MEDIA COVERAGE IN QUESTION
SHINING LIGHT IN RENEWABLES

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FOREWORD

The media has a vital role to play through dissemination of its journalistic pieces and opinions to foster free discourse and information access for local responses to the global problem of climate change. There will be no quick end to climate change. Owing to its complexity and negative effects, it is now a subject that journalists should cover more frequently with deeper analysis.

Rising sea levels and more frequent extreme weather events like droughts and floods are being caused by the changing temperature and rainfall patterns brought on by climate change. In Bangladesh, the energy industry, which mainly relies on fossil fuels for the production of power, is responsible for 55% of the greenhouse gases, the main cause of global warming and sea level rise.

The Government of Bangladesh has been giving greater emphasis to the production of renewable energy than non-renewable sources for a few years now, realizing the value of increased energy efficiency. It has signed several international agreements and treaties committing to the transition to renewable energy sources in addition to other national activities, including the development of policies.

Being a significant stakeholder in the effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the media has a role to play through dissemination of its journalistic pieces and opinions to foster links between professionals, civil society, and audiences in search of sustainable solutions like renewable energy sources.

It can enable people to make informed decisions, the timely and accurate dissemination of information can support in the formulation of plans and essential policies for any nation as well.

Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) undertook a benchmark study to understand how renewable energy is covered in the media in relation to other related issues like climate change and fossil fuel use, as well as to pinpoint issues and suggest potential fixes for improved media coverage of renewable energy issues as a climate solution.

This study, a comparative analysis of media coverage in renewable energy, non-renewable energy and climate change, and environment, commissioned under the project "Climate, Energy and the Media" aims to comprehend the media coverage on renewable energy and related topics and to identify the problems and potential solutions for better media coverage of the issue. This report tries to determine the actual trends, standard of media coverage, and challenges in Bangladesh with

regard to reporting on renewable energy, fossil fuel-based energy, the environment, and climate change. It also looks at how Bangladeshi newsrooms can play a crucial role in providing accurate and necessary information to the public and policymakers in order to promote policies that are in the best interest of the country and the environment.

MRDI is thankful to Digitally Right and the team for conducting the study on its behalf. We would like to extend our gratitude to authors of this study - Abu Siddique, Contributing Editor-Bangladesh, Mongabay and Miraj Ahmed Chowdhury, Managing Director, Digitally Right - for their time and effort in making this research successful. We also acknowledge the contributions made by the other researchers that worked on this project.

MRDI also thanks everyone who participated in the focus group discussions and key informant interviews for their helpful cooperation.

MRDI expects that the study's findings and suggestions will serve as a roadmap on renewable and non-renewable energy, and climate change coverage for news organizations, news managers, and media development professionals to bring critical, pressing topics and concerns to the public as well as to decision-makers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bangladesh, one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, aims to achieve the SDG-7, which calls for "affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all", by 2030. Contingent on a steady increase in renewable energy, it has also set a national plan to voluntarily reduce 12 million tons of carbon emissions in the next seven years.

The goal is ambitious, and the challenges formidable. To this date, achieving the target of increasing the share of renewable energy by 20 percent of total energy consumption within 2030 is far from reality.

The media has a significant role in promoting renewable energy and holding the authorities and businesses accountable for every dollar invested in this sector. However, there have hardly been attempts to examine the media coverage on renewable energy and understand how its importance is perceived in the mainstream newsrooms, which is critical to foster the media's effective role in promoting a green transition.

This study analysed 496 news stories published over three years from 2020 to 2022 in 10 leading media outlets to get a comprehensive assessment of news coverage on renewable energy compared to the broader issues of climate change, environment, and non-renewable energy.

While the content analysis offers a deeper look at the trends in reporting on the aforementioned issues, the study also offers recommendations gathered from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 16 experienced journalists and issue experts.

Here are some of the key findings from the study.

- Environmental and climate change related news received the highest media attention compared to non-renewable and renewable energy. Of the 496 stories analysed, the share of renewable energy in the coverage was only 4%.
- Newspapers (print editions) account for 75% coverage on the issues while the combined share of television channels and online portals was only 25%. In terms of coverage, English dailies tend to give more emphasis on renewable energy, while the Bangla dailies and television channels cover it the least.
- Television channels provided better treatment to energy and environment related stories than newspapers. Only a quarter of the coverage could make it to the first and last page of the newspaper, considered as the placeholder for most important stories.

- Solar and biogas accounted for half of the news coverage on renewable energy. Most of the coverage on climate change and environment issues are centred around climate change, while for non-renewable energy- the issues like fuel price hikes, investment, and capacity charges for rental plants dominated the coverage.
- Renewable energy as a reporting issue is largely ignored at the local level (from districts outside the capital) as all the coverage on renewable energy was found to be from Dhaka and focused on national topics. However, of all the stories 25% were local, mainly because of the coverage of natural disasters and the impact of energy price on agriculture.
- In-depth and investigative stories are rare, and those are mostly related to environment and climate change. The media coverage on three issues are dominated by news or daily events and current affairs, consisting about 90% of the coverage.
- Quality of reporting is constrained by poor and inadequate sourcing of information and lack of journalistic rigor. About 39% of the stories were either single sourced or cited unnamed or no sources before presenting an information.
- Overall score in gender sensitiveness was low as only 3% of the stories could offer diverse gender representation and perspectives. About 77% of the coverage had no gender representation at all. Stories scored low in gender consciousness as most of them failed to capture the gender specific needs and impacts.

One of the most important recommendations to enhance the quality of the issue's coverage was to develop a pool of journalists with relevant knowledge. The necessity for a few specialized online-based information hubs was also emphasized because the issue is technical, and the related information is somewhat widespread. Journalists can use these hubs as their primary source of information before conducting their investigations and serving their audience. With sufficient hands-on training, the shortcomings in the media's coverage of the issues highlighted can be corrected. In this case, young, enthusiastic journalists should be considered.

CHAPTER 1

Background

Bangladesh, an active delta, is considered one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. According to the German Watch (2021)[1], the country is ranked 7th on the list of countries with long-term climate risks in 2019 and is ailing from erratic weather patterns, intensified cyclones, droughts, and gradually intruding salinity because of the rising sea level.

The emission of Greenhouse Gases (GHG) is considered the prime factor behind global warming and sea level rise. In Bangladesh, 55% of GHG emissions[2] come from the energy sector. Power is the largest subsector of emissions in the country as electricity generation is heavily dependent on fossil fuels. According to the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB)[3], natural gas (49.07%), coal (11.46%), furnace oil (26.95%), and diesel (5.49%) constitute the largest shares in the energy-mix. In comparison, renewable energy, including solar and hydro, has a share of only about 2.08%.

Considering the environmental crisis as well as the negative fallout of global warming triggered by fossil-fuel-based economic development and the way out, Bangladesh has taken different initiatives, including formulating and implementing Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan[4], Nationally Determined Contributions, Energy Efficiency, and Conservation Master Plan up to 2030[5] and so on.

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[1]German Watch (2021)

[2]Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) 2021

[3]Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) https://bpdb.portal.gov.bd/site/page/e7f4aaea-7605-4588-a705-e615c574cb88/-

[4]Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

[5]Energy Efficiency, and Conservation Master Plan up to 2030

Bangladesh, under its global commitment - Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) 2021[6] - plans to voluntarily reduce carbon emissions by 12 million tons within 2030 which is about 5% of the total. As a national climate action plan, the document submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2021, Bangladesh pledged to produce 911.8 MW of new electricity with renewable sources including solar, wind, hydro, and biomass in order to reduce the emission of 26.3 Metric tons of carbon-di-oxide equivalent (Mt CO2e).

The NDCs 2021[7] also outlines an emission reduction plan of 59.7 Mt CO2e by implementing renewable energy projects of 4114.3 MW by 2030, on the condition of receiving sufficient technical and financial support from the developed world.

Media can play a pivotal role in realizing the climate pledges by informing people of these commitments, challenges, performance and ensuring accountability. Globally, journalists are found most interested in reporting adaptation and resilience stories (70.8% are "very interested"), followed by renewable energy (59.5%) as climate solutions[8], according to a study conducted among the members of the Society of Environmental Journalists (SEJ).

As one of the most climate vulnerable countries, a producer of natural gas for decades, and an economy of high growth trajectory with huge electricity demands, Bangladesh has a history and strong tradition of energy, power and climate-related journalism. The root of energy reporting in Bangladesh can be traced back decades to its onshore and offshore gas exploration and start of production. It widened further due to a growing attention from foreign energy companies and investors. As a large importer of petroleum products, news reporting also focused on global oil prices and its impact on Bangladesh's economy.

Natural disasters have always been a part and parcel of life in Bangladesh and the same can be observed in the media coverage. As the concern over environmental protection and carbon-di-oxide emission reduction came to the front in the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the Bangladeshi media also followed through. Yet, renewable energy has been far from the spotlight. Summarizing the environmental reporting in Bangladesh, the author of a recent study titled "Environmental Journalism in Bangladesh"[9] suggested that due to their role of 'active agents' in the policy negotiation process, journalists should adopt and change their approaches to the news to align with the changing contexts and ensure better journalism practice.

There hasn't been any attempt to understand and compare the coverage on renewable energy in Bangladesh in relation to issues like fossil fuels, electricity production, climate change, and environment. No matter how formidable the challenges are, the inadequacy of the coverage on renewable energy and its underlying reasons were not explored. This study aims to address the gap.

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[6]Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) 2021

[7]Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) 2021

[8]Amanda C. Borth, Eryn Campbell, Sammi Munson, Shaelyn M. Patzer, William A. Yagatich & Edward Maibach (2022). Are Journalists Reporting on the Highest-Impact Climate Solutions? Findings from a Survey of Environmental Journalists, Journalism Practice, 16:2-3, 443-461. *Routledge.* DOI: 10.1080/17512786.2021.2002711

[9]Jahnnabi Das (2012). ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM IN BANGLADESH, Journalism Studies, 13:2, 226-242. Routledge. DOI: 10.1080/1461670X.2011.646400

CHAPTER 2

Objective & Methodology

Objective

This study aims to comprehend the media coverage on renewable energy in relation to other connected topics, such as climate change and fossil fuels, and to identify the problems and potential solutions for better media coverage on renewable energy issues as a climate solution.

Methodology

The study has considered different types of tools to get the actual trends and quality of the media coverage on renewable energy, non-renewable energy, environment, and climate change in Bangladesh.

To get a comparative analysis of media coverage trends and obtain an in-depth understanding of existing challenges, and solutions, the study relied on a mixed approach of secondary literature review, content analysis, focus group discussion, and key informant interviews.

Selection of Issues

Among the range of issues Bangladeshi media outlets cover, this study selected renewable energy, non-renewable energy and the environment, and climate change for news monitoring and content analysis.

Renewable energy is defined as "all forms of energy produced from renewable sources in a sustainable manner, including bioenergy, geothermal energy, hydropower, ocean energy, solar energy, and wind energy[10]," according to the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). While this study

[10] https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstreams/ee5d895e-ba99-5314-8b0a-8ba704009889/download

identified and curated all news stories with the keyword "renewable" in a given timeline, it paid special attention to solar, wind, and hydropower because they are the most common renewables-based electricity production sources in Bangladesh.

"Non-renewable natural resources are exhaustible natural resources whose natural stocks cannot be regenerated after exploitation or that can only be regenerated or replenished by natural cycles that are relatively slow at human scale ," according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, for content analysis, this study focused on commonly used fossil fuels such as coal, gas, various types of petroleum oils, and nuclear energy.

By definition, the environment and climate change are broad issues, and this study focused on stories about carbon emissions, sea level rise, forests, biodiversity, natural disasters, food security, air and water quality, and migration when they were related to the larger issues.

Literature Review: An extensive literature review was conducted to enhance the understanding of the reporting trends of environmental and energy issues globally and in Bangladesh. The literature review process was considered with the aim of bringing together the necessary background information to successfully assess the scenario and prospects, and to develop an understanding of the existing reporting trends in the country. Following are the categories of the literature reviewed:

- Importance of climate communication to reduce the impacts of global warming.
- Policy and strategy of Bangladesh Government related to reducing the negative impacts of climate change.
- Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2009
- Relevant peer-reviewed journal articles on climate communication for promoting renewable energy in Bangladesh and elsewhere.
- Research reports and working papers related to climate-smart actions in Bangladesh.

Selection of Media: This study monitored and analysed news content from 10 media outlets - print, television, and online - published over three years from 2020 to 2022. The media outlets were selected based on their reach and popularity in the respective segment and particularly for television, the availability of recorded news bulletins in MRDI's monitoring database. The selection of news outlets was finalized jointly by the research and MRDI program teams in a meeting. The outlets monitored are:

Name	Category
Daily Prothom Alo	Bangla Daily
Daily Kaler Kantha	Bangla Daily
Daily Samakal	Bangla Daily
The Daily Star	English Daily
The Business Standard	English Daily
Channel 24	Television Channel
Ekattor TV	Television Channel
Jamuna TV	Television Channel
Bdnews24.com	Online portal
Banglatribune.com	Online portal

Table 1: Name of the selected media outlets

Media Monitoring: The study monitored 52 days of news articles published in 10 media outlets over three years from 2020 to 2022. To obtain a comprehensive picture, the 12 months (January to December) were randomly allocated among the three years, as seen in the figure below. In this sampling, each year contained four monitoring months, with one monitoring day in each week of a month. For more granularity, the seven-days of a week were distributed over the 52 weeks. For example: if Sunday is monitored in the first week, it is Monday for the second week; Tuesday for the third, Wednesday for the fourth - and so forth for the 52 weeks in total.

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020	✓			✓			✓			✓		
2021		✓			✓			✓			✓	
2022			✓			✓			✓			✓

Table 2: Contents selected from the months and years

Content Analysis : A team of experienced news monitors identified news articles published in the news outlets on specific days and specific issues. Each article identified was then documented and analysed in a structured data entry form. The news articles were analysed based on 34 indicators related to issues and topics, types and treatment, quality, and gender sensitivity. The data was analysed using structured queries to obtain an analysis of the content.

Each story sample is documented through a structured content analysis form and analysed using the Kobo research tool. Data is presented using tables, graphs, narratives, and schematic diagrams in the relevant section.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD) : A focus group discussion with ten participants was held to gather qualitative information on reporting practices in the selected issues. The FGD was attended by nine journalists from leading media outlets covering energy and the environment, and a communications expert. It provided an overview of the trends and challenges in reporting on renewable energy in comparison to journalism on non-renewable energy, the environment, and climate change. The FGD also provided recommendations for improving the breadth and depth of reporting on the relevant issues. An expert facilitator moderated the FGD, and responses were recorded and transcribed for reporting purposes. The FGD was conducted virtually through the Zoom meeting platform.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) : As key informants, six experts from the media, academia, and civil society were chosen. Two media managers, two environmental and renewable energy experts, a development activist, and a senior energy reporter from a Bangladeshi media outlet are among those on the list. Each was interviewed for an hour and given a detailed questionnaire to thoroughly understand the current state of renewable energy reporting and future needs. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, then analysed to identify problems and make recommendations.

Limitations : The study did not include editorial or opinion pieces; it only included news for monitoring. The contents of specific dates were monitored from archived e-papers of Bangla and English dailies, archived prime-time bulletins of television channels, and site-specific searches of online portals using advanced search engines. The indexing of articles on search engines heavily influences online search results, which may limit finding articles via keywords and advanced search filters.

A total of 12 bulletins from two television channels could not be included in the content analysis because their records were not available on the MRDI Archive. Newspaper articles were not found on a specific day because newspapers were not published on that day due to Eid holidays.

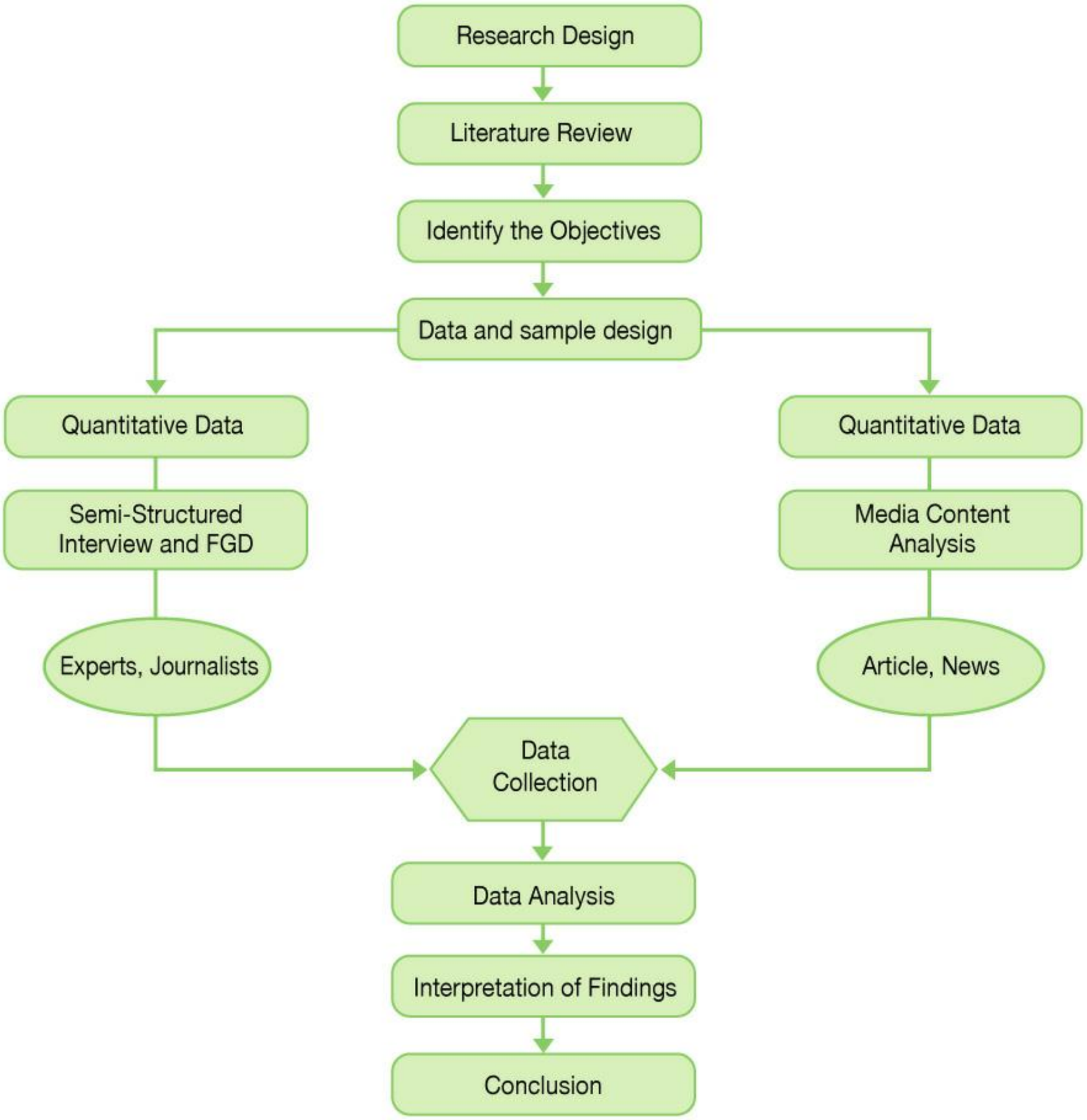

Chart 1: Diagram of the overall methodology

CHAPTER 3

Findings from the content analysis

According to the monitoring data, a total of 496 articles were published in the ten media outlets over a period of three years. The highest number of energy and environment-related stories were published in 2021 and the lowest in 2020. Most reports were published in November 2021 and June 2022, while the fewest were reported in July and October 2020.

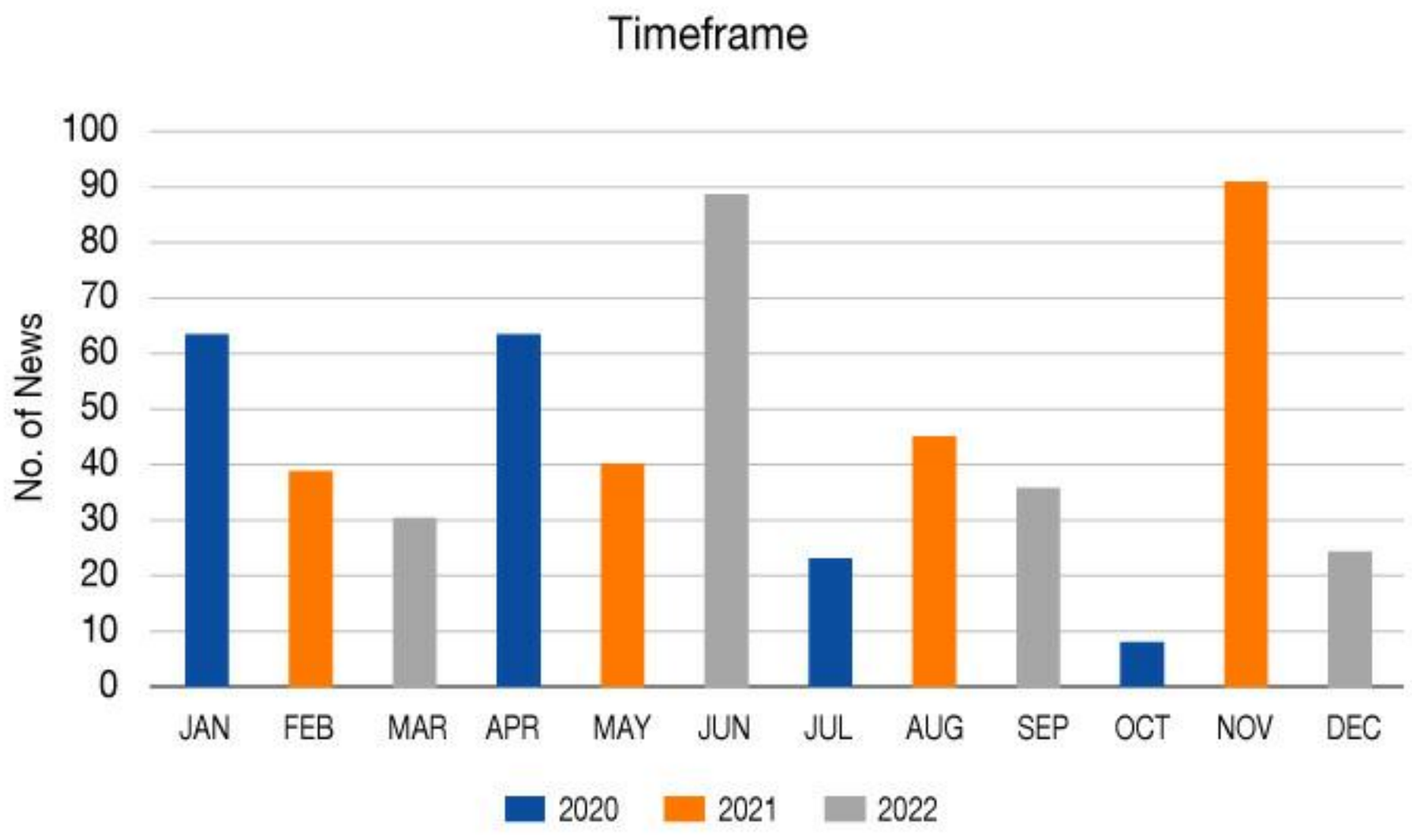

Chart 2: Number of stories by month and year

According to the content analysis, the global fuel price hike in Bangladesh surged the number of reporting in November 2021. In June 2022, the flood in North-eastern districts- Sunamganj and Sylhet significantly increased the number of stories during that time. In January 2020, most of the stories focused on air pollution, which naturally increases during the winter period in Bangladesh.

Number of energy and environment-related stories was the lowest in July and October of 2020, and a few media outlets published mostly feature and in-depth articles on environmental concerns.

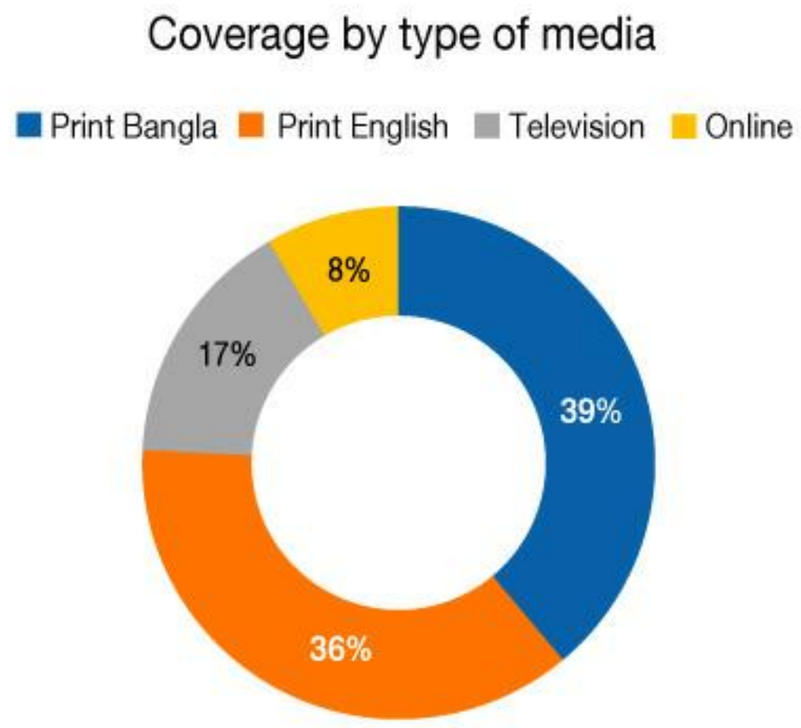

Chart 3: Percentage of published stories by type of Media

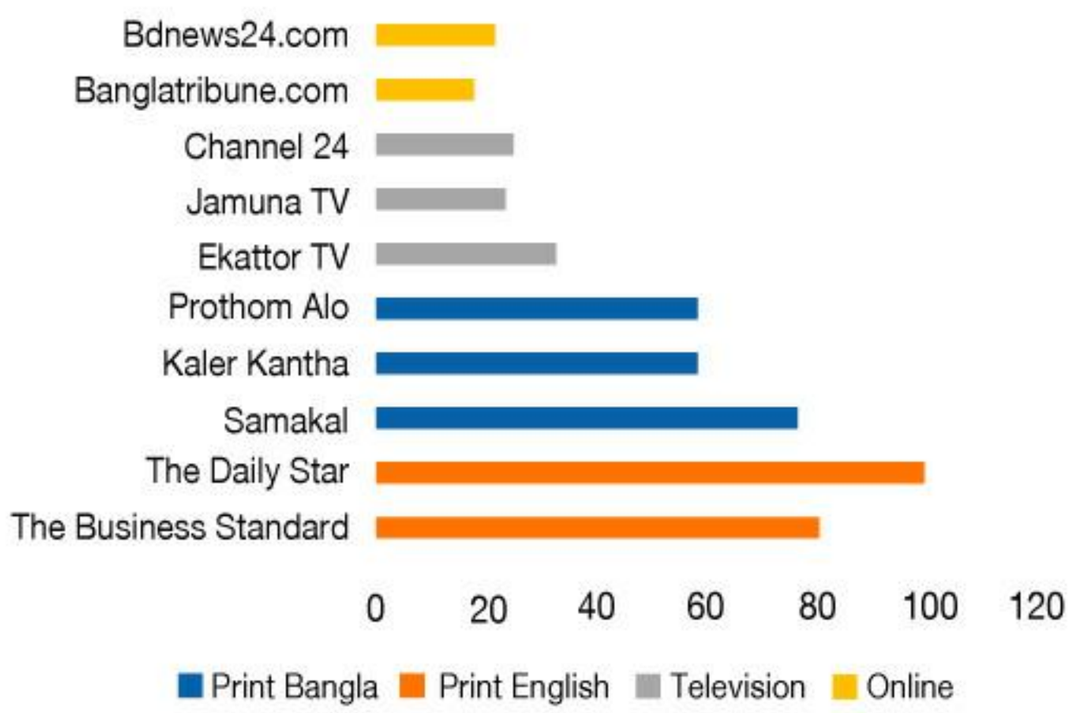

Chart 4: Number of stories by media

About 75% of the stories in three broad issues were published in daily newspapers, while the Bangla dailies published slightly more stories than the English outlets. Television channels followed through with a moderate 17% share, and the online media published only 8% of the stories monitored in the selected days.

Among the outlets, The Daily Star and Samakal led in coverage among English and Bangla dailies, bdnews24.com and Ekattor Television led in their respective segments.

Priority

Among the three broad reporting issues, renewable energy received the least attention from the media. Over two-thirds of the media coverage focused on climate change and environmental issues, and about a quarter focused on non-renewable energy. The share of stories related to renewable energy was only 4%.

The trend is similar across all media types, with the highest coverage on environment and climate, followed by non-renewable energy, and the least coverage on renewable energy.

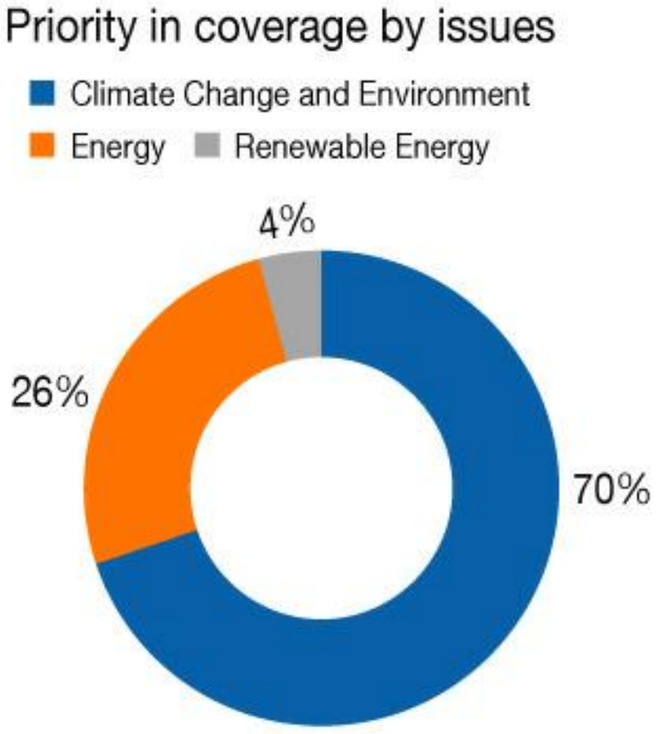

Chart 5: Percentage of stories by reporting issues

Natural disasters dominated the coverage in environment and climate reporting, followed by forests, biodiversity, water, and air quality. The sectors like livelihood, public health, and food security received the least attention.

Petroleum oil-related stories accounted for nearly half of the coverage in non-renewable energy, while Diesel was the focus of most of the stories. Coverage on natural gas-based energy was the second in terms of priority, while coal was third. Among the other sources, Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) received the least attention in the media during the period.

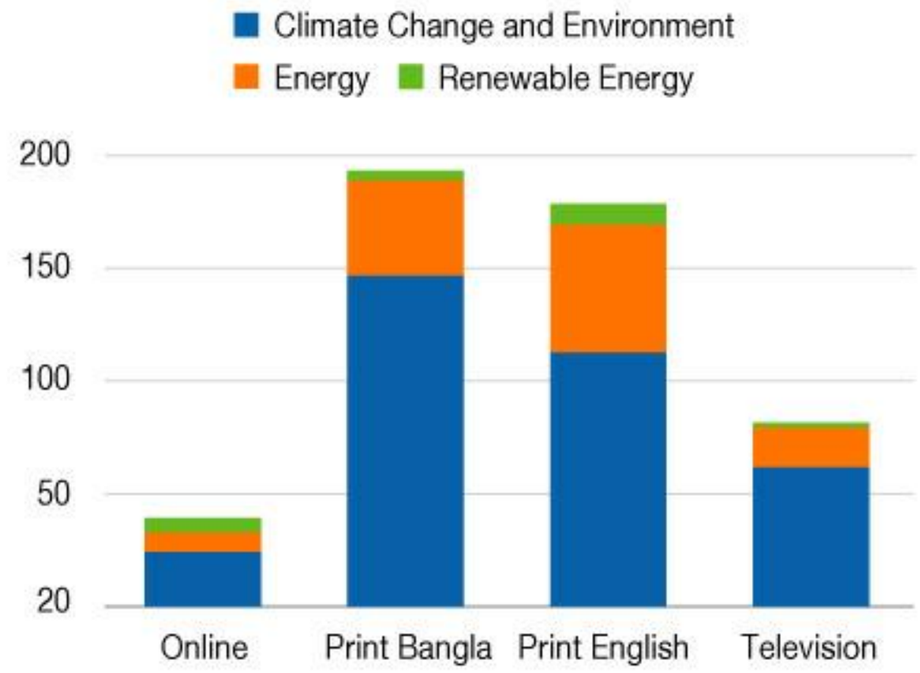

Chart 6: Coverage by issues and type of media

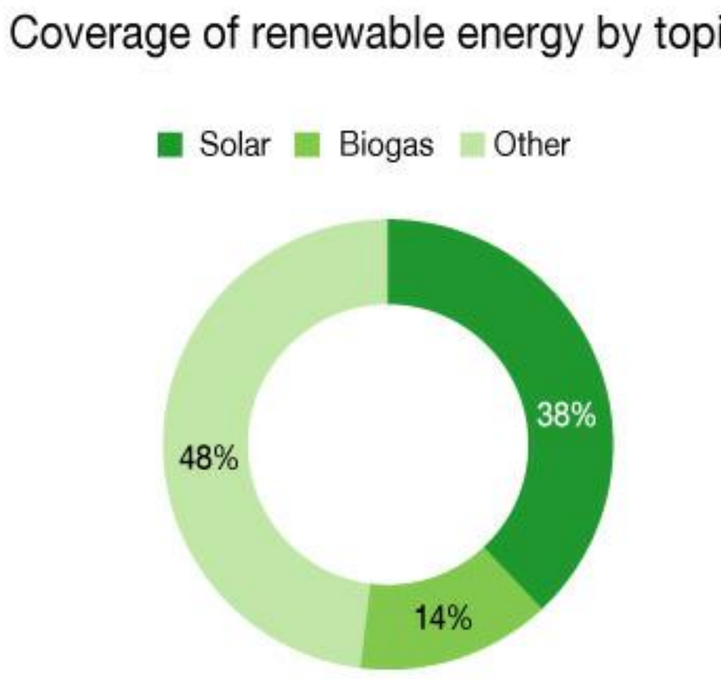

Chart 7: Coverage by types of renewable energy

Solar and biogas comprised half of the news coverage on renewable energy, and the rest covered other issues, including wind, hydropower and the broader topic of renewables without a distinct focus on a particular energy type.

English newspapers seem more interested in renewable energy than Bangla newspapers, television, and online portals. Of the 20 (out of 496) stories on renewable energy, nine were published in English dailies. The online news portals published six stories, there were only three stories on television channels and only two in Bangla newspapers. The findings indicate that 40% of media outlets among the selected ten did not publish any stories in the 52 sample days.

Treatment

Television channels provided better treatment to energy and environment related stories than newspapers with more than half of the news pieces placed in headlines and the first part of the news. Only a quarter of the stories could make it to the first and last page of the newspaper, considered as the placeholders for most important stories. The treatment of online stories, however, could not be compared with TV and newspapers by placement, but 100 % of online stories provided special treatment to the energy and environment related stories by adding photographs and multimedia elements.

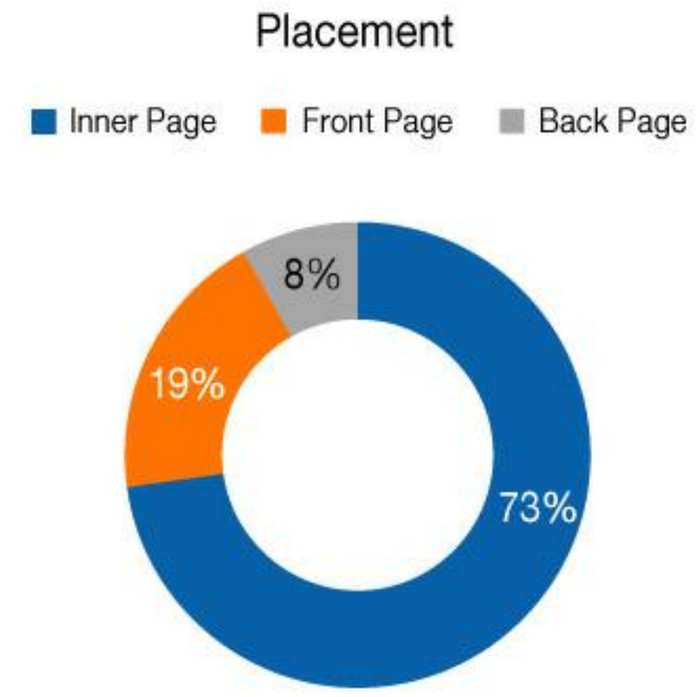

Chart 8: Percentage of newspaper stories by placement

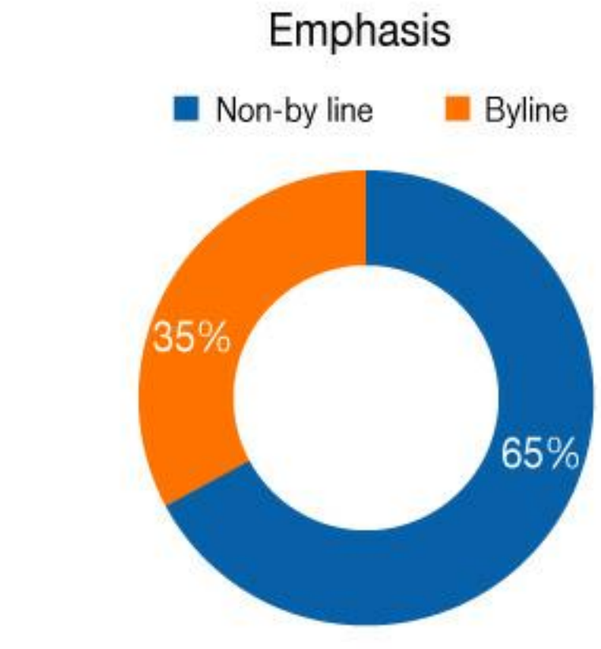

Chart 9 : Percentage of newspaper stories by by-line treatment

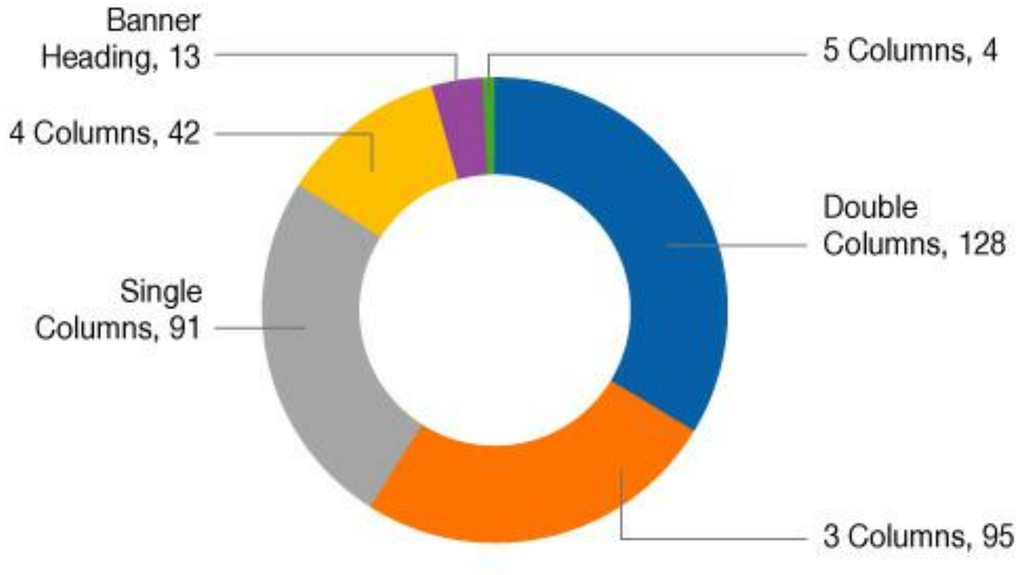

Chart 10 : Percentage of newspaper stories by column size

The overall analysis of story treatment suggests that about one-third of the newspaper stories on energy and the environment gets better treatment in terms of placement, emphasis, and size of the article. Of the print stories (English and Bangla combined), 73% were featured on the inner pages, with 19% appearing on the front page and only 8% on the back page. Only 35% of the stories had by-line information, an indicator of newsroom's emphasis on a story.

About 58% of the print stories were of single or double columns. Of the 59 news stories receiving four to eight-column treatment, only 5% were on renewable energy. Like the extent of coverage, environment and climate related stories are also found to have better treatment, followed by non-renewables.

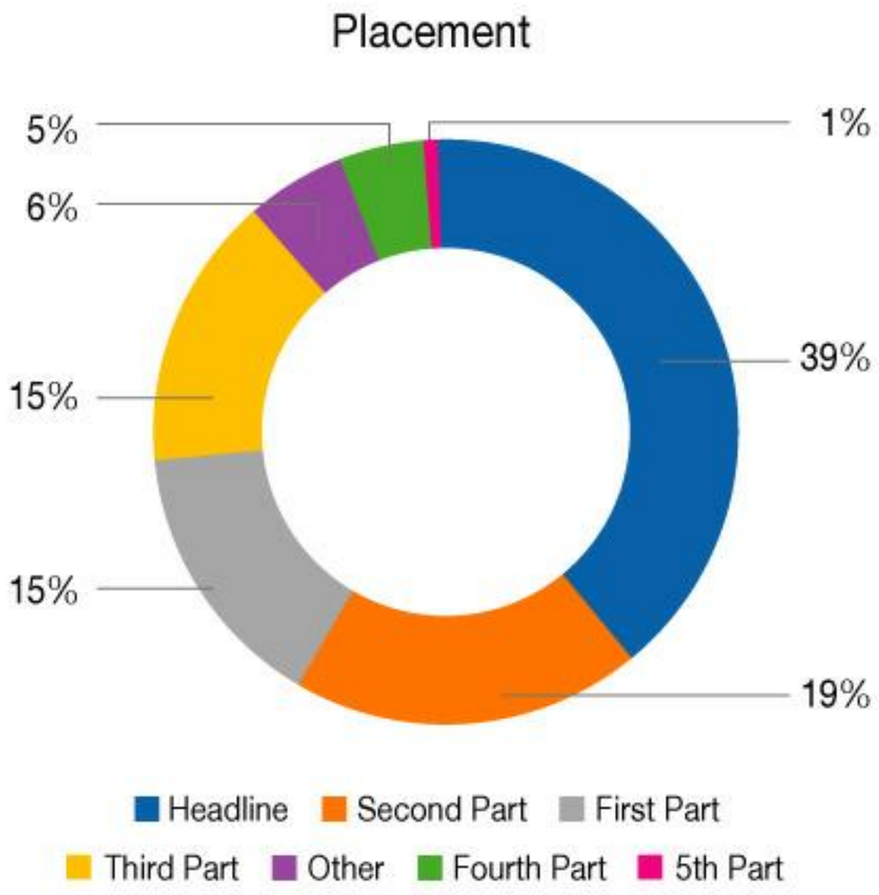

Chart 11 : Percentage of Television stories by placement

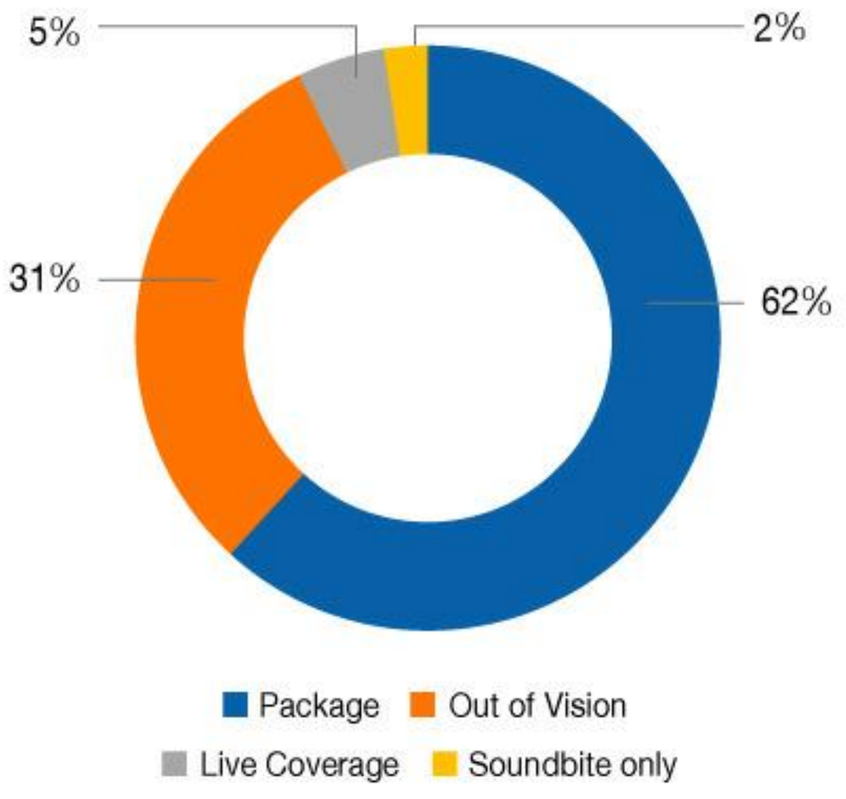

Chart 12 : Percentage of Television stories by type

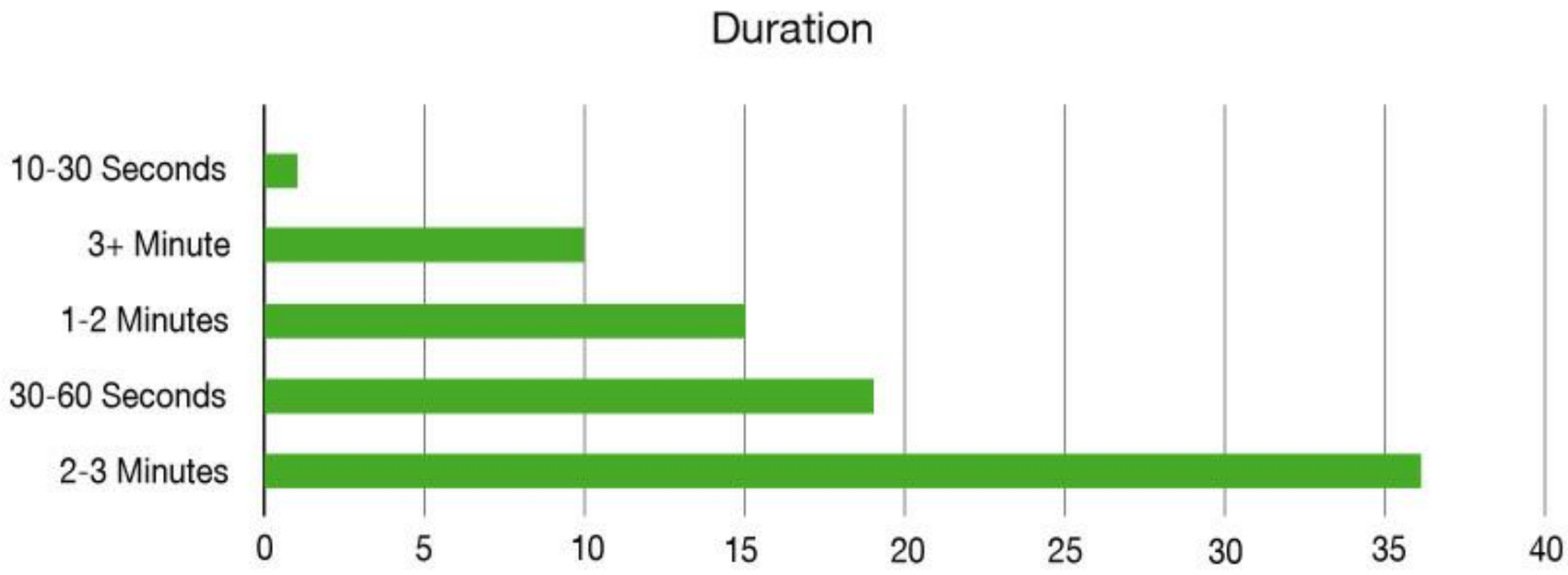

Chart 13 : Story treatments by the duration of television news

On Television, 39% of environmental and energy-related news was highlighted in the headline, 19% announced in the second part of the news. Of these news pieces, two-thirds were in the form of packages, while one-third were off-screen. Only 5% of the news was live coverage, and only 2% were soundbites. Sparing the timeframe, only 12% of stories of the discussed issues got more than 3 minutes of broadcasting time, while about 44% of stories got broadcasting time between 2-3 minutes.

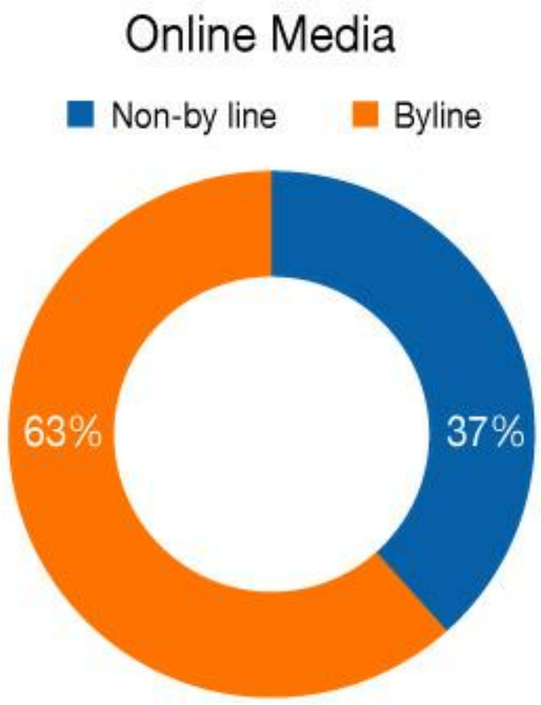

Chart 14 : Percentage of stories in online media by credits

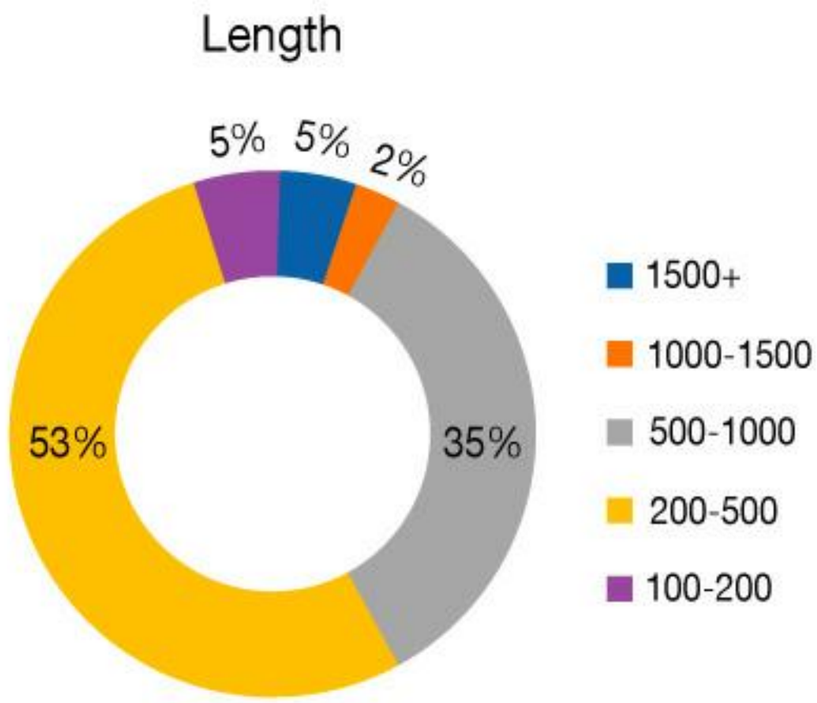

Chart 15 : Percentage of stories in online media by word count

Treatment of the online stories were measured in three indicators: byline information, length and presentation. The trends showed that 37% of online stories on environment and energy were published with a by-line credit. Regarding length, 55% of stories had word counts between 200-500, and 62% of those are on environment and climate change. Of the total samples from Online media, 35% of stories had lengths in between 500-1000 words, and 54% of them were on the environment and climate change. Almost all stories had some form of visuals or multimedia elements.

Quality of coverage

The quality of coverage on energy and environment issues was constrained by an extreme lack of investigative and in-depth reports, poor sourcing practices, dependence on daily events and straight-jacket news stories covering the recent events, trends and developments on a topic.

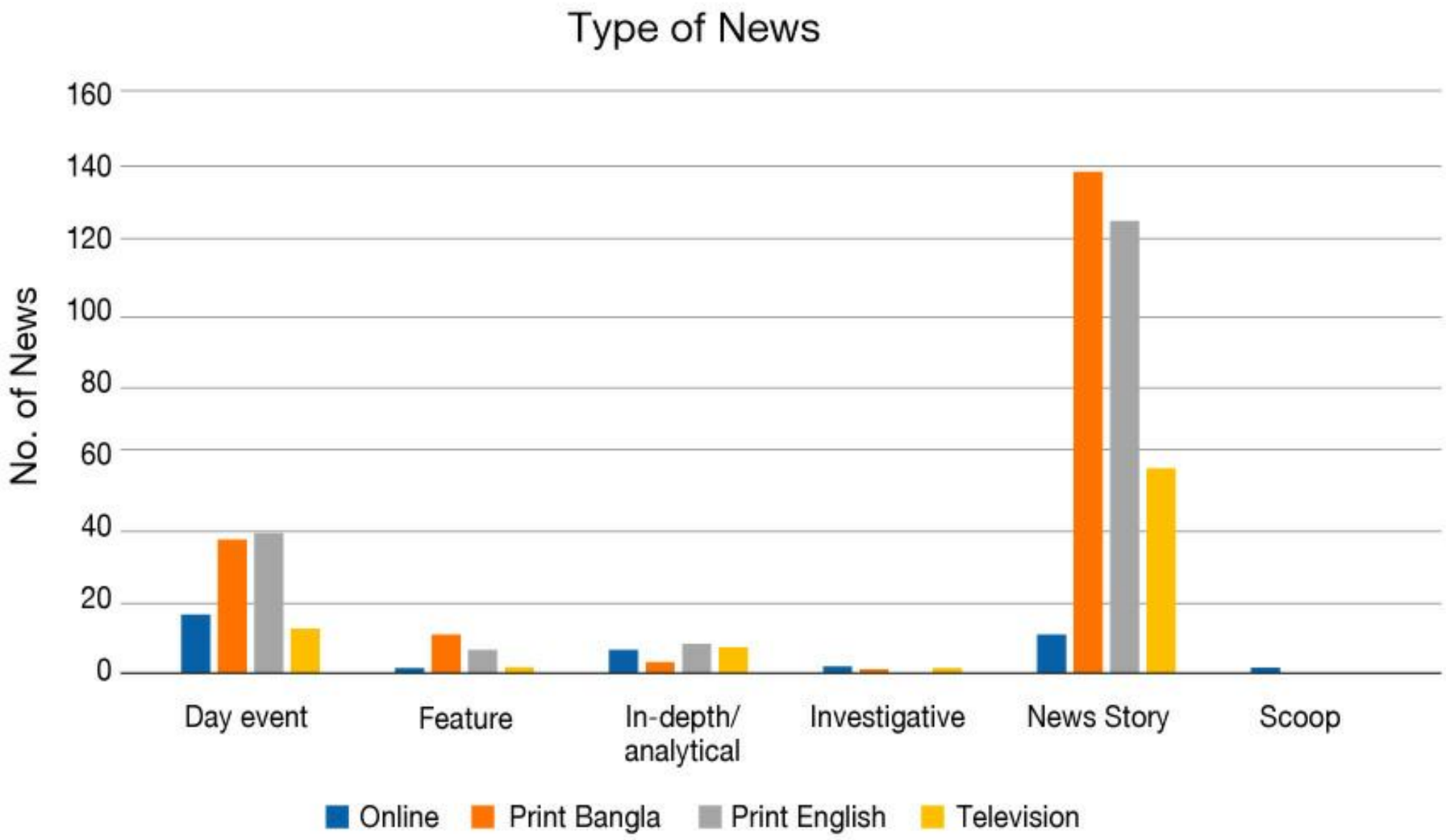

Chart 16 : Type of published stories in different media forms

Among the types of published stories, news stories were the most prevalent type of coverage, accounting for more than two-thirds of all news. Nearly 22% of the articles were coverage of events, 5% were features or analytical pieces, and investigative and scoop articles were scarce.

In all cases, news stories dominated the coverage irrespective of the type of media houses and issues. The stories on current developments like the projection of early flash floods or fuel price hikes or a cyclone and its aftermaths are considered in the study as a news story. For instance, in the cases of English print media 66% of the stories were classified as a news story and for Print Bangla the figure is 73%, while the second highest portion came as daily events 24% and 17%--respectively.

Following the example of print media, 38% of the environmental coverage on Television was placed in the headlines, followed by news stories in the first part of the news bulletin, that made up 19%.

For online media, event coverage dominated the highest part, 23% of the published stories, where about 15 % of stories came as news story. About 80% coverage on renewable energy were on events and 20% were news stories. The study could not find any in-depth or investigative studies on the web platform for either conventional energy or issues with alternate energy sources.

The portion of in-depth or investigative stories could be better in all types of media houses in the aforementioned issues. The study found that only 8% of stories in English media as in-depth, while the figure is only 3% in vernacular dailies.

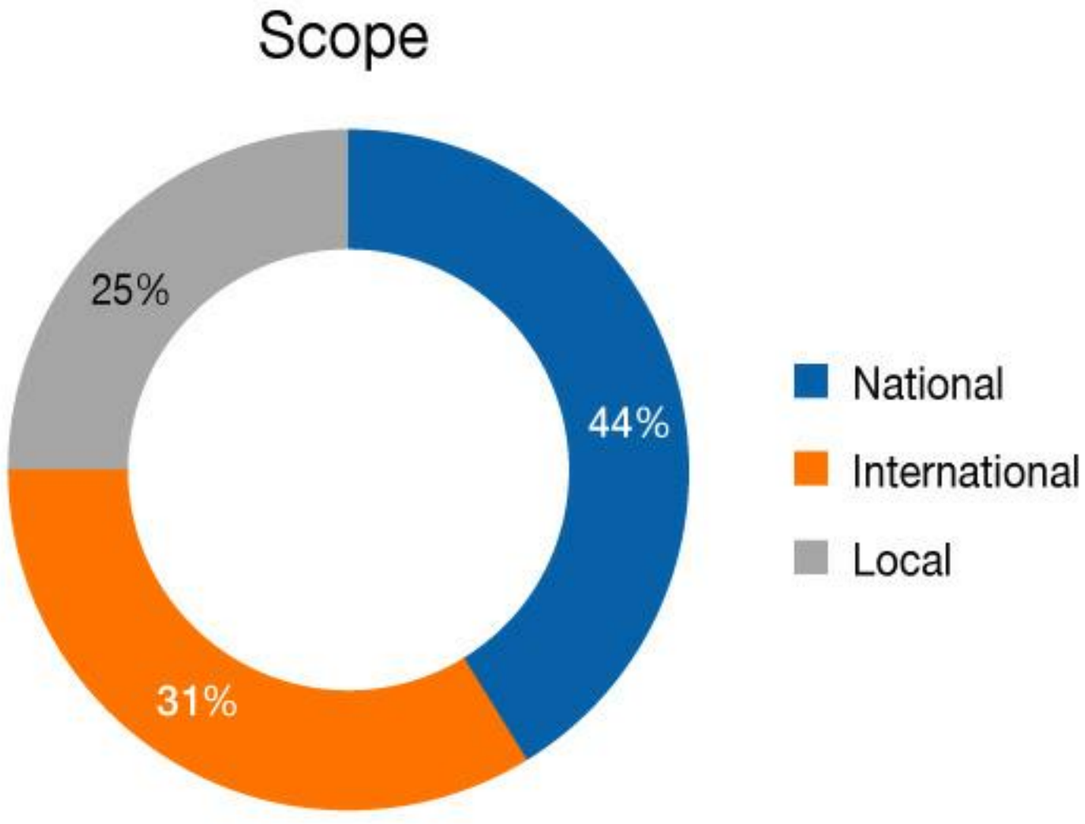

Chart 17 : Scope of the published stories

Most stories (44%) covered national issues, 31% covered international issues, and only 25% focused on local issues.

In all cases- national, local, and international, environment and climate change-related issues received the highest attention in the media. The data suggests that 58% of national stories, 99% of local stories and 60% of international stories were on climate change and the environment.

For energy issues, national and international media paid almost similar attention, as the study found 34% of national coverage and 37% of global coverage on non-renewable issues. The study did not find any story on renewable issues from local, while 8% of stories came from national and only 3% from international.

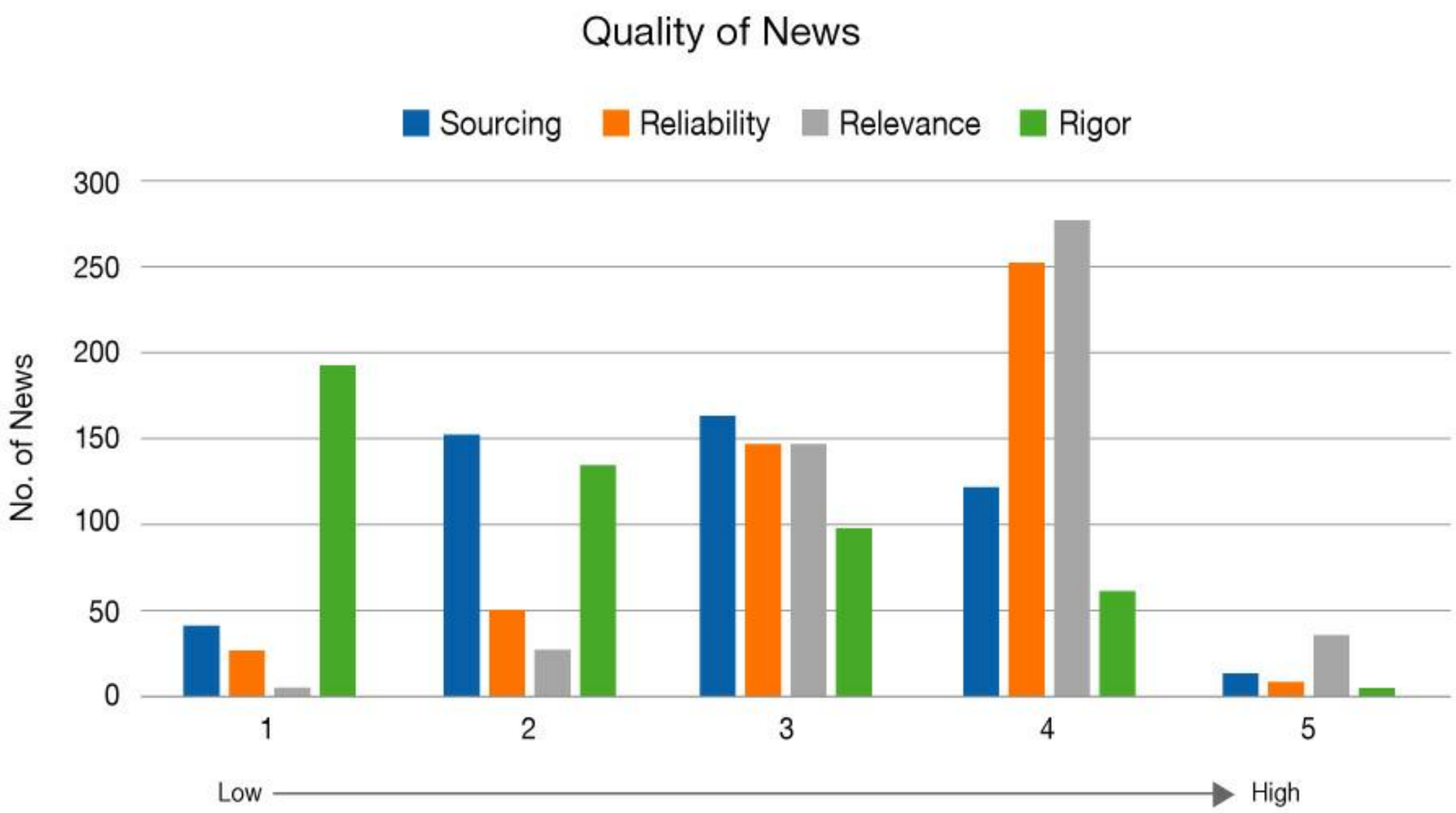

Chart 18 : Quality of News

The quality of coverage was assessed using a 5-point rating scale - one is low and five is high - to determine the standard of sourcing, reliability, relevance, and rigor in stories. The data suggests that most of the stories performed well above the medium in relevance and reliability of information, while the score was medium in sourcing, and low in journalistic rigor.

Only 3% of stories scored high (scale 5) in sourcing, meaning they cited multiple relevant sources with proper identification to provide different perspectives. However, 25% stories scored better than medium (scale 4) in sourcing information and explanations, while 33% stories scored medium. The medium score means that these stories had one or two named sources. The 39% stories with below medium and low scores were either single sourced or cited unnamed or no sources before presenting an information.

Only 2% of the stories scored high in reliability, meaning that those stories indicated from where the information were obtained, how it was verified, and had clarity about sources. About 51% of overall stories scored above medium in reliability and 30% were categorized as medium. Irrespective of media type and reporting issues, overall reliability of news was medium according to the analysis. News is important for a number of reasons within a society.

Bangladeshi media performed best in relevance. It means that stories were on issues that were of public interest, or closely related to the needs of the audience, or something that may affect them and timely. While only 7% of the coverage were highly relevant, almost 56% scored above medium (Scale-4).

Irrespective of media type and coverage issues, Bangladeshi media performed the weakest in journalistic rigor. Defined here as reflection of a journalist's own initiative, hard work and thoroughness, only about 1% of the stories scored high (Scale-5) in rigor, mainly seen in a few investigative or in-depth reports published in Bangla newspapers. A whopping 39% of the stories scored low (Scale-1) meaning there was no visible effort to conduct in-person interviews, consulting multiple sources or field visits.

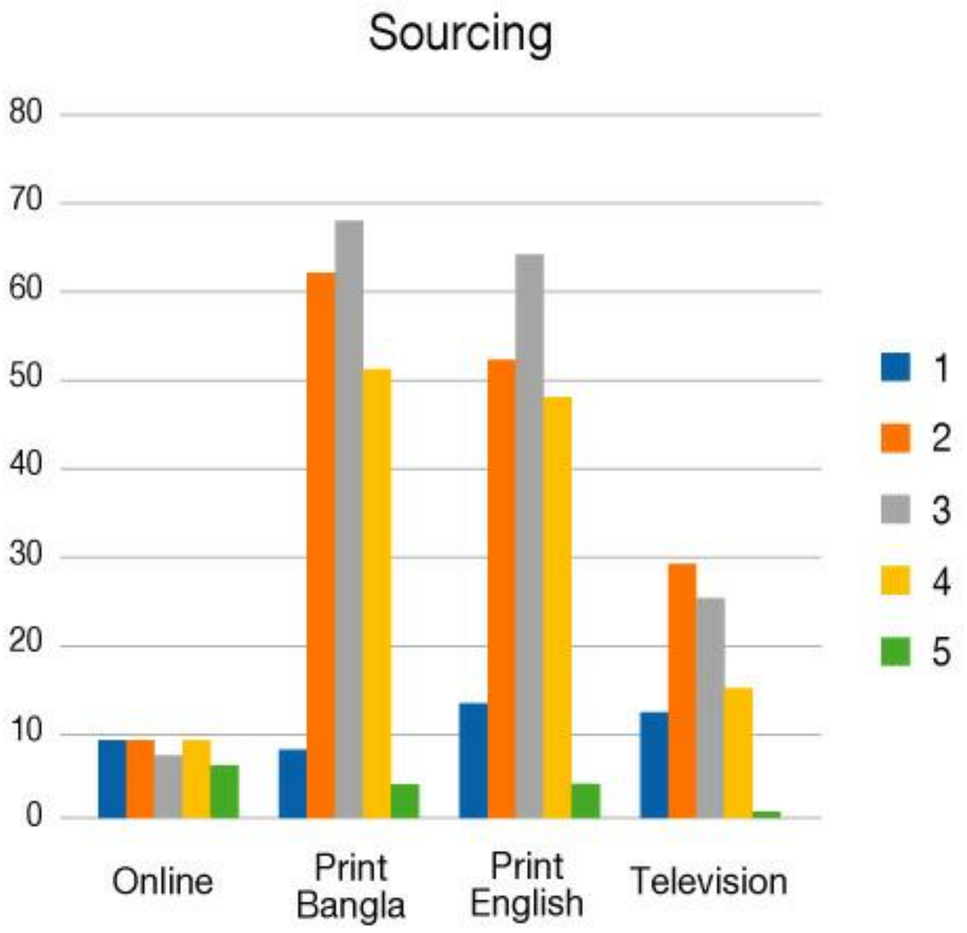

Chart 19 : Sourcing score by media type

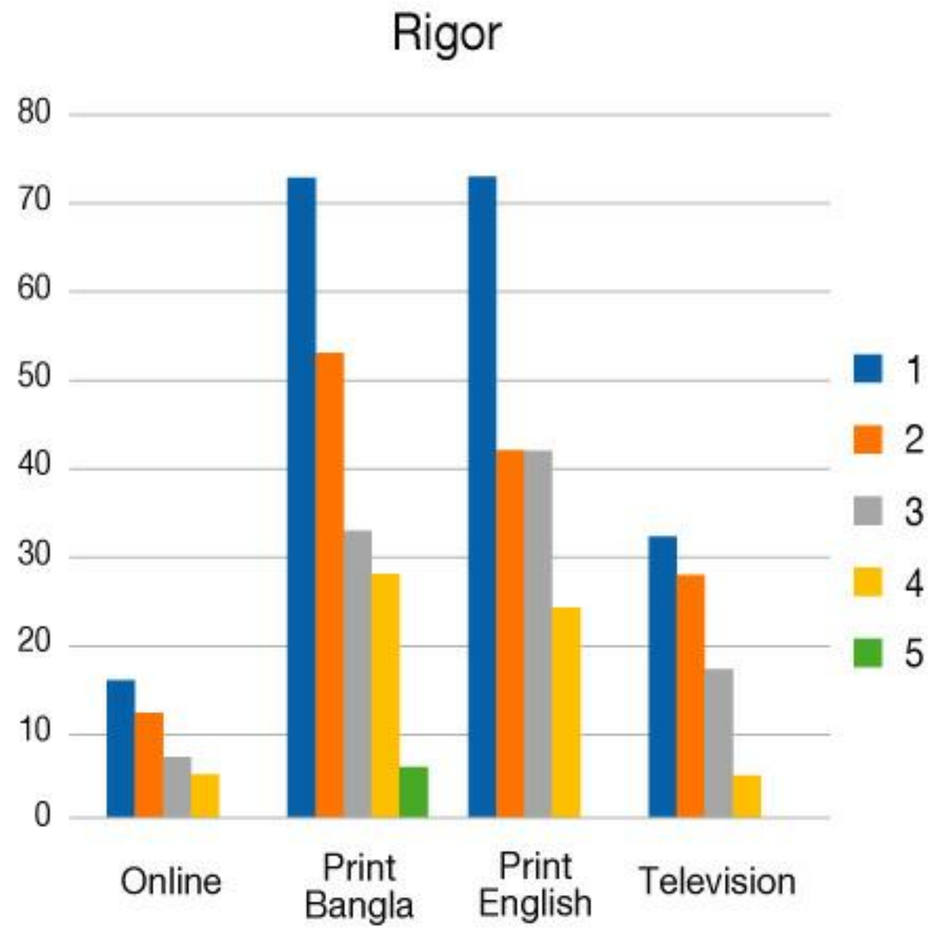

Chart 20 : Journalistic rigor by media type

Gender

Stories performed poor in gender representation, portrayal, and consciousness. Measured in a 5-point rating scale (from low to high) only about 3% scored high in representation, meaning these stories presented more than two woman in interviews as subjects and experts to offer a diverse perspective. While 77% of the stories scored low in gender representation, about 20% scored above medium or medium showing some level of inclusion of women experts and subjects.

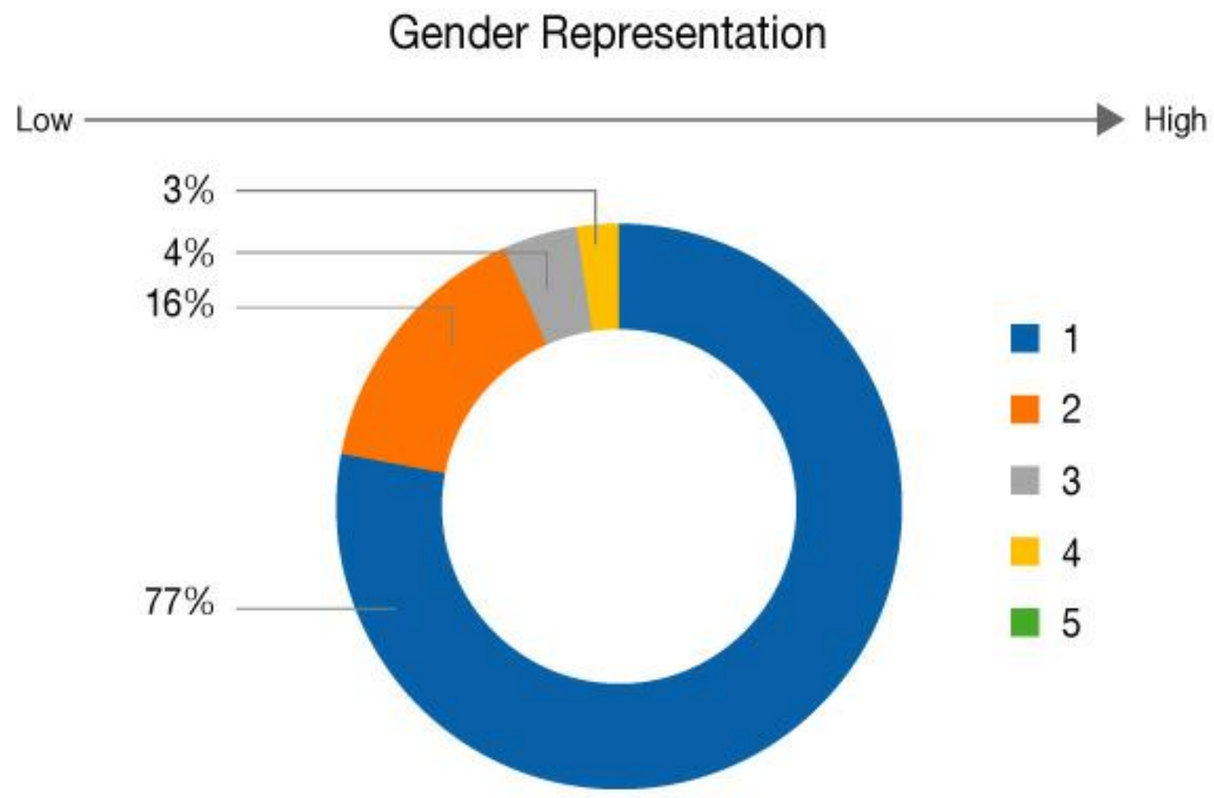

Chart 21: Gender representation and consciousness in energy and climate reporting

Gender representation in climate and environment stories was statistically better. Women typically appeared in such stories as victims of natural disasters or the effects of climate change. There have been a few stories in which women were interviewed as experts on the subject. Women were significantly underrepresented in non-renewable energy coverage, with 92% of stories scoring low. Only 10% of renewable energy stories received a medium score, which is better than non-renewable coverage but reveals a structural weakness in gender coverage in Bangladeshi media. Gender representation by media type followed a similar pattern, with roughly 75% of stories scoring low.

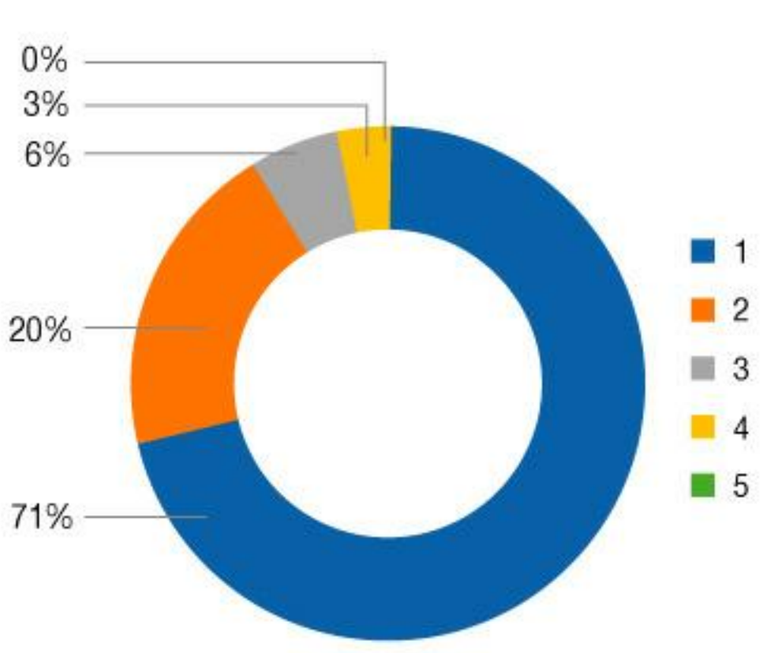

Chart 22: Gender representation in climate change and environment reporting

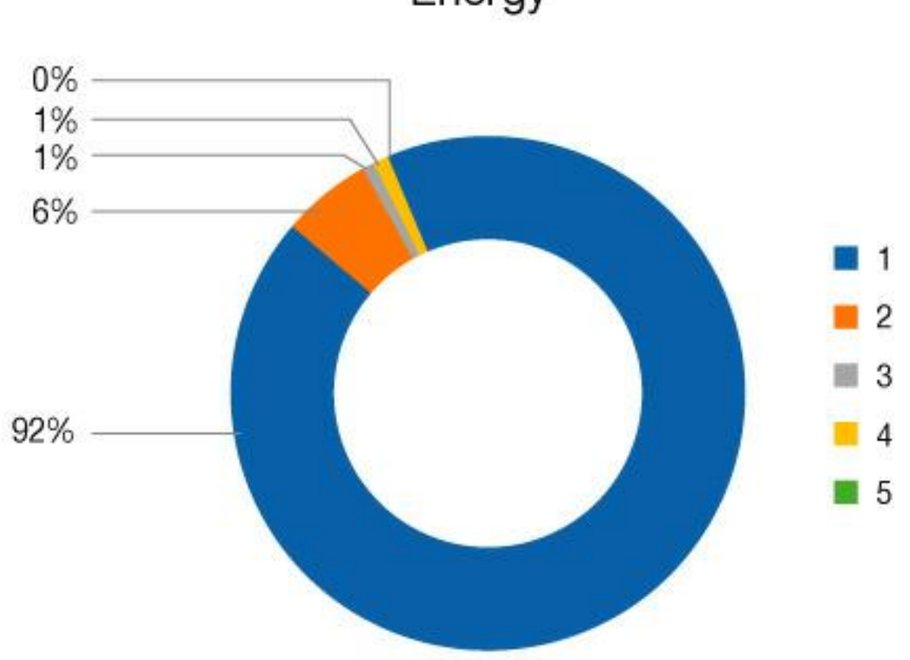

Chart 23: Gender representation in non-renewable energy reporting

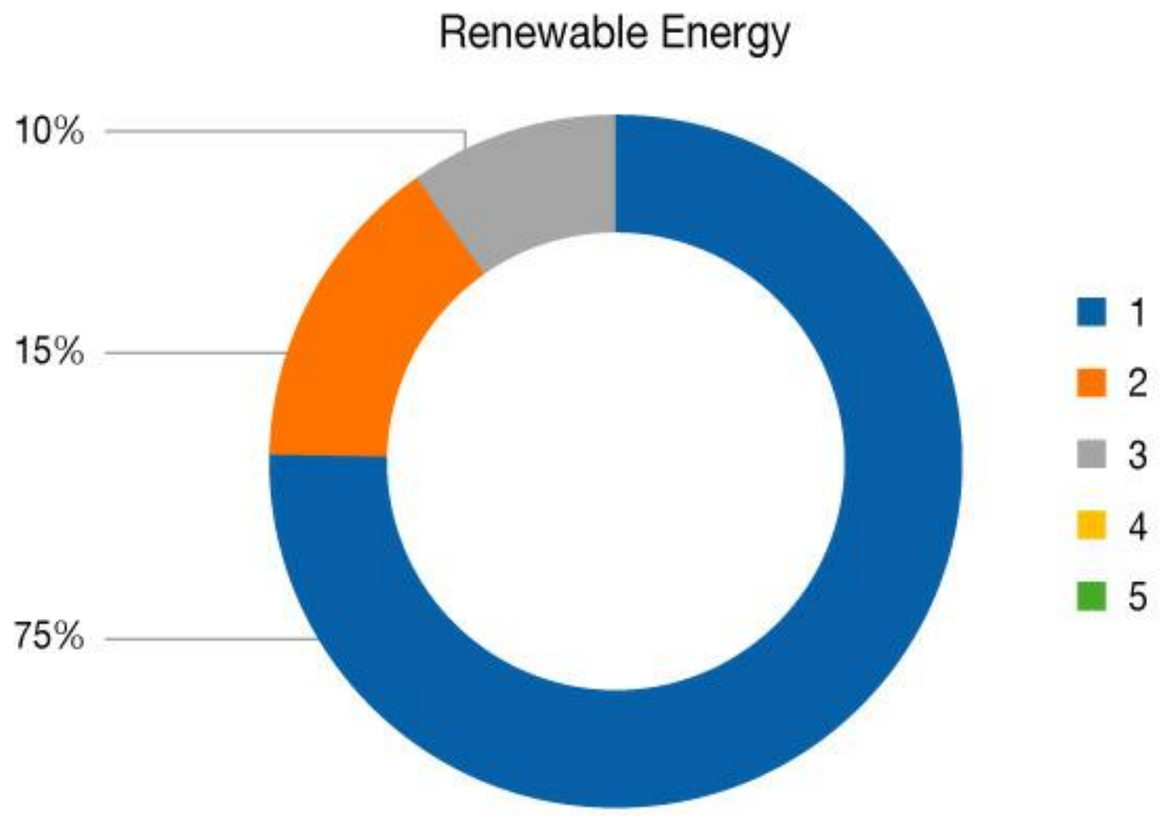

Chart 24: Gender representation in renewable energy reporting

Gender consciousness, defined in this study as sensitivity to and reflection of gender specific needs in the content of a story, remained extremely low. Regardless of the media type or issue, more than 90% of the stories appear to be unaware of the gender (in this case, women) specific needs and instead discuss the issues as general or stereotype.

CHAPTER 4

Challenges

The study identified several challenges that affect the coverage of renewable energy versus non-renewable energy, and climate change. In various interviews and discussions, journalists, experts, and media managers shared invaluable qualitative observations that revealed systemic weaknesses and a lack of capability within media outlets, resulting in inadequate coverage, shallow reporting, and poor handling of green energy. This section outlines some of those challenges.

Renewable energy is not a newsroom priority

Reporting on the renewable energy has never been a priority in Bangladeshi media. Very few working journalists are interested in the issue as the demand for this kind of reporting is comparatively poor from the newsroom. The news managers are more interested in conventional energy and power related stories that often make headlines.

Environmental crime and corruption receive attention followed by climate change as long as these stories are focused on natural disasters, climate finance and visible impact of climate change on people. Managers argue that sea level rise, reduction of carbon emission and issues like renewable energy are often "technical" and "less interesting."

"We have seen some in-depth or investigative stories on the issues, but they are very few in number," said a prominent expert in Bangladesh about coverage of renewable energy and climate change. "And interestingly, that reporting has been done by only a few journalists over the years, which indicates that the number of journalists covering the issue is limited."

Demand for energy overshadows the environmental concern

Energy has long been the centre of attention in Bangladesh for its rising demand in household and industries. The news stories on this issue naturally followed through. The media traditionally cover energy and power-related stories including source, pricing, production, reserve, new contracts, projects and investment.

Most media organizations have a reporter who specializes in covering the energy and power, and cover topics such as pricing, subsidies, and newfound issue of capacity charges for private power plants. The coverage ranges from government decisions to the role of a growing private sector in the power industry, from gas exploration to fuel import and shortages in power supply.

Media managers claim that over time, the conventional energy reporting community has also grown to be a potent lobby that shapes the stories about energy. Senior journalists claim that as a consequence, the effects of fossil fuels and the case for switching to renewable energy sources were not given enough weight in the local media sector.

"Bangladesh's carbon emission mostly happens from the energy sector due to the dependency on fossil fuels as a primary source; this is one of the significant reasons behind back-footing the demand for environmental news in Bangladesh, where energy demands defocus the environmental concern," said a senior journalist with a long experience in economy and energy reporting in Bangladesh.

Inadequate knowledge of the issues

There is a wide consensus among experts and journalists that the reporters covering the issues don't have adequate knowledge on renewable energy, global climate commitments and ongoing global conversations.

Due to inadequate knowledge, the content produced by journalists are often shallow. According to the journalists interviewed, young reporters hardly follow the global discussion around climate commitments and renewable energy goals. As a result, their reports lack context and depth, and largely fails to capture the needs of the society or the country.

The issues of climate change and energy are more global rather than local and most of the related policy documents and research are in English. According to the FGD, the majority of Bangladeshi journalists share a common English language phobia. As a result, they find it difficult to access knowledge resources, learn from them, and keep up with global developments.

A senior journalist said that, as a result, during each global climate summit known as the Conference of Parties (CoP), most media outlets in Bangladesh reported mostly on "how much compensation Bangladesh or vulnerable countries would receive from the developed nations responsible for global warming" and they missed the opportunity to hold the authorities to account for the commitments they made in the global forum.

Journalists lack capacity, so do managers

Climate change and renewable energy reporting fall under the greater purview of science journalism. Often lack of understanding in science aspect of such reporting and explaining it in a relatable manner results in stories heavily reliant on jargons, and numbers that distracts the audience, even the newsroom managers from prioritizing it.

Availability of information, data and resources is cited as a major challenge; reporters are often unaware of local and global sources where such data can be found. According to the key informants, this challenge is common in reporting on climate change and both renewable and non-renewable energy. They asserted that the ability to analyze data, spot emerging trends, and relate a local issue to a larger context can enhance the standard of coverage.

"Most articles written during the recent energy crisis only discuss the crisis," said a senior energy reporter, "only a very small number of stories explained the causes, effects, and what is going on in the background."

At least two managers claim that the copy editors and editors are dependent on the beat reporters because they do not have a thorough grasp of the renewable energy issues. This has an impact on generating new ideas as well as the improvement of the depth and scope of reporting. They pointed to it as a key factor in today's reporting that is heavily focused on current affairs and daily events.

Coverage of renewable energy lacks depth and scrutiny

Only a few media outlets cover renewable energy with importance. Even the opening of a single megawatt solar power plant receives attention in some newspapers. A reporter who specializes in energy said that those media outlets frequently gloss over crucial issues, such as the lack of available land and expensive investment requirements, which rather harm the prospects of renewable energy in Bangladesh.

For instance, he cited stories about solar home systems and rooftop power plants as two of the most widely reported stories on the subject, despite the fact that many of these initiatives resulted in financial waste.

However, positive stories are equally essential, according to a media gatekeeper, to inform audiences, build momentum, and popularize the topic. "More reporting, more attention," he added.

CHAPTER 5

Recommendations

The study recommends the following actions to improve the nation's media coverage of conventional and renewable energy, as well as environment and climate change. These actions are based on six key informant interviews, a focus group discussion with nine experienced journalists, and experts and suggestions from media mangers in a key-finding sharing meeting.

Develop more journalists covering the renewable energy

Newsrooms in Bangladesh have limited resources and inadequate reporting workforce. Only a few newsrooms have energy and environment beat reporters and they cover renewable energy occasionally missing the nuances and greater needs around the topic.

Experts and senior journalists have urged to increase the number of journalists in media as a whole, who understand the importance of renewables for a cleaner future and have the knowledge to explore the intersection of climate change, traditional energy, and renewables.

According to news managers, a better way to create this pool of journalists is to target young and early-career reporters in various newsrooms who can bring a fresh perspective to the problems going beyond the stereotypical energy reporting. Given the scarcity of reporters, they proposed that the new pool of reporters come from other beats who are eager to acquire fresh knowledge.

Build capacity and skills to address the quality gap

Quality journalism is critical for raising public awareness and driving policy change in the renewable and non-renewable energy sectors, as well as for a more climate-friendly future. There is a consensus that gatekeepers and journalists must shift their focus away from the traditional event-based reporting trend and toward more in-depth stories that are also interesting and relatable to the audience.

Journalists believe that capacity building initiatives that focus on hands-on training, fundamental understanding of climate change and renewables science, and introducing new tools, techniques, and resources to young reporters can help close the quality gap. Capacity development may include production assistance to test new ideas and reporting projects.

Sensitize the newsrooms, managers

Improving news coverage of a critical issue like renewable energy necessitates involving the larger news ecosystem, which includes not only reporters but also copy editors, news managers, and, in some cases, senior editorial figures.

One of the key priorities identified in both interviews and the FGD is the sensitization of news managers. According to them, it can be accomplished through dialogues with experts in the fields, trainings, and workshops, as well as the creation of a collaborative environment among newsrooms and development organizations.

Making resources more available and accessible

Journalists proposed creating a resource hub to increase the availability of data, information, and other resources for climate change and energy reporters. Such information hubs can be built online and serve as a one-stop shop for journalists looking for research papers, key policy decisions, academic resources, subject matter experts, and documents on recent developments. The Bangladesh Working Group on Ecology and Development (BWGED)[12] is cited as an example.

Using reliable data and references is critical to improving journalism practices and audience trust. In a world of increasing climate disinformation, denialist propaganda, conspiracy theories, and corporate influence, an information hub can be critical in gaining access to reliable data and records. Partnerships between the media and civil society can aid in the long-term management of such information access points.

More efforts from the newsrooms

Media outlets can allocate more resources to covering climate change and renewable energy. This includes assigning dedicated reporters, providing them with the time and resources they need to conduct in-depth and investigative reporting, and facilitating training to improve the quality and frequency of coverage.

A senior reporter urged that there should be a research desk in newsrooms that can help the reporters to find and analyze data and explore new ideas. According to him, it can significantly improve the depth and quality of stories on these critical issues.

More investment in climate and renewable energy reporting

Media support organizations should offer training and mentoring programs in renewable energy reporting as much effort is currently concentrated around traditional environment and climate change journalism.

Reporters suggested that the government can also play a role by providing training and resources to journalists, as the more accurate information that journalists disseminate, the more aware policymakers and audiences will be.

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[12] https://bwged.blogspot.com/

Gender sensitive coverage

Experts believe that the widespread gap in gender representation can be addressed by including more female voices in the stories, not only as victims or survivors, but also as experts to provide a female perspective. It can be facilitated, according to them, by including gender sensitive reporting in energy and climate related media training, as well as by creating a database of female experts in these issues so that reporters can reach out to them for stories when needed.

It is also suggested that a relationship be established between the media, research, and civil society organizations in order to exchange ideas on gender aspects of climate and energy reporting.

Conclusion

Improving media coverage and reporting quality on renewable energy in Bangladesh is essential for sustainable development and climate change adaptation. Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, and renewable energy is crucial for promoting sustainable development. However, media coverage on renewable energy has been limited and often failed to capture its importance and potential benefits.

Better media coverage can increase public awareness of the benefits and potential of renewable energy, drive policy and investment decisions, promote transparency and accountability, and attract international investment and support. By providing accurate information, the media can hold government officials and private companies accountable for their actions, and ensure that renewable energy investments are made in the best interests of the public and the environment.

The study might aid in the media's comprehension of the necessity and value of responsibly covering such a significant subject.

LIST OF TABLE AND CHARTS

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