of identities and still not sure about its role as a player of economic and social capital earner and its responsibility to serve society. The missing links must be identified before actions can be planned let alone taken.
- The co-relationship between high access and high profit is well established. No media including the GoB media can afford to compromise major headline space or peak time broadcasting in public interest. This remains a major issue as both at the end of the day, whether subsidized by public money or advertisements are trying to reach certain objectives of individual remit not necessarily social. It's significant that the only media product that is mandatory for all broadcasters to relay is the national news produced by the Government owned BTV which sets out the priority of the public face of the official media world too. Censorship on print and electronic media is severe and again focuses on protecting the political space of the authorities. Hence, before too strong a judgment is produced on media functioning, it would be useful to be reminded on the governance realities under which media production, consumer reaction and participation of both parties can happen are often not in the same street as public interest supporting children.



# **ANNEXURE**

# Annex 1

## KII Responses

Interview of thirty five key informants from both the media and the citizen readers were taken with a semi-structured set of questionnaire to collect their views on the current situation of news literacy and potential interventions for improvement. Newspaper editors, academics, intelligentsia and civil society members were involved in the process. The interview findings have been put here in order of the date of interview, not maintaining any hierarchy.

### BARISAL DIVISION

#### **Rahima Sultana Kazal**

Executive Director, AVAS, Barisal

- Media needs to understand perspective and preference of readers. A study can be conducted to identify perspective of newspaper readers, their interest and priority.
- Newspapers can introduce readers' opinion poll. Readers will post their opinion/ comments/feedbacks in this platform. This will help understand readers' perception about news. Some selected opinions can be published in the newspaper.
- Readers/viewers forum can be developed by young people. Forum members will analyze the news and give their opinion to the newspaper management.
- There are laws/rules/regulations related to ethical reporting. Journalists need orientation on these. A space can be allocated in the newspaper to publish code of ethics.
- Media association can organize some programme for their self assessment. They can discuss about standard of their own news reports.
- Easy reading awareness material on different aspects of ethical reporting and news literacy such as poster, leaflet and booklet can be printed and distributed among the students and youth for improving news literacy.
- Awareness group can be developed at the district level through which awareness campaign on news literacy can be created.



## **Muhammad Amirul Azam**

Deputy Director, Divisional Information Office, Barisal

- Reads two national and two local newspapers daily.
- Lead news, business news and reports on violation get priority.
- Newspapers mainly highlight the negative issues and overlook positive stories.
- Local newspapers do not always follow ethics in publishing photographs.
- As a vulnerable segment of the society children should get special attention while present in a news. They need special treatment.
- Media should give importance on follow-up news.
- Media sometimes give detailed description of acid throwing and rape case which is absolutely unnecessary. This may provoke violence.
- Media should present the news in a decent way without publishing violent picture.
- Interaction between media and the students of school/college can be organized. This programme will help the journalist to understand the views of young readers about news. Journalists can also identify which news are accepted by the readers and which are not.

## **Jibon Krishna Dey**

Convener, Khelaghar, Barisal district committee

- Reads six national and four local newspapers daily.
- Editorial, child related report and political reports get priority.
- Some of the media reports lack in authentic information and create confusion.
- Reporters sometimes present report to attract readers without thinking about credibility and ethics.
- Recent trend of news presentation create confusion about the quality and credibility of reports. Titles like ‘‘Children are not safe in mothers’ lap/মায়ের কোলে শিশু নিরাপদ নয়’’ has created misconception to children about mother. It also interrupts their mental growth.
- Duty of media is to aware people by their reporting. It is important to publish the reason behind of incident but they should be careful that total group will not suffer for personal blame.
- Children should get separate space and treatment in media. Professional killer and child accuser are not in same level. Due to emotion or lack of knowledge Children some time do the crime. Media should be more concern for presenting such reports.
- Readers should be the option to express their opinion about news.
- Necessary training and orientation on ethical reporting can be organized for the young journalists. In-depth knowledge has to consider during recruitment

## **Mazibur Rahman**

Retired Head Master, Kaunia Girl's High School, Barisal

- Reads three national and four local newspapers on daily basis.
- Child related news, violation against women and political report gets first priority
- Media does not prioritized positive issues of child reporting. When any incident occurred on child violation then it gets better coverage.
- Seeing such news title, Student assault by teacher children lose their respect on teachers. Responsibility of media is to present news. But they should avoid detail description of violation and present the news in a positive way mentioning law-enforcement situation.
- Media needs to present news in a child friendly manner. They should not published news in such a way which influences them to do crime.
- Media has to give different treatments to adult and child accuser.
- Media should not disclose the name and identity of children in their reporting. People should know the real scenario for awareness but media has to be careful that their report does not create any harm to anybody.
- As a viewer children also see the news with their parents. Taking this in mind media should present news with cautious.
- Media does not fulfill the requirement of reader/viewer. But still there are some journalists are preparing good reports.
- Local newspaper mainly published news on business perspective
- Reader's forum can be formed. This forum will analyze the news and give their opinion to the media houses
- To promote the news literacy of student school authority can play vital role. They can grow the habit of reading newspaper among the students.

## **Syed Dulal**

Editor, Monthly Aranda Likhon, Barisal

- Study circle can be organized on news literacy for creating awareness among the readers
- Awareness on news literacy for student and mass people can be developed through theater-drama. Script of this drama will be focused on how wrong information impact of life. Duration of this drama will be 30-40 minutes. Mutual involvement of academics and journalist to prepare this script.
- Some awareness group can be made at district level. These groups will facilitate readers to increase their news literacy. Before operation, group members should be oriented. These group will also analyze news publish/on air over media and send their opinion to the editors. Simultaneously these groups will create peer groups and disseminate their knowledge.

### **Subarna Mazumder**

Lecturer, Department of Communication and Journalism, Chittagong University

- Producers are preparing news as per instruction of their policy makers. Policy makers always prioritize sale value of the news.
- Local newspapers prefer sensational news and try to create suspense through detailed description which is actually unnecessary. Media's responsibility is to unveil the truth before the audience. So they should get into the depth and the background of the incident.
- Readers are getting used to read news stories that grossly violate ethical standards.
- Laws regarding printing of pictures in the media have to be applied strictly.
- Readers can create pressure on the policy makers by forming groups. The groups can share different issues of news literacy through an online platform.

### **Akhtar Kabir Chowdhury**

Advocate, Bangladesh Supreme Court, High Court Division, & Judges Court, Chittagong

- Child readers sometimes ask questions on media reports that embarrass parents. This type of reporting does not bring any benefit to the society.
- Media should avoid publishing report that may create misconceptions.
- Sometimes newspapers publish news reports only for business purpose.
- Newspapers are definitely accountable to their readers.
- Newspapers should follow the ethical standards of reporting.
- Local leaders can work as a pressure group to make the media houses follow their commitment to the society.
- Young readers can send their opinion through letter to the editor and also through facebook.

### **Abul Momen**

Writer and Journalist

- Professional journalists are very rare who take journalism as a passion. Those who are working now treat it only as a job. They are not well experienced.
- Till now journalism is an attractive profession. This is the only profession which is like an open shell. Anyone can come to this profession without any specific skill or previous experience.

- There are some readers who do not subscribe a particular newspaper. They buy newspapers to read column of their favorite columnist.
- Young readers mostly read newspaper online.
- Journalists are not properly aware about their responsibilities. Quality human resources are not being developed.
- Major portion of our population is youth. They can think about future. News literacy issue can be discussed among the youth through debating club, online sharing and blogs.
- For raising awareness roundtable can be organized for the youth.

### **Shyamoli Mazumder**

Executive Director, Organization for Women's Development in Bangladesh (OWDEB), Chittagong

- Prefer to read headlines, international and political news, economics and environment news, positive stories.
- Readers always want to see positive news, success stories.
- Some newspapers follow the ethics carefully, some do not.
- Some newspapers take business as their prime purpose and hardly care about providing information to people in an ethical manner. They often publish detailed description of violence to attract readers.
- Children often get involved in crime as victims of circumstances. Journalists have to be more human and sensitive while presenting children in their reporting.
- Educational institute based readers groups can be developed. These group will analyze published reports and their impact on readers.
- Newspapers can introduce online comment option for the readers.
- Students and young people should know the process of news making. This can be taught as a part of their curriculum.

### **Sisir Dutta**

Executive Director, Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA), Chittagong

- Local issues, headlines of national newspaper, political news get priority in the reading list.
- Some news reports and photos make children ask their parents embarrassing questions. Such reports and photos confuse children.
- Newspapers published some violent pictures while reporting on political issue. Editors should be more careful about publishing such news considering child psychology.
- Generally newspapers prioritize their business to readers's needs.

- Most of the local newspapers publish reports written in poor language and lots of spelling mistakes.
- Reporters need training on spelling & language. Training can be arranged in collaboration with Institute of Language.
- Children's page should be published as the front page of the newspaper.

## DHAKA DIVISION

### Dr. Mohsin Ali

Nutrition Specialist, Nutrition Section, UNICEF

- Prefer to read positive news, because it gives a good feeling.
- International events, health, nutrition and child issues in newspaper are interesting.
- Positive news in media raise optimism about the country and its people.
- Negative news provokes thought about the underlying reason of the occurrence.
- Attitude of reporter is important. Reporter and editorial staff should think about the perspective of readers before finalizing and publishing a news.
- Detailed description of crime news is unnecessary and harmful.
- Children as the subject of a news should be treated in a different way. Headline of news on children should be written carefully.
- Ethical standard of reporting has improved compared to recent past because of interventions and awareness in the area. Still there are scopes for further improvement.
- Editorial team of the media has to take the responsibility of publishing authentic and ethical news.
- Targeted groups, preferably involving young people, can be formed to create pressure on media to value audience expectation while producing / publishing news.
- Orientation and awareness events can be organized for the audience groups. Media coverage of the event should be arranged for greater impact.

### Abdulla Al Mamun

Programme Coordinator – Governance, Manusher Jonno Foundation

- Lead news and other major headlines of newspaper get priority.
- Editorial and post editorial, child related news and articles on child rights are also interesting.
- MJF conducts annual child situation analysis on the basis of media news contents.

- Both positive and negative news that demand deep analysis provoke thought and concern.
- It appears that reporters hardly think about readers while reporting. They think about the content of news only.
- Headlines of news are often irrelevant and misleading.
- Name and shame of children are often ignored.
- Idealistic approach of child reporting along with correct information is desirable.
- Forum of young readers can be organized and their interaction with journalists should be arranged. Forum members will analyze selected news stories and share with the journalists.

### **Afsan Chowdhury**

Communication specialist

- Interest in daily news mostly depends upon the headline.
- More professionalism is required in journalism.
- One sided news making is becoming popular.
- Government never moves from its stand, unless pressure is created on it.
- Reflection of public opinion is very limited.
- Media cannot play its role on its own. It needs partnership with other social stakeholders.
- A study can be conducted on young people's media consumption habit.
- Participatory journalism can be promoted by encouraging readers to give feedback on presentation of news stories.
- More young journalists have to be recruited who will write for young people.
- Media consumers forum can be formed involving young readers.

### **Professor Dr. AAMS Arefin Siddique**

Vice Chancellor, Dhaka University

- Training and institutional learning are required to instill news literacy in the young mind.
- Classroom is the ideal place for learning. So the basic concept of news should be taught to children starting from primary school as a part of their curriculum. It may continue from class 4 to class 12.
- Children will be encouraged to give feedback to the media. Teachers will facilitate them to do so.
- Visit to media house can be arranged for the children to create more interest about news among them.

- News literacy has to be included as a topic in the training curriculum of teachers. Even a weeklong training on news literacy can be organized for them.
- Development of readers will develop newspapers.
- Child readers need to be created, rather than developing child journalists.

### **Matiur Rahman**

Editor, Prothom Alo

- Newspapers have a decreasing trend of circulation in Bangladesh.
- Viewers and readers have started rejecting TV and newspaper.
- People of new generation have other media options. They hardly care about print and TV media.
- Journalism will remain, whether readers are there or not.
- Ethical sense of owner and editor of newspaper is very important.
- Initiative of individual media house is needed for maintaining accuracy of language in reporting.

### **Professor Dr. Md. Mizanur Rahman**

Former Chairman, National Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh

- While writing news stories, reporters hardly think about perspective of readers. They mostly consider circulation and business.
- Provocative journalism is unfortunate. Ethical standards have to be maintained in reporting.
- Neutrality is hardly maintained in reporting. It affects credibility of the news among the audience.
- Facts are often twisted and distorted in reporting.
- Audience can create pressure on media houses to follow ethical standards. Social media platform can be formed to do so.
- Moral values have to be inculcated in the children from early childhood. Moral and ethical teaching should be provided at the pre-school and primary school levels. Sense of morality in children will develop them as sensible readers/viewers with ethical understanding.
- Children should not be burdened with lots of theoretical and technical lessons. They should rather be facilitated to learn from the natural environment of the family, classroom and friends.

## **G. M. Kader**

Politician, Co-chairman, Jatiya Party

- News stories on politics and social disruptions interest most.
- Media has been playing a positive role in the socio-political context of the country.
- Ethical practices in media reporting can be rated as 50% of the desired level. TV media is trying to maintain ethics.
- Some newspapers have lone focus on business without caring for quality and ethical standards of reporting.
- Some media houses deviate from ethics to attract a section of the audience and please certain quarters.
- News analysis will bring out the real picture of ethical standards.
- Rejection can be an effective way of creating pressure on media. However, this rejection has to be spontaneous.
- Realistic news reports on social issues provoke thoughts of the audience.
- Credibility of news depends upon the particular media and the reporter.
- Media seems to be under pressure at times.
- News about children has no specific significance.
- Minimum educational qualification should be mandatory for a journalist.

## **Meher Afroze Chumki**

State Minister, Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

- A media boom has taken place in Bangladesh. Child friendly environment has to be maintained everywhere.
- Many of the media houses have too much of commercial attitude. They should be more cautious about producing news, particularly news concerning children.
- Some news and photographs over the media have adverse impact on children. This is harmful for child psychology.
- Family is the most vital institute for teaching ethical values.
- Improvement is visible in protection of child rights including that in the media.
- Children can learn journalism and practice as a part of their extra-curricular activities. But they should never be used as professional journalist.
- Two streams of journalism are there in our country. One is genuine professional journalism and the other is yellow journalism. Journalist unions and bodies should work to prevent unhealthy competition of yellow journalism.
- Forum for readers and viewers can be formed to create pressure on media authorities to comply with the ethical standards of reporting.



### **Wadudur Rahman Panna**

Editor, Janmabhumi, Khulna

- Media does not consider children as a reader and viewer while publishing/airing reports.
- Media should follow some principles in reporting on and for children.
- Media should be more careful while reporting on accident concerning children.
- Media can aware local administration about different incidents through their reporting without mentioning detailed identity.
- Written guideline is essential for all media houses. It will remind reporters to follow ethical codes, which will eventually reduce the violation of ethics while reporting.
- Journalist must have some qualities along with professional capabilities to maintain ethical standard of reporting. Media houses themselves need to ensure this.
- Special care is needed for giving the license to local newspaper.

### **Advocate Molla Mohammad Masum Rashid**

Former secretary, Khulna District Bar Association

- Most of the media houses do not follow ethics in reporting on and for children but some of them gave only description of the incident without mentioning identity and showing picture. Others should also follow this principle.
- Violent pictures should not be published/aired. It affects the readers' viewers' state of mind. In some cases it may provoke violence.
- Special care is needed for publishing report and picture on children and women.
- Written guideline will help follow ethics in reporting.
- Orientation and training can enhance the theoretical knowledge of journalists.
- Special wing can be introduced inside the house who will cover this types of sensitive issue.
- Financial solvency will be another reinforcing issue for following ethical standard for the journalist.

### **Rafiqul Islam Khokan**

Founder & Executive Director, Rupantor, Khulna

- Media gives more emphasis on the incidents of rape, kidnapping, physical abuse etc.
- In most cases, media publishes identity of the victim, sometimes they also add some adjectives with name.
- Media publishes picture of dead bodies of children without hesitation which does not create any sense among the readers.

- Child rights issues are overlooked by the society and media and not covered as a news item.
- Journalist should maintain the ethical aspects while reporting but readers are not aware about this issue.
- Media sensitization for newsroom leaders and editors are mandatory on the issue of ethical reporting.
- Absence of financial solvency is a barrier to maintaining ethical aspects.
- Creating regional level pressure group through credible NGOs at local level can take this advocacy forward.

### **Nargis Fatema Jamin**

District women and children affairs officer, Khulna

- Media does not follow the ethical standard in their reporting.
- Media always publish the name and identity of the children. They need to be more careful during reporting and follow the Children Act, 2013.
- Information dissemination is needed for awareness. But media should present the sensitive issues in a different way.
- Newspapers explore sensational pictures and news for their highest selling.
- They are least concerned about the child readers/viewers.
- Media needs a written guideline for maintaining ethical standard in their reporting. At the same time internal consultation is important to follow the guideline.
- Proper training should be organized for the journalists.
- News editors should also be aware about the issue.
- Awareness is needed for all sectors. Newspaper, journalist, parents need to be more sensitive on child issue.

### **Professor Anwarul Quadir**

Retired Professor, Daulatpur BL University College, Khulna

- Journalists are reporting mainly on events. They do not analyze the reason behind the incident. They do not even think about the psychographic profile of the victim and accused person.
- Media does not follow any rule in publishing picture. Sometimes they publish a picture which is atrocious and affect children's mind.
- Media should not provide same news treatment for children and adults.
- Media should present the news carefully by removing the negative portion as negative things always attracts.
- Media should be careful about language.

- Written guideline is needed for publish/airing news. Because lack of ethical knowledge of journalist will bring harmful impact for the society.
- Reporters need proper training. Child friendly attitude is required.
- News editor can play a vital role in this regard. They should edit the news more carefully and also need to discourage the reporter about this type of reporting .

## RAJSHAHI DIVISION

### **Advocate A.N. Motasim Billah**

Rajshahi Bar Association

- Ethical standards of media houses need improvement. However some of the reporters still attract readers by their decent writing.
- Child development and child rights related reports are rare in media. Media mainly emphasized on accident reports and pictures. Publishing violent picture along with reports sometimes create negative impact on children's mind.
- Awareness has to be developed among children and youth about reading newspaper in analytical way.
- Media should be more careful about presenting news keeping child readers in mind.
- A platform for media audience can be developed.
- Proper training and orientation for the journalists will sensitize them about maintaining ethics in reporting.

### **Professor Fazlul Haque**

President, Khelaghor, Rajshahi Branch and Former Editor, Sonar Desh

- Journalists, particularly local reporters lack in academic knowledge and professional skills
- Reporters and editing staff should be careful about publishing news on children.
- Media's responsibility is to disseminate information to the audience. But media should also take care about probable impact of negative components of news that may provoke young audience get involved in criminal acts.
- In recent times, some violent videos on torturing children have been uploaded in social media. This must stop.
- Media houses should review their reports regularly to find compliance and violation of their code of ethics.
- Media house can create option for sending comments of readers/viewers about their news.

## **Dr. Pradip Kumar Panday**

Chairman, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Rajshahi University

- Journalists need conceptual clarity on sensitivity of the audience, particularly that of children and youth. clear about ethics on child reporting.
- Serious readers/viewers often discuss about the presentation of news over TV channels and newspapers.
- Children constitute a special segment of media audience. They should be kept in mind while reporting.
- In most cases media does not follow any principle. Journalists hardly know how to bring the truth in news without violating ethics. They don't have any clear instruction about the issue.
- Journalists should apply their conscience while reporting.
- Picture has its own voice. As a reader of the newspaper children often look at the picture. Violent picture negatively impact on children's mind
- Some journalists are not aware about how children act. So they fail to treat children as a special segment of readers.
- Local newspapers are least concerned about readers' sensibility and ethics. They take journalism as a business.
- Expected level of professionalism is absent in Bangladeshi media
- Special thoughts and caution are needed for issuing license to local newspapers.

## **Fayezullah Chowdhury**

Executive Director, Barendro Unnayan Prochesta, Rajshahi

- Gaps are there among local newspaper, national newspaper, online and TV channels in terms of ethics and sensitivity.
- Ratio of positive reporting is very low. Media mainly focuses on negative events. Sometimes atrocious description create fear among the readers.
- News should be published for creating awareness in the society. But very often child victims of violence are portrayed in a negative way and it does not produce any useful result.
- There is no linkage between the readers and the newspapers. Media does not get readers opinion, at the same readers do not feel the need to raise their voice.
- Media should set some principles for publishing photographs keeping child readers in mind.
- Guideline on ethical standards should be a pre-condition for getting license for publishing newspaper.
- Separate beat should be created for child reporting in newspapers

### **Dr. Md. Mafizul Islam**

MBBS, Family Medicine Consultation, Rangpur

- Recent issues, feature, article, sports, child related news, environment related news, entertainment, liberation war, tourism, women entrepreneur, history get priority while reading newspaper.
- Quality of news presentation in general is not up to the mark. Sometimes newspaper exaggerates information like number of deaths in an incident.
- Newspaper provides more importance on news of politics and accident rather than other positive and constructive news.
- Newspapers hardly take young/child readers into consideration while publishing news/photos.
- Readers' Forum can be formed. This forum will analyze published reports and send readers opinion to the media houses.
- Readers get-together can be organized on monthly and quarterly basis.
- Readers can give their opinion about news online.

### **Ujjal Kumar Chakrabartty**

Executive Director, DOPS Foundation, Rangpur

- Local issues, development issues, sports news get priority.
- News of juvenile crime, torture and violence provoke thoughts.
- Sometimes newspapers provide wrong information.
- All newspapers are publishing same news stories.
- Media should be careful about their language and words in reporting.
- Sometimes reporters try to present the news in an attractive way and provide detailed description of the incident which makes children curious. Adults feel embarrassed in meeting the curiosity.
- Sometimes newspapers publish obscene pictures to attract readers. But this perception is not at all true.
- Civil society organization can work for creating readers' awareness. They can include news literacy as a cross cutting issue in their programmes. They can disseminate this knowledge among their beneficiary groups.
- This awareness can be multiplied through message dissemination by adolescent club or science club.
- Educational institutions can also be brought under this awareness programme. School authority can discuss the issue in parents' meeting.
- Child to child communication approach can be used for creating and sustaining this awareness.

## **Dr. Tuhin Wadud**

Associate Professor, Department of Bangla, Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur

- Headlines, editorial, op-ed, column written on politics, important issues on country situation get priority while reading newspaper.
- Reports of torture on helpless people provoke thoughts.
- Children read newspapers like others. They do not like news on torture or violence. Recent trend of news on violence has developed panic among children. Positive news needs to be published.
- Child related news deserves special treatment.
- Authenticity of published news is a concern. Spelling mistake and language of reports are often disgusting. News headlines sometimes do not match with the content of the news.
- Sharing meeting of readers can be organized with journalists to exchange views on the reports published.

## **Zafrin Islam Ripa**

Councilor, Rangpur City Corporation

- Regularly reads Prothom Alo, Ittefaq and local Juger Alo.
- National and international issues, sports, social issue get priority while reading newspaper.
- Media reveals real situations in front of us through their reporting. Sometimes language and detailed description of news embarrass readers.
- Newspapers sometimes treat the same issue in a different way.
- Journalists sometimes use information in the report without checking its authenticity properly.
- Dialogue between media and local representative should be organized to inform them about readers' view/opinion.

## **Mostafizur Rahman**

Convener, JSD Metropolitan Committee, Rangpur

- Regularly reads two national and four local dailies.
- Mainly reads the headlines, column and editorials. News related with good governance also gets priority.
- Media is one of the sources which can present the news in a neutral way.
- News stories of national dailies are more authentic than those of the local ones.
- Reporters of local newspaper fabricate news stories. They publish news of violence in the front page. But this type of news should be published in inner page.

- Children also read newspapers. Description of violence in the news creates adverse impact in their mind. Reporters should take this issue into special consideration.
- Readers can send their opinion to the editors.
- Readers can express their views to the media through a forum of their own.

## SYLHET DIVISION

### Emad Ullah Shahidul Islam

Ex-President Sylhet District Bar Association

- Prefer to read widely circulated national dailies and some local dailies.
- Reports on international affairs, human rights, children and judicial issues interest most.
- Newspapers publish news more in the interest of their business.
- Newspaper authorities do not consider readers' perspective while publishing news. Contents of news should be selected on the basis of reader survey.
- Some news stories do not contain any message. Only information is not sufficient.
- Children deserve special importance in getting reported. Other than hard news, feature stories on child rights and related issues are important.
- Despite ethical practices by the newspapers, use of vulgar words and unacceptable pictures often pollute reports.
- Perspective of child readers have to be taken into consideration while publishing sensitive reports. Crime reports create questions in the minds of children. Such reports may even provoke them to get involved in criminal acts.
- Readers can post their reactions on the online version of newspaper. Some selected reactions can be printed in the newspaper.
- Local readers can communicate their views through the local bureau of the newspaper.
- Face to face interaction of the readers and journalists can be arranged.
- Newspaper management can conduct survey among readers.
- Young readers can write letter to the Readers Column.

## **Professor Abdul Aziz**

Emeritus Professor, Metropolitan University, Sylhet

- Read both national and local dailies.
- Prefer to read political analysis, literature page and columns.
- Newspapers prefer to publish negative news, which again are reported in a sensational way.
- Wrong analysis of news creates confusion. Reporters often fabricate news to make them attractive.
- Sometimes unnecessary issues appear in newspaper as news stories.
- Success stories and development news should get greater coverage in media. This can promote positive changes in the society.
- Children are our future. They deserve more coverage in media.
- Newspaper has to establish itself as a reliable institute. Newspapers should not publish stories that may hurt children or violate social norms.
- Language of report and picture should be chosen carefully.
- To develop news literacy, readers can create a forum of their own to analyze reports, interact and inform publishers about their opinion.
- Readers can write letter to the editor to give their opinion.
- Young readers can post their comments online.

## **Chitta Ranjan Rajbanshi**

Former Advisor, Bangladesh Tea Labour Association

- Read national dailies online and also local dailies.
- Prefer to read political news, editorial page, news on tea garden, social and economic issues.
- Some reports in media lack in credibility. Baseless news stories are also published. Insufficient analysis of news sometimes creates confusion.
- News on children are published in newspaper. News and picture of jubilation are published after the SSC exam results. Most newspapers publish picture of girls, which, they think, would increase circulation of their newspaper.
- Media news sometimes facilitate courts speed up the judicial procedure. Judgment on Rajon murder case can be cited as an example.
- Newspapers have a trend to publish news on women and children when they become victims of repression or get involved in crime. News of preventing child marriage may bring harm to the girl for her future life. Journalists hardly think about the consequence of report. The issue of ethics should particularly be taken care of while detailing out the news.
- Readers forum can be formed for better literacy in news.
- Newspapers themselves can take initiative to collect readers' views.



## Annex 2

# Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Report

Seven FGD sessions were organized in Dhaka and six divisions involving different groups including journalist, children, indigenous community, cultural activists, parents, young professionals and NGO representatives. A total of 64 participants took part in discussions. Findings of the sessions have been placed here in order of their occurrence, not prioritizing any group over the other.

### FGD 1

Group□ : Journalist	Number of participants□:□Male□ 10
Location□: Khulna	□ Female □ 0
Date□ : 18 February, 2016	□ Total □ 10

### Findings

- Ethical aspects are often ignored while reporting on child issues.
- Reporting on children is more or less a sensitive issue.
- Language, tone and use of words in reports will mostly depend on the level of sensitivity of the incident.
- Children should never be used for serving any purpose or interest of any individual or group.
- Sometimes media reporters use children unethically for producing sensitive news stories. These reporters treat news as a commodity that has to be served to the audience in a palatable form.
- Psychology of a child who is a victim of an incident must be taken into serious consideration while preparing a report.
- Children hardly read newspapers. They are mostly used to watching TV and browsing internet/ social media.
- Editing is a vital part of news presentation. Quality of editing has fallen.
- Still some media houses try to edit news properly to maintain quality and ethical standards.

- Unfair competition among the media houses is responsible for publishing sensitive news and picture without considering ethical aspects and readers' perspectives.
- Readers' and viewers' feedback is important. But there are hardly any scopes to receive such feedback.
- Ethical standards in child reporting is at a medium level according to 90% respondents and low according to 10%.

## FGD 2

Group : Bangla medium students (Class X to XII)	Number of participants: Male	4
Location: Bogra (Rajshahi division)	Female	6
Date : 17 March, 2016	Total	10

## Findings

- Nine out of 10 participants read newspaper. 3 of them read regularly.
- Most readers prefer front and last pages of the newspaper. Sports and entertainment pages are also popular.
- Pictures of decomposed face or dead body create negative impact in mind.
- Pictures of Rana Plaza collapse published in the media were horrible.
- Some advertisements and other pictures in the online media are not acceptable to children and adolescents.
- Photograph of the victim of violence should not be published in the newspaper.
- Child readers discuss about sensational news published in the media. They talk about the content, but nothing about way of writing the news.
- They are not aware about ethics of reporting, though they feel bad about some news.
- Level of credibility of news published in the newspaper among this group of readers vary. It is highly credible to 10%, relatively high to 60 % and medium to 30%.
- Young readers can give their feedback to media about reporting through writing letter to the editor, sending e-mail, posting comment on facebook and online media.

## FGD 3

Group : NGO executives

Location: Barisal

Date : 31 March, 2016

Number of participants: Male 7

Female 3

Total 10

### Findings

It appeared from discussions that NGOs subscribe national and local newspapers for their office. They expressed their concern about standard and credibility of news over media. They put their comments on the following areas.

#### Issues of individual priority

- Lead story of the newspaper attracts most.
- As development activists, priority is given on news and follow up stories related with violence against women and children.
- Politics, trial of war criminals are priority issues. Talk show over TV also gets attention.
- Editorial, post-editorial and feature stories draw attention.
- Burning issues and breaking news attract the audience.

#### Reporting standard and credibility

- Language of reports is a big concern. More care should be taken about accuracy and standard of language.
- Standard of TV news presentation needs improvement.
- National and local newspapers, except few, lack in credibility in publishing news.
- Both print and electronic media are owned by business people. They want the media to serve their business purpose. So maintaining quality and ethical standards may not be easy for the journalists.
- Too many newspapers are being published from district and divisional towns. It is very difficult to maintain their quality and standard.

#### Children as subject and audience of news media

- Media reports on some recent incidents have made children fear even their mothers.
- Children are innocent and vulnerable. Media reports may provoke abnormal behavior of children. So much care should be taken in producing such reports.
- Children's involvement in criminal acts is the failure of family and society. Children are not responsible for such acts. This should be kept in mind while reporting on children.

## How to develop news sense and awareness

- NGOs can monitor violation of children act in media reporting. Awareness programme on legal provisions can be organized.
- Interactions can be organized with reporters and editors.
- A campaign on quality and ethical media reporting can be organized producing drama, songs and developing advocacy materials like poster, bill board etc.
- Children has to be made aware about the UNCRC.
- Sensible journalism has to be practiced.
- Relevant clauses of the children act can be published in the newspaper as an advertisement to remind the journalists about their ethical responsibilities.

## FGD 4

Group : Young professionals

Location: Chittagong

Date : 22 April, 2016

Number of participants: Male 5

Female 3

Total 8

## Findings

Young people engaged in teaching, legal practice and other professions participated in the discussion session. They put their comments on the following areas.

### Issues of individual priority

- Lead story, front page and back page of the newspaper attract readers.
- Sports page is priority to many readers.
- International news in newspaper and TV interest audience.
- Editorial, post-editorial and feature stories draw attention.
- Chittagong page of some newspapers also create interest of local readers.

### Reporting standard and credibility

- Media often violate ethical principles while reporting, particularly on sensitive issues.
- Reports on crime, accident, allegation, corruption should contain statements of parties concerned and involved to present a neutral picture.

- National and local newspapers, except few, lack in credibility in publishing news.
- Average score on credibility of news reports rated by the participants is 6 out of 10.
- Both print and electronic media are owned by business people. They want the media to serve their business purpose. So maintaining quality and ethical standards may not be easy for the journalists.
- Too many newspapers are being published from district and divisional towns. It is very difficult to maintain their quality and standard.

### Children as subject and audience of news media

- Media reports on some recent incidents have made children fear even their mothers.
- Children are innocent and vulnerable. Media reports may provoke abnormal behavior of children. So much care should be taken in producing such reports.
- Children's involvement in criminal acts is the failure of family and society. Children are not responsible for such acts. This should be kept in mind while reporting on children.

### How to develop news sense and awareness

- NGOs can monitor violation of children act in media reporting. Awareness programme on legal provisions can be organized.
- Interactions of readers can be organized with reporters and editors.
- A campaign on quality and ethical media reporting can be organized producing drama, songs and developing advocacy materials like poster, bill board etc.
- Readers' forum should be formed at the district and upazila levels.
- Local journalists should be trained on ethical reporting.

## FGD 5

Group□ : Ethnic/indigenous community	Number of participants□:□Male□	5
Location□: Sylhet	□	□ Female □ 5
Date□ : 13 May, 2016	□	□ Total □ 10

### Findings

About 3 million people of 45 ethnic minority groups live in different districts of Bangladesh. The ancestors of the ethnic communities in Sylhet came here as tea labourers. Many of them still work in tea gardens, while others are engaged in other occupations. One FGD session was conducted with ten people of ethnic communities on the level of their news literacy and their views on different aspects of the media.

## Issues of individual priority

- Local newspapers are popular here. National newspapers are also read. Some of them read online news in their mobile phones.
- Lead story, front page and back page of the newspaper attract them.
- Sports page, international news and feature stories draw attention of readers.
- They listen to TV news with interest.

## Reporting standard and credibility

- Media, particularly local newspapers, frequently violate principles of ethics while reporting on sensitive issues.
- Readers and viewers prefer hot news. To meet this demand media often produce news reports with exaggeration.
- Newspapers should be more careful about printing photographs.
- Average score on credibility of news reports rated by the participants is 6.5 out of 10. However, sports news is 100% credible to them.
- News stories on indigenous communities are rare in the media. Some stories are published on 'Indigenous Day'. But news stories on life, livelihood and problems of indigenous communities are hardly published. Even the stories published are full of wrong information.
- Participants have divided opinion on talk show. Some of them think talk shows explore facts through debates. Few of them rate talk shows as useless discussions.

## How to convince media gatekeepers to maintain ethical standards

- Readers' forum can be formed. Forum members will analyze credibility and ethical standards of sensitive news stories and send their opinion to the gatekeepers.
- Readers can give their opinion on news contents through the 'Letter to the editor' column of the newspaper.
- Comments on news can be posted at the facebook page of newspaper.

## FGD 6

Group : Guardians of children

Location: Rangpur

Date : 5 May, 2016

Number of participants: Male 5

Female 3

Total 8

## Findings

Parents of children who have different professional engagement participated in the discussion session. Three national newspapers and 5 local newspapers are mostly read by them. They put their comments on the following areas.

## Issues of individual priority

- Three of the participants read online newspaper.
- Headlines of front page and last page of the newspaper attract readers.
- Sports page, editorial, post-editorial and feature stories draw attention.
- Local newspapers have special value because these cover local news and events with importance.

## Concerns about media reports

- Too many advertisements are there in the newspaper.
- News of accident, political violence and killing are painful. Detailed description irritates.
- Headline of news is often misleading.
- Both print and electronic media are owned by business people. They want the media to serve their business purpose.
- This digital generation is least interested in reading. Children have to be developed as readers.
- Vested interest is there in news presentation.

## How to develop news sense and awareness

- Readers can comment by writing letter to the editor.
- Media should conduct assessment of its own reporting.
- Readers forum should be formed to pressurize media to report ethically.
- Positive news should be published in the front page.
- Awareness about ethical values has to be created in the family and the society.
- One agency can communicate with media on behalf of the readers.
- Live discussion programme on ethical reporting can be telecast involving reporters and the audience.

## FGD 7

Group : Cultural Activists

Location: Dhaka

Date : 25 May, 2016

Number of participants: Male 7

Female 3

Total 10

## Findings

Cultural activists most of whom have got other professions participated in the discussion session. They put their comments on the following areas.

## **Issues of individual priority**

- Most of them read online newspaper over lap top, desk top computer and mobile phone.
- Headlines of front page of the newspaper attract readers.
- Cultural news gets priority.
- Sports page and world news also attract.
- Editorial, post-editorial and feature stories draw attention.
- Burning news of the day definitely gets priority.

## **Concerns about media reports**

- Detailed description of murder and other crimes irritates the reader.
- News stories are often distorted. Facts are combined with fiction in producing such reports.
- Media channels always prefer negative news ignoring positive ones.
- Both print and electronic media are owned by business people. They want the media to serve their business purpose.
- Journalism once was an effective weapon for social change. Unfortunately the purpose has been shifted to profit making only.
- Journalists are less caring about the needs and concerns of the audience while reporting.
- Some media outlets, particularly the FM radio are polluting and distorting the language.
- Average score on ethical standards of media rated by the participants is below 4 out of 10.
- Against all these limitations, media is also playing a positive role in advocacy for democracy, projecting the picture of crime, corruption and unfair practices in the country.

## **How to develop news sense and awareness**

- Readers can comment online about the ethical aspect of the report.
- Overall ethical values have to be created in the society through moral teaching and cultural activities.
- Media gatekeepers have to be aware and conscious about ethical standards of journalism.
- A mechanism of linkage between audience and media gatekeepers has to be developed through which they can interact with each other.



## Annex 3

# Consultation Meeting

### Meeting - 1

Venue : YWCA Conference Room, Dhaka

Date : 28 April 2016

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The consultation was organized involving journalists, teachers and NGO representatives from Dhaka and three other divisions of the country.

Welcoming the participants, MRDI's Executive Director Hasibur Rahman explained the objectives of the project and the consultation meeting. Md. Shahid Hossain, Adviser, Planning and Development of MRDI presented the key note paper. An open discussion session followed the presentation in which all the participants took part. Farid Hossain, CEO, INFOCUS summarized the discussions and gave his own views on the issue.

Ethical aspect of reporting, professionalism of journalists, role of media owners and gatekeepers, credibility of media reports, perspective of the audience and related issues were raised and discussed in the meeting.

### Excerpts from the discussions

#### Dr. Fahmidul Haq

Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka

- Academic study on news literacy / media literacy is not new in the world.
- Once newspaper was treated as the Gospel. Now days have changed.
- Receiver of news has now become the source. This discussion is relevant at this stage.
- One false / intentional news can cause a long lasting damage.
- Reader has to be able to differentiate news and rumour.
- Audience can react through dominating, negotiating and rejecting.
- Audience can post opinion online.

**Belal Uddin**

Advisor Advocacy & Media, MaMoni-HSS Project, Save The Children, Dhaka

- Once subscribing a newspaper was a matter of prestige for the family.
- Interest of readers has to be taken into account while reporting.
- Journalism is being taught in universities. But quality of reporting has rather deteriorated.
- Creating interest in media news among the audience is important.

**Naresh Chandra Madhu**

Executive Director, Sat Sanga Pallikalayan Samity, Pabna

- Printing of picture is advised by the desk.
- Even language of report is dictated.
- Ethics in editorial administration is important.

**Dr. Pradip Kumar Panday**

Chairman, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Rajshahi

- Very few of the media houses think about the expectations of the audience.
- Media product depends upon the policy of the house.
- Number of newspapers is not compatible with the number capable media workers / reporters.
- Media audience can be divided into literate, semi-literate and illiterate.
- Public perception is that whatever media produces is true.
- Media people need to be trained before appearing to the audience.
- Media / news literacy should be included in the school curriculum.

**Mobinul Islam Mobin**

Editor, Daily Gramer Kagoj, Jessore

- News literacy is a new issue that MRDI has introduced in Bangladesh for discussion.
- Readers are not unaware. Many of them read news reports thoroughly.
- Journalists and editors lack in professionalism.
- Government regulations regarding qualifications of an editor should be followed strictly.
- In-house training needs to be organized for the journalists of serious local newspapers.

**Saifuddin Sabuj**

Director, Rupantar, Khulna

- First of all, we need to have a child friendly family, society and state.
- We feel embarrassed to answer the questions of our children.
- This is a very timely initiative of MRDI.

- We want a child friendly Bangladesh.
- In-house training is needed for journalists.

### **Kh. Ali Ar Raji**

Chairman, Department of Communication and Journalism, University of Chittagong

- News is treated almost as fiction.
- Level of credibility of media news is rather low.
- Circulation of newspaper is insignificant in our country.
- Standard of our education is not at the desired level.
- Murder and killing have two different meanings. But often these two words are used as Synonym.
- News should be produced as good commodity for good clients.

### **M Zahid Newaz Khan**

New Editor, Channel-I, Dhaka

- Recruitment policy in the media has problems.
- Social media has both positive and negative impacts.
- Sometimes social media guides the mainstream media.
- News sense of media providers has to be developed.
- Philosophy of social media should be properly taught to children.

### **Shamima Sultana Shilu**

Executive Director, Manob Sheba O Shamajik Unnayan Shangstha, Khulna

- Social media is creating big problem for children.
- MRDI's ethical reporting guideline should be distributed among local journalists.

### **Dr. G.M. Moniruzzaman**

Chairman, Department of Bangla, Comilla University

- Human studies should be emphasized to attain ethical standards in all aspects.
- Spelling is very important for accuracy in language.
- Facebook has now become an addiction, particularly to the young generation.

### **Mahabubur Rahman**

Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Rajshahi

- Scandinavian countries are providing media education to school children.
- Journalism education should be provided in practical methods.

- Media creates sensational news in their interest.
- Abuse of social media has to be prevented.

### **Mir Shahidul Alam**

Director, SoMaSHTe, Dhaka

- Common sense is required for practicing ethics.
- Media sells audience to advertisement providers.
- Ethics is related to conscience.
- Ethics should also be followed in advertisements.
- Unhealthy competition is a barrier to practicing ethics.

### **Hasan Millat**

Editor, Daily Sonar Desh, Rajshahi

- Using children for creating news is unfair.
- Journalists' responsibility is not being practiced at the desired level.
- Editorial team is mainly responsible for publishing ethical news.
- Feeding and selling news to the audience is an unhealthy attitude.

### **Abdullah Al Amin Dhumketu**

Associate Professor, Meherpur Government College, Meherpur

- Media literacy is a new issue in Bangladesh.
- Media creates ideology.
- Media has always played a vital role in social changes, national movement, liberation war, trial of war criminals.
- Journalists should follow professional ethics.

### **Shamima Laizu Neela**

Executive Director, ALWO, Natore

- Professionalism is grossly violated in journalism at the local level.
- News literacy is linked with cultural literacy and social literacy.
- Comments box should be placed at the newspaper office for the readers.
- Requesting for 50 copies of MRDI's ethical reporting guideline for Natore.

### **Yasmin Reema**

District Correspondent, New Age, Comilla

- Media houses are supportive to their correspondents.

- Unfair financial transactions often take place for news coverage.
- Coverage of report is ensured in broadcast media.
- Print media goes for investigation before reporting, whereas broadcast media hardly does it.

### **Asaduzzaman Selim**

Executive Director, Manab Unnayan Kendra, Meherpur

- MRDI's programme has sensitized journalists about ethical reporting.
- Local newspapers grossly violate ethics in reporting.
- Forming readers forum will be effective.

### **M. Nazmul Azam**

Executive Director, PARIBARTAN, Khulna

- Level of the quality of media owners is frustrating.

### **Monirul Islam Monu**

Staff Reporter, Kaler Kantho, Barbarban

- Gatekeepers of the media house frequently change. Coping with new gatekeeper is a problem for the correspondent.
- Gatekeepers often confuse the correspondents.

### **Fayezullah Chowdhury**

Executive Director, Barendro Unnyan Procheta, Rajshahi

- A study on readers' expectations should be conducted.
- Specific recruitment policy should be formulated and followed by media.
- Instead of time bound projects, sustainable actions are needed for practicing ethics in reporting.

### **Md. Rakibul Houque Khan**

Coordination Officer, Light House, Bogra

- Qualifications of journalists have to be considered before issuing declaration of newspaper.

### **Husne Ara Joly**

Executive Director, Programme for Women Development, Sirajganj

- More interactions are required at the policy level.

## **Shailo Mong Marma**

Programme Coordinator, Nutrition and Livelihood Project, Green Hill, Rangamati

- Ethical standards are violated in headlines of news.
- Unethical reports sometimes provoke violence.

## **Salauddin Ahmed**

Executive Director, HEEDO, Chandpur

- Local journalist demand money for reporting, because they are not paid.
- Salary scale of local journalists is important for ethical practices.

Summarizing the discussions, Farid Hossain termed news literacy as a new issue for academic discussions in our country. He stressed upon making news credible to the readers and suggested following measures:

- Context has to be considered while producing a news report.
- News has to be collected from a credible source of good quality.
- The reporter has to examine, verify and investigate before producing the report.
- Language and wording of report are important.
- The issue has to be fairly treated and the reporter has to apply common sense to produce a report credible to the audience.

## **Meeting - 2**

Venue : YWCA Conference Room, Dhaka

Date : 5 June 2016

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The consultation was organized involving journalists, teachers and NGO representatives from Dhaka and three other divisions of the country. Dr. Md. Mizanur Rahman, Chairman, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) was present as the chief guest.

Welcoming the participants, MRDI's Executive Director Hasibur Rahman explained the objectives of the project and the consultation meeting. Md. Shahid Hossain, Adviser, Planning and Development of MRDI presented the key note paper. An open discussion session followed the presentation in which all the participants took part. Farid Hossain, CEO, INFOCUS summarized the discussions and put his own views on the issue.

Ethical aspect of reporting, professionalism of journalists, role of media owners and gatekeepers, credibility of media reports, perspective of the audience and related issues were raised and discussed in the meeting.

## Excerpts from the discussions

### **Junaid Ahmed Halim**

Chairman & Associate Professor, Department of Film and Television, Jagannath University, Dhaka

- Literacy in all aspects is required to attain news literacy.
- We cannot be over-cautious in the name of ethical reporting. We are used to a system.
- Unethical words used in reports should be replaced by fair words. MRDI can initiate to make list of sensitive words.
- Human dignity of the person reported has to be ensured.

### **Shameem Ara Sheuli**

Executive Director, Institute of Communication Studies, Dhaka

- A recent TV report on the knowledge level of the GPA 5 scorers faced strong reactions and bitter criticism. It shows how important ethics is in reporting.
- Guideline is not law. Maintaining ethical standards is a matter of commitment.

### **Aminur Rasul**

Executive Director, Unnyan Dhara Trust, Bhola

- FM radio is polluting Bangla language. There is none to monitor this.
- Media is owned by corporate people. It is important to change mindset of the owners.
- Developing Readers Forum is a good proposal.

### **Md. Minhaz Uddin**

Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Jagannath University, Dhaka

- Only law cannot solve problem. Changing mindset is important.

### **Ikramul Kabir**

President, Sylhet Press Club, Sylhet

- New media houses and fresh journalists lack in the sense of ethics in reporting. Old journalists try to follow ethics.
- Local newspapers are in worst situation in terms of ethical reporting.
- This type of consultations should be organized at the local level.
- Our reporting standard has improved compared to recent past. We need to sustain and improve further.

**Lutfar Rahman**

Chilmari Distressed Development Foundation, Kurigram

- This initiative of MRDI is new to me.
- Ministry of Information should come forward with such initiatives.
- Forum should be formed at district and upazila levels.

**Aminul Haque**

Editor, Weekly Alapon, Saidpur, Nilphamari

- Reasonable time is needed for investigative and objective reporting.
- Limitations and barriers are there for the reporters. They need support.

**Tabiur Rahman Prodhan**

Associate Professor, Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur

- News reporters and producers need certain level of qualifications.

**Khan Mohammad Khaled**

Editor, Weekly Purbakash, Tangail

- What MRDI is doing now, should have been initiated by media houses.
- Publishing newspaper is merely a business.

**Md. Abdur Rahman**

Senior Coordinator, Project Development & reporting, RDRS Bangladesh

- MRDI deserves thanks for the initiative.
- Attaining ethical standards is not an easy task.
- Media houses have to be involved with the initiative.
- Reporters have to be cautious about spelling.
- Study circle can be organized involving reporters.

**Priscilla Raj**

Senior Manager, Advocacy for Social Change, BRAC, Dhaka

- It seems media is more aware than before.
- Borderline of ethical practice has to be identified.

**Sanjay Krishno Biswas**

Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet

- We have limitations. We should try to maintain ethical standards keeping the limitations in mind.



### **Shahabuddin Panna**

Executive Director, Nazrul Smriti Sangstha, Barguna

- We need to have standard of ethics before us. We have failed to align our commitment with code of ethics.
- We are often confused about the borderline between ethical and unethical practices.
- Press council should be involved with the process.

### **Chitta Ghosh**

Editor, Aiker Desh Barta, Dinajpur

- Media was vocal during the 1/11 government.
- Some newspapers are tarnishing the image of media.
- A national media guideline is required.

### **Ziaul Ahsan**

Executive Director, Pirojpur Gono Unnayan Samity, Pirojpur

- The term national newspaper is confusing.
- Indicators of quality and standard have to be set.

### **Nazim Ahmed**

Assistant Director, Institute of Development Affairs, Sylhet

- Media has a positive role in promoting good governance.
- One cell on ethical reporting can be set at the press club to receive to receive readers' feedback.
- News editors have to be trained on ethical reporting.

### **Zahidul Haque Khan**

Freelance Journalist

- A comprehensive broadcasting policy can facilitate ethical media reporting.
- Press council does not seem to be a functional institution.

### **Professor Dr. Helena Ferdousi**

Chairman, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Jagannath University, Dhaka

- We have earned a lot and we have a lot to do on ethical reporting.
- Ethical standards have to be set in the social context.
- Social media should also be brought under the purview of ethics.

After the open discussion session, Farid Hossain summarized the points and termed news literacy as an important issue that needs to be discussed at the academic and professional levels. He stressed upon using the right source and investigating deeper to make news credible to the audience and comply with ethical standards.

**Dr. Mizanur Rahman** thanked MRDI for taking such a timely initiative. He made the following specific comments:

- Inclusion of news literacy in school curriculum is unnecessary. It will increase academic burden on children. Teaching them ethical values is rather important.
- Family is the primary institute to cultivate values.
- Ethical journalism will only be possible in an ethical economy and ethical society.
- Journalists can create demand for fair and ethical reporting among the audience.

## Annex 4

# Interview Questionnaire

### Introduction

The media appears before its audience with lots of national and international news everyday. We are enriched with new information, knowledge, experience, opinions and analysis. However, our responsibilities do not end as silent observers. It is in our duties and responsibilities to increase the utility and acceptability of the news among audiences through positively analyzing the published news. Complying with ethical values is vital in every sector of our lives. It is of paramount importance during publishing of news as well. Responsibilities to the human beings are at the centre of ethics for a journalist. Thus, a journalist needs to perform the responsibilities and duties to the audience everyday by maintaining ethics in reporting. Children constitute an important segment of the population and they comprise a major portion of the audience in recent times. So, maintaining ethical standards while reporting on and for children holds more relevance.

*Note: All persons below the age of 18 years are children according to the Child Law 2013.*

#### 1. Do you regularly read the newspaper?

A. Yes      B. No      C. Sometimes

1.1 If yes, which newspaper do you read? É É É É É É É É .É É É É É É É É É

#### 2. Do you regularly watch Television?

A. Yes      B. No      C. Sometimes

2.1 If Yes, which Channel do you watch? É É É É É É É É .É É É É É É É É É

#### 3. What types of news attract you first and you give importance to?

(Arrange in order of importance to you, 1= most important, 6= least important)

- a) Politics
- b) Child related editorials
- c) Business
- d) International
- e) Crime report
- f) Sports
- g) Entertainment

4. How authentic the published/telecast news seem to you?

- a) Fully authentic
- b) Moderately authentic
- c) Some news create confusion
- d) Not at all authentic

5. What types of sources are cited in the newspaper?

- a) Source missing so report made vaguely
- b) Just mentions sources as reliable/ authentic
- c) Versions of all parties involved are taken
- d) All above

6. Do you know that journalists should follow/maintain the ethics to make any report?

- A. Yes      B. No

7. Do you think that Bangladeshi media follow the ethical perspective to make any report?

- A. Yes      B. No

8. Some scenario of child reporting and readers/viewers opinion

8.1 Children got involved in violation of law, such as three adolescent friends are accused of killing another friend and they confessed to the police. Is there any necessity to publish their picture and identity?

- A. Yes      B. No      C. Don't know

Give explanation in support of your answer

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8.2 "Father strangles his two and half year old son over rift with wife" This type of headline can have adverse effect on children's mental development.

- A. Yes      B. No      C. Don't know

Give explanation in support of your answer

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8.3 Is there any necessity of publishing the name and identity of children who are involved with criminal activities like sexual harassment, murder, drug addiction, drug peddling etc.

A. Yes      B. No      C. Don't know

Give explanation in support of your answer

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8.4 Give your opinion on publishing the name, identity and picture of children who are alleged of getting involved in criminal activities

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8.5 Give your opinion on publishing the name, identity and picture of children who are victims of rape and sexual harassment.

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## 9. Give your opinion about publishing/telecasting child related news

9.1 Future of victim children was kept in mind while reporting

A. Yes      B. No      C. Sometimes

9.2 Reports have been made keeping the impact of news on other children in mind

A. Yes      B. No      C. Sometimes

9.3 Keep in mind the dignity of children as a person

A. Yes      B. No      C. Sometimes

9.4 Detailed description of news can impact for permanent damage of children

A. Yes      B. No      C. Sometimes

9.5 Detailed description of report can develop negative interest in children's mind and instigate them for cruelty/violent behavior.

A. Yes      B. No      C. Sometimes

**10. What type of child related news do you give importance?**

(Can tick any 3, mark as per importance, 1=most important, 3= least important)

- a) Accidental news/Daily event news
- b) Physical, psychological and sexual harassment news
- c) Entertainment
- d) Child health
- e) Child education
- f) Child death
- g) Children with conflict of law
- h) Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**11. What types of news are applicable for children?**

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_

**12. How does the media depict children?**

(Arrange in order of importance to you, 1= most important, 6= least important)

- a) Children are victims of crime and harassment
- b) Adolescents are not obedient, create chaos and get involved in criminal activities
- c) Children are innocent
- d) Children are restless and stupid
- e) Children are genius (exceptional children)
- f) Everything is good that children do
- g) Not mentioned

Thank you!

***Note: MRDI is committed to maintain confidentiality of information provided by you for the survey which will be used for the purpose of research only.***

Name of interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Address and Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

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