



Journal of Social and Political Sciences

Yogi, A. (2026), Media and Public Opinion in Foreign Policy Making in Bangladesh. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 9(3), 48-56.

ISSN 2615-3718

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1991.09.03.731

The online version of this article can be found at:
<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

Published by:
The Asian Institute of Research

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Media and Public Opinion in Foreign Policy Making in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The influence of the media in determining public opinion and informing foreign policy-making processes in Bangladesh is considerable. The media impacts decision-making indirectly, while also acting as a forum for information and public discussion, which affects foreign policy formulation and implementation. This study analyzes the nature of the relationship between media, public opinion, and foreign policy in Bangladesh through analyses of historical developments, theoretical concepts, and current practices. The study draws attention to the media's role in Bangladesh's Liberation War, national and international media's contributions, the development of the country's media landscape, and the rise of digital journalism and social media. Informed by insights from the CNN Effect, Al Jazeera Effect, and soft power, the study identifies the media's construction of narratives that influence public perceptions of Bangladesh's bilateral relations with India, China, Pakistan, and other regional actors. The paper further explores the media's contributions to track-two diplomacy, public diplomacy, and the development of Bangladesh's international image. It contends that media acts as a crucial middleman between policymakers and citizens, as it raises foreign policy awareness, fosters debates, and sways the degree of public backing of such diplomatic efforts. Despite issues with press freedom, regulation, and digital misinformation, media remains an essential constituent of Bangladesh's foreign policy context and a key tool in advancing national interests amid an ever-connected world.

Keywords: Media, Public Opinion, Foreign Policy, Bangladesh, CNN Effect, Al Jazeera Effect, Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Digital Media, Foreign Policy Decision-Making, Bilateral Relations, Track-Two Diplomacy, International Image, Media Activism, Bangladesh Foreign Relations.

1. Introduction

The media has an indirect impact on foreign policymaking. The trends of communication and reporting on foreign affairs influence Bangladesh's foreign policymaking in twofold ways, by providing an environment and an input source for decision-making. Governments need to interact with public media houses to shape what people know and believe about foreign policies. It is important for policymakers to have agreement about the strategies and core objectives of external engagement to ensure policy credibility for any country. Terms such as "Al Jazeera Effect," introduced by Philip Seib, have discussed new media, which is about widespread internet and satellite television and its impact on policymaking. Seib's idea of a virtual state is also relevant, through which diverse communities achieve cohesion on the internet on the international political map. These institutions have also led to the fostering of virtual sovereignty. Such extensions of the borders have led to the development of common identity among diverse religious and ethnic communities (Arnold, 2011). The phenomenon of the 24-hour media CNN effect is

also about ensuring a regular, instant flow of information and news that influences government decision-making.

The role of Media had started since the time of Independence only, the international mass media had played an necessary role in Bangladesh's War of Independence, the Guardian, Daily Mirror, *The London Times*, *The Sunday Times*, and the *Daily Telegraph*, the Sunday Observer, had tried to expedite cooperation among the international community for the cause of freedom and to support Bangladesh in the war of Independence. One of the concerns for Bangladesh, which had raised awareness about the war effort, was organized in New York in August 1971 by Pandit Ravi Shankar and George Harrison was one such instance. Pandit Ravi Shankar opined In one day, the whole world knew the name of Bangladesh. Bangladesh media has been an important player for the promotion of liberty and democracy. The sacrifices of the brave people of Bangladesh were told to the world about the tribulations which people were facing under the armed forces of Pakistan under the military administration. It was the relevance of the Journalists in the Independence War that on March 25, 1971, on the night the military had launched its genocide campaign. The Pakistani military was in Hotel Intercontinental, known as Rupashi Bangla, presently in Dhaka. The media has helped leaders get re-elected and bring down governments. In the new age of Mediaism, being a true transnational actor, the media has promoted and hindered the aims and policies of national leaders. The importance of garnering domestic support for foreign policy is recognized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One of the important tasks is handling domestic media and building foreign policy consensus in the news circles of the country. The Foreign Affairs Ministry depends to a greater degree on the media to report and explain foreign policy developments. At one level, the government exercises some pressure on the media professionals to provide or deny access, while the reporters and correspondents, through their reportage and commentary, are able to nudge policy in certain directions. This process has its roots in the colonial practices when the foreign reporters, also known as war correspondents, were key elements in manufacturing consent for the policies of the colonial power.

2. Media Profile in Bangladesh

The media covers newspapers, television, YouTube channels, and other journals for the purpose of this thesis. In the subcontinent of South Asia, Kanganlal Harinath Majumdar could be called the first investigative reporter with the publication of *Gram —Barta Prokashita*, which was a Bangla weekly journal. This weekly aimed to reveal the veiled tyranny of those in power and generate public awareness about it. The birth of Bangla language newspapers was led by English newspapers but had different goals. In Calcutta, the English newspapers were considered a means of entertainment and profit. The Bangla newspapers, at the same time, were for the privileged class and for cultural enhancement. The *Gram Barta Prokashika* was dealing with philosophy, poetry, and hard news, along with defense and security issues. The Bangla-speaking population of Pakistan was affected due to East Pakistan's Language Movement in 1952, which had helped enhance the consciousness of the people.

Other Bangla newspapers, such as *Dainik Sangbad* and *The Azad*, were covering the news about the killing of youth activists at Dhaka University. These articles were written with evocative language describing the risks and threats posed by the Pakistani occupation forces. One of the newspapers, *Itfaq*, was first published in 1953 under Manik Miah's leadership, which popularized the nationalist movement. Apart from it, the fourth estate does play a role in mediating conflict between the legislative and executive branches of Bangladesh. Younger members of the subcommittee chairmen also seek out opinions for proposals about conflicting viewpoints. The chairmen of the standing committee on Foreign Affairs have access to information and intelligence from the government of Bangladesh. All the sides of a conflict in the international arena are being visited by the countries involved, who personally investigate all sides of a conflict in the international arena. Reporters have extensive linkages with the members of the committee. Nahim Razzak, the youngest Member of Parliament in Bangladesh, keeps frequent media interactions, such as being part of *Young Bangla Live*, *Meet the Leader*, and other interaction platforms. The incidents of violence have affected not only the local public opinion about the status of minorities but also the international reputation of the country. One such incident is when in 2012 there was a violent attack on Buddhist monasteries, shrines, and houses of the Buddhist minority in Ramu Upazila in Cox Bazar District by the local population. These incidents led to straining of Bangladesh's relations with major Buddhist countries, i.e., China, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar. Bengali dailies such as *Samakal*, *Prothom Alo* and English ones like *The Daily Star*, *Dainik Karatoa*, *Dainik Puranchal*, and *Dainik Purbokone* try to compete with broadcasters and social media

portals for web presence. Besides, the ABC Radio, Mediaworld Limited: —The Daily Star, Beximco Media Limited: The Independent (English daily) and Independent Television, Jamuna Group Limited: Jugantor (Bengali daily) and Jamuna TV, Times Media Limited: Daily Samokal (Bengali daily) and Chhanel24 (24-hour television news station), Ittefaq Group of Publications Limited: Daily Ittefaq (the oldest Bengali) are other major groups. There are more than 500 news sites and web portals functioning in Bangladesh. The Dhaka Tribune, Ekushey Television, and ETV have brought news events to the homes of people. As per the Media Landscapes report, the National Media Survey (NMS)-2018, conducted by Kantar MRB Bangladesh, says that 66 lakh people read a paper daily. With the presence of online technology and as per the movement against communal riots of 1964, the mass movement of 1969, the Freedom House report, Freedom on the Net 2020, and the presence of 4G technology have made YouTube content in the Bengali language more popular. The largest body of reporters of Dhaka-based newspapers is Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU). It is the largest body of Dhaka-based newspapers, television and radio, online portals, and news agencies, with 300 members. Apart from it, the *Bangladesh Parliament Journalists' Association*, *Dhaka Sub-Editors Council*, *Bangladesh Photo Journalists Association*, and *Television* also work to protect the interests of their members. Apart from it, *Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS)*, *News of Bangladesh (UNB)*, *Bdnews24.com*, and *Bangladeshnews20.com* are other major websites. International organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, UNDP, Fojo, Internews, Bangladesh Telecom Regulatory Commission (BTRC) have also led the internet penetration rate to reach 87.79 million. E-commerce is also associated with online websites and is regulated by institutes such as —*e-commerce association of Bangladesh (eCAP)*. In one of the projects, WPFDF cooperation is part of the South Asia Cross-Border Journalism project to bring together journalists from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Nepal. In another area of Media activism, the *International Press Institute (IPI)*, which is for cross-border cooperation and is a global network of editors, leading journalists, media executives, and advocates for press freedom, has launched projects to highlight attacks on journalists in South Asia. The four dailies, Dainik Azad, The Pakistan Observer, Dainik Sangbad, and Dainik Ittefaq, were the pioneers of the national press system.

3. The Theoretical Framework: Role of Media in Foreign Policy Decision Making

The concept of soft power, understood as the cultural and social capital which a country possesses globally, entails the role of media and public opinion. The media is one agency capable of co-opting the interests of other nations. Nations in developing transitional countries, including Bangladesh, establish soft power by establishing media outlets, brands, and news houses, having foreign policy experts, and encouraging research on foreign policy issues, more importantly in transitional countries³⁰². The media helps in collecting data required to make informed decisions, which is also used by parliamentarians and bureaucrats. The ‘CNN Effect debate’ popularized after Operation Restore Hope in Somalia to feed starving people after the media reports of mass starvation there, had led editorials to circulate that American foreign policy was driven by Media news stories. Robert Kurtz argues that media access to technology, which was earlier with governments, has changed the nature of information and associated policy debate, and is also analyzed by Bernard Cohen's *The Press and Foreign Policy*. Bangladesh is known to have two media audiences in Dhaka and urban centers, which refer to television as their preferred source of news. Newspaper readability is first in Bangladesh, yet online media play a secondary role for both, with social media sites. The newspapers in Bangladesh are financed by Beximco, Globe, Karnaphuli, Transcom, Jamuna, Ha-meen, Bashundara, and Gemcon Group³⁰⁶. The development of think tanks confirms Dhaka centrism of foreign policy, mostly located such as Bangladesh Institute of BRAC institute, Department of International Relations, Dhaka University, Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, American Institute of Bangladesh Studies, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Institute of Bangladesh Studies, International Centre for Climate Change and Development, Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies, Institute of Bangladesh Studies.

4. An Analysis of Media's Role and Bilateral Relations of Bangladesh

Dev Nath Pathak, Chayanika Priyam and Ratan Kumar Roy have explored internet activism and its impact on politics with regard to India and Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh stands at 144th place in the Press Freedom Index given by —Reporters without Borders. The relationship between journalists and the Bangladesh Government has also not been easy-going, since independence in 1971. Bangladesh's new broadcasting policy

was implemented in 2014 for regulating the media. Yet, the low rate of Internet access, which is 9.6 percent compared to South Asian countries (ITU, 2015), also affects the media's role. Within the nation, due to the increase in cyber communities, print media is shifting toward online internet-based journalism. It helps in making the reach available to all. It is the mushrooming of web-based news and the role of corporate print and television media outlets because of which their own web versions are created, which include various web portals and news sites in Bangladesh. Haq (2014a) has outlined four categories of online news practices: small-scale news media that are independent, print media that have corporate investment, and citizen journalism using blog sites and social media.

The growth of telecommunications and ICT in Bangladesh has led to convergence of cyberspace and media, which includes Congress and other official elites. The media has played a crucial role in diffusing the tension between the two countries on different issues. One of them is the Nassau accord reached between the Ershad regime and Indira Gandhi for a resolution of the Farakka dispute. It got an effusive media response in Bangladesh. The media has also been influential in putting light on the issues of amplifying movement of people with entry/exit at checkpoints at Ghojadanga (West Bengal) and Akhaura (Tripura). The media has been emphasizing cooperation against radical and extremist groups, organized crime, terrorists, fake currency, and smuggling through the mechanism of bilateral *Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements*. The issues about Integrated Check Posts for more cooperation in the area for withdrawing port restrictions through Akhaura-Agartala port, and increasing the number of Border Haats, have been influenced by media activism. Other than that, dialogue events such as those by Conflict, Law and Development have influenced the role of media. Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das has also, on various occasions, talked about enhancing linkages between the media of India and Bangladesh. If we scrutinize Bangladesh-China Relations and the role of media, one of the major issues at the heart of Media activism is that of the Rohingya. Bangladeshi Media has given its endorsement to the regional arrangement of Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar (BCIM). The media houses have noted the relevance of the arrangement. It is through the help of media outlets that it has been made clear by the Government of Bangladesh that the deep seaport in Chittagong is not considered a part of the String of Pearls. It is not part of the larger concern of China to encircle Bangladesh. Prime Minister assured the public through the media that China can benefit from using the deep seaport, while all neighboring countries can also use it (Chowdhury, 2010). In the context of BRI, Bangladesh, being the neighboring country of China, has received cash from China for infrastructure projects since 2016. The media have widely covered all the agreements for loans and investments, and Bangladesh is the second-largest recipient (after Pakistan) of Chinese loans under BRI in South Asia. Thus, the media has been influential in shaping public opinion about the 2,800-km Bangladesh- China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC), which is to link Kunming in China with Kolkata in India via Mandalay and Dhaka. Media houses in Bangladesh have been apprehensive about the extent of China's ability to fulfill Bangladesh's expectations on the Rohingya issue (Bhattacharjee, 2018). Efforts such as bringing together Journalists of both countries through the China-Bangladesh Media Dialogue and Chinese news agencies' efforts to bring together editors are a few of the positive futuristic initiatives. Media and civil societies in Bangladesh are resentful against China for not pressurizing Myanmar for the repatriation of Rohingya refugees. The media in Bangladesh are vocal in expressing disappointment about India for not doing enough to resolve the Rohingya crisis. It is also to be noted that any small gesture of connection by China is highlighted widely in Bangladesh media. The perception of China created by the media as non-interfering in the country's domestic affairs has favored shaping public support for the relationship. The newspapers are run with themes of China and India and their strategic concerns and have major columns on foreign policy issues. Press coverage speeds up the decision-making process, and negative coverage pushes decision-making up the bureaucracy to a higher level of officials.

To analyze the Bangladesh-Pakistan Relations, the print media from East Pakistan was vocal in favor of emancipation of the Bangalis since the Awami League in March 1971, which had launched a non-cooperation movement. The newspapers from East Pakistan, supported by Pakistan Press Trust, favored the line of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. These newspapers were *Dainik Ittefaq*, *the people*, and *Sangbad*. The offices of '*Dainik Pakistan*', '*Pakistan Observer*', '*Dainik Purbodesh*', and '*Morning News*' were involved in the movement's activities.

Periodicals and weeklies such as *Swaraj*, *Banglar Bani*, which were the voice of the resistance movement, along with these other newspapers, were closed down. *Daily Ittefaq* was associated with the democratic struggles of the Bangalis, and the daily *Sangbad* was also one of the burnt ones. It is said that the first visible signs of tension

between Dhaka and Islamabad were in the media discourse.

5. Track Two Diplomacy in Bangladesh, Media & Foreign Policy Making

For India-Bangladesh relations, 35% of foreign patients are covered by Bangladesh, and more than 50% of the total revenue is covered from medical tourism. It is the largest contributor to medical and health tourism of India. Opening up of Bangladeshi-owned IGlobal University in the United States, International Health Tourism and Services Expo, organization of 11th Meditex Bangladesh, and 4th Bangladesh Clinical Lab Expo, such as organized by CEMS Global at Bashundhara International Center, are examples of track two diplomacy. Bangladesh's healthcare system does face challenges from global medical tourism and from neighboring countries such as India, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia. Enhancing bilateral cooperation in emerging sectors can also be a major challenge for foreign policy.

Such that the Government can allow for cross-border educational institutes in Bangladesh and joint ventures such as with the USA, Australia, Canada, the UK, and Japan on the lines of an institute such as The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), which works with various activities in the socio-cultural field, Asia Dialogue on Forced Migration (ADFM) to deal with people's movement and displacement in the region; other such incidents, such as the dialogue by the Center for Policy Development in 2015, have helped address trafficking, smuggling, and related exploitation, which are present in Cox's Bazar. The India- Bangladesh dialogues, which were to facilitate the Farakka Barrage dispute resolution between Bangladesh and India, led to the signing of the Ganges Water Treaty. One of the negotiators for the Ganges treaty, Salman Haider, acknowledged the role of track two groups in getting the problem solved. It was in June 1996 when Indian and Pakistani members of the non-governmental observer team in Bangladesh issued the 'Dhaka Statement', which supported an unconditional dialogue between New Delhi and Bangladesh. It has been suggested to boost people-to-people exchanges by harmonizing education standards at various SAARC Summit meetings³²⁶. There are also mechanisms to have multi-country dialogue, including Bhutan and China. One such mechanism is about the Basin of the Brahmaputra River from riparian countries, to consolidate political willingness among people to have a joint mechanism for sound basin management. It is also known as Track 1.5. The successful role of these mechanisms is visible in joint research proposals developed by research organizations in India, China, and Bangladesh, which have conducted assessments for the river stretch and were an important input to policy development.

At the time, there were examples of not taking Media voices into account; one of the examples was signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) agreement in 2000, which was a decision taken completely by government officials. Bangladeshi newspapers' columns had run debates in Dhaka Tribune about India rejecting the CTBT, through which it was being proposed. The Bangladeshi stand was popularized in the newspapers that Bangladesh can only be a nuclear weapon power and not as a non- weapon state.

6. Representation of Bangladesh in International Media

There is a dissimilar opinion among the people about Bangladesh; one section of the media considers it to be excluded and less focused because of being a moderate Muslim, while the media tend to cover conflict-ridden Muslim countries. International media has appreciated Bangladesh for having women as prime ministers for 29 years, while also being criticized for violence against women. Bangladesh has also received journalistic attention from global media due to it being most vulnerable due to global warming. The wide coverage and reports on mass migration, garment collapse, and climate change have been brought to the frontline of Western media³²⁷. One section of the media points out the limited coverage given to the issues of disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, maritime intelligence, and port reconstruction. Bangladesh is represented in the media as a country in need of constant support of financial aid. Prominent issues such as poverty and overpopulation are highlighted in the developed nation's media. The other major issue covered is Bangladesh's human rights concerns, due to which Bangladesh is portrayed in a negative light by the international media. The media has also given coverage to issues such as election observation by the Forum of Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and countries such as Japan, Germany, Spain, the US, and the EU were invited to observe elections. Bangladesh's dominant values found in the literature of Tagore, Nazrul, and

Jashimuddin are significant sources of soft power, as shown by the Bangladesh Diaspora. A few instances of such practice are the establishment of the Bangabandhu Chair at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok, Bangladesh Bhavan at Visva-Bharati University, and it is also considered that allowing Rohingya refugees into its territory promoted Bangladesh as a peace-loving country, even despite having its own weak economic condition (Islam, Daily Star). Words such as dark spots to explain poor human rights records are being used in international media. Bangladeshi human rights activists were arrested in cases which represent attacks on the identity of Bangladesh (NYT, 2013).

The international media reports are focused on journalists and activists. Bangladesh's dominant values found in the literature of Tagore, Nazrul, and Jashimuddin are significant sources of soft power, as shown by the Bangladesh Diaspora. A few instances of such practice are the establishment of Bangabandhu Chair at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Bangkok, Bangladesh Bhavan at Visva-Bharati University, and it is also considered that allowing Rohingya refugees into its territory promoted Bangladesh as a peace-loving country, even despite having its own weak economic condition (Islam, Daily Star). Words such as dark spots to explain poor human rights records are being used in international media. Bangladeshi human rights activists were arrested in cases that represent attacks on the identity of Bangladesh (NYT, 2013). The international media reports are focused on journalists and activists, who talk about the challenges democracy faces in Bangladesh. One of the senior journalists, Nadeem Qadir, writes about issues from Bangladesh being covered by the magazine *The Economist*. *The Economist* chooses to publish write-ups that negatively portray Bangladesh and ignore ones that are positive he says (Qadir, 2016). He also mentions that the U.S. media does not talk about the positive developments that have happened in the last few years in Bangladesh on the issues of women's empowerment.

On the issue of radicalization being represented in international Media, the telecommunication minister of Bangladesh, Tatana Halima, acknowledged in public fora that social media is being misused by militants in Bangladesh for terrorist attacks and other activities (Asia Times, 2015). He substantiates incidents about attacks on foreign bloggers, Avijit Roy, and the death of an on-duty policeman killed by a terrorist from ISIS in Bangladesh are given comparatively wide coverage. Such incidents have been acknowledged in the parliament in many of her speeches about social media being misused for criminal activities. The government has several times taken measures to block WhatsApp and Viber and allowed for the monitoring of social media. The media also helps in understanding the future strategies and plans of militants. The IS online magazine *Dabiq*, for example, has also explained about the future attack plans and activities in Bangladesh through an article titled "The Revival of Jihad in Bengal". Seeing the role of Media in Bangladesh, and to deal with cyber-related crimes, the government has also introduced the Digital Security Act 2016³³⁰. Reports on international media also indicate interference in media affairs by telling them about the content of publication. Ownership is also given to the ruling party loyalists by the political elites to control the media. Later, the free market economic policies in 2000 led to an increase in television channels.

The role of private players in the media industry was seen from 2000 itself, when the first private television channel, ETV, started broadcasting in April 2000. And with it, the practice of issuing TV licenses to party loyalists had also started supposedly during the BNP regime (2001—2006). Media is considered not only as a tool to leverage the power of media to shape public discourse on foreign policy but to decide on foreign and national security affairs; it was also considered a tool to mobilize pressure on the politicians and bureaucrats. Among foreign representations, it also works in the way that foreign nations use media for communication with countries with whom they don't have effective or viable dialogue channels. The Internet is significantly an important medium for political communication. As represented in the Threat Model, individuals receive information about foreign policy primarily through the mass media. And that media disproportionately focuses on threat and covers terrorism in sensationalistic ways³³¹. Freedom of the press is a key element in democratization indices such as Democracy Watchdog, Freedom House, and others, and any nation-state is measured on the parameters set by these indices, thus domestic politics having international repercussions. Voltmer also argues that the media has taken an important role in democratic transitions in Bangladesh, leading to mediaization of political change. The forces of radicalization being impacted by the Media have also affected Bangladesh's representation at the international level. India's mass media, including Bengali papers, had reacted against the anti-India propaganda launched by the counter-revolutionaries. In this process, the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, *Hindustan Standard*, and *Jugantar* (Bengali

Paper) had published cartoons and derogatory remarks about India. In another incident, online propaganda by AQIS has enchanted youths within Bangladesh. In one of the surveys conducted in 2017 by the Bangladeshi Police, it was revealed that many of the extremists are influenced by social media and have been using Thrima, WeChat, Messenger, and other social media apps to communicate. Many operations were using the networks of Islamist militants, and 29 AQIS were using online propaganda efforts that have negative effects for peace and security in Bangladesh. The International Crisis Group (ICG) reported on the emergence of a Muslim insurgent group called ARSA, also known as Harakah al-Yaqin (HaY). The ICG report also warned that a response from Burma "could create conditions for further radicalizing sections of the Rohingya population". Media representation is also affected due to the presence of the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) or due to the presence of the coalition government of two Islamist parties, the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Islamiya Okiyya Jote (IOJ), which have expanded Islamist influence in Bangladesh. These parties have also created space within extremist and terrorist groups since Islami Okiyya Jote has ties with one of the radical organizations, such as Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI).

7. Conclusion

The research suggests few of the points necessary for the future foreign policy formulation.

Increasing press freedom- A few legislations, such as the Right to Information Act in 2009, do show the commitment of the Awami League government to media freedom. But instances such as Ekushey TV, a popular TV channel in Bangladesh formed by former BBC journalist Simon Dring, have faced impediments in their coverage. The owner's permit was canceled, and he was forced to sell his share in ETV after the BNP government came to power in 2000. In another incident, in 2013, the government shut down Diganta TV on charges of reporting on the government's crackdown. Islamic TV and Channel One were also shut down due to charges by opposition parties (Adnan, 2018). Editors have been charged with defamation and sedition. The staff of Prothom Alo has been charged with more than 100 criminal cases about the issues. Among some of the victims have been atheist bloggers and publishers. It is also to be noted that there are new news sites coming up due to the prosaic economic effect termed by Abadi, which means due to fewer subscriptions, and advertising revenue is less in Print Media. The government is trying its best to curb social media with the goal of curbing violent extremism. National Telecommunication Monitoring Center and the launch of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police app called "Hello CT" in 2016 are a few examples. Yet Bangladesh needs to increase the freedom given to editors. On the other hand, the continuous coverage of foreign affairs by Bangladesh news media remains relatively small, with foreign news coverage constituting only 21 percent in morning and early evening network news programs.

The readership has dropped 1.4 percent since 2014, but print readership hasn't actually gone down despite the rise of TV and Internet. Media's role in the foreign policy of Bangladesh becomes crucial since the foreign policy of Bangladesh has to promote trade, investment, international co-operation, and international projection apart from being able to maintain the religious status quo. Bangladesh also has to look at foreign policy and security architecture, which should also include maritime routes in the Indo-Pacific to secure against piracy and meet the demands of the middle class entering the economy. The grand strategy of Bangladesh must include a development goal, which should include projects in various regions such as Khagrachari, Rangamati, and Bandarban. The government of Bangladesh also has to look at the concerns of minorities; it is seen in the creation of the Hindu Religious Welfare Trust and the Buddhist Religious Welfare Trust. Bangladesh is also enhancing its role in the Asian Cooperation Dialogue and in organizations such as the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA) for the promotion of all human rights. The media industry of Bangladesh is covered by various agencies, such as Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB); the report mentions media owned by big business and corporate houses and influenced by media politics over the years. Corporate interests and competition in the industry are at the root of it. It is also noted that the ideological orientation of the editor, reporter, and owner of the paper is reflected while presenting data and information. Bangladeshi media also reflects upon the internal politics of the country since Bangladeshi Dailies have a critical viewpoint about the rise of religious extremism.

Having a religious background, such as Jamaat-e-Islami, is also not appreciated by media houses. In covering foreign relations, The Daily Star, being pro-Indian, shows the media having a stand on foreign relations. In a general trend, activities of the United States, the European Union, and other major powers are covered widely.

Few of the media houses also suffer with the issues such as lack of professionalism, resource limitations; poor human resources, lack of skills and staff shortage are other major issue. The shortage of staff is one of the major reasons for inadequate follow-up on stories and the coverage to be primarily Dhaka-centric. At the same time, it has been noted that Bangladeshi public opinion believes that better trade leads to higher wages and more job creation and encourages stronger inter-state economic relations, thus being followed by policymakers.

Emphasizing foreign policy research- The Media houses in the country are also trying to create a database of people who are working on Bangladesh and India in the ministries of both countries. The seminars and conferences are not multi-faceted, thus must be conducted regularly, sometimes just based on foreign policy exchanges. In the process of keeping its brand as an activist and developmental role, the media has mobilized support for democratization and putting socio-economic issues at the front. The role of media also becomes important due to its independent perspectives apart from party politics on different policy issues.

Ethics/Informed Consent: All participants involved were made aware prior to the interview about the objective of the study and the nature of their participation. Participation in the interview was voluntary.

Disclosure statement: The authors assert no conflicts of interest.

Funding: No Funding was taken for this study

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies: This study has not used any generative AI tools or technologies in the preparation of this manuscript.

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