

## GLOBAL NEWS FLOWS IN THE BANGLADESHI NEWSPAPER

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### ABSTRACT

People wanted to know global events for various reasons. Previous studies also showed that there is information dependency on the west of International news. But there is no research on the Bangladesh scenario. To fill this gap, this research aimed to understand the dominance of western news agencies in Bangladesh media. For that reason, this work observes 206 International news from 6 national dailies of Bangladesh for three days. This observation shows that 93.2 percent of international news in Bangladeshi dailies comes from the foreign-based news agency, 4.9 percent news comes from Asia-based news agency and 1.9 percent byline news comes from other countries. It suggests that Bangladeshi national dailies are highly dependent on foreign news agency mostly western news agencies. According to the international news editor of national dailies, western news agencies are fast and covered more than Asian news agencies. The empirical findings show that most of Bangladesh's international news comes from Western sources and that the media adheres to Western prestige daily reporting principles. Some theoretical and practical significance of the results has been discussed as well.

**Keywords:** Global news flow, Imbalance, Communication, Dependency, News Agency, International Communication.

### I. INTRODUCTION

In Bangladeshi media, Global news flow is a rare concern to its stakeholders, creating an imbalance in the flow of information. It is a significant concern because this information can be manipulated at any point in time. Bangladeshi media are getting the information, but they are not concerned about the news agency. Over the period, the International news selection process is the same based on a particular agency only. What Bangladeshi media do, they collect important news and translate this. Natural calamities and military coups are chosen above fundamental realities in reporting. Over 80% of world news flow was controlled by four main news agencies at the time.

Bangladeshi newspapers are depending on foreign news from some particular news agencies, and that selection is creating an information monopoly basis. After WWII, the democratic mandate of "open flow of information" was severely questioned. Ultimately the news sourcing process is demonstrating the supremacy of the West in the global information distribution process. Even after colonization, the news flow from developed to undeveloped and developing countries remained hierarchical. As a result, how developed countries see the world, in the same way, is reflected in developing countries' media. The media is a reflection of society's power structure. Those western agencies try to implement their plan through the news they collect and circulate. At the time, four major news agencies controlled over 80% of global news flow.<sup>[1]</sup>

Most of the western news agencies try to portray the capitalism and problems of developing countries. In this way, the common interests of developing countries are being avoided. The Mac Bride commission has worked to solve those issues, and they have given some suggestions to adopt in various media houses around the world.

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO or NWIO) is a term coined in a debate over media representations of the developing world in UNESCO in the late 1970s early 1980s.<sup>[2]</sup> The MacBride Commission widely used the term, a UNESCO panel chaired by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Seán MacBride, which was charged with creating a set of recommendations to make global media representation more equitable (New World Information and Communication Order, n.d.).<sup>[3]</sup> The American media scholar Wilbur Schramm noted in 1964 that the flow of news among nations is thin, that much attention is given to developed countries and little to less-developing ones, those crucial events are ignored, and reality is distorted (New World Information and Communication Order, n.d.). Information has become a power in current days. In the 1970s, international debates on communication problems centered around media imperialism, imbalance in

international news flow, and concentration and monopolies in the communication industry. Myer stated that Structural theorists such as Johan Galtung and NWIO advocates from the Third World have charged that developing nations are dependent upon the West for international news.<sup>[4]</sup> News dependency, in turn, is said to lead to the adoption of Western news values and subsequent cultural imperialism in the South. In Bangladesh, most of the dailies are dependant on western news agencies, and those agencies are creating cultural imperialism. RAY & DUTTA (2014) stated that in India, Asia-based news agencies are less preferred in Indian print media. The issue of media imperialism resonates with the old phenomenon of colonialism; except that it is more pervasive today, its nature and scope have changed.<sup>[5]</sup>

### **III. CURRENT SCENARIO OF BANGLADESHI MEDIA**

According to the Department of Film and Publication of People's of the Republic of Bangladesh, there are two hundred 55 dailies from Dhaka city and three hundred five from local cities. Among them, 33 are English dailies and the rest the Bengali dailies. There are one hundred eight weeklies, 19 fortnightly, 27 monthly, one quarterly, and Bi-monthly each (Publications, 2021).<sup>[6]</sup>

In 2020, Reporters Without Borders, a non-government organization dedicated to safeguarding independent journalism, published the Press Freedom Index, an annual report indicating a decline in press freedom of Bangladesh. The country's ranking dropped to 151 out of 180 following the persistent violations of human rights, involving alleged prosecutions, arrests of journalists and restricting media industries to access certain information, including elections (New World Information and Communication Order, n.d.).

### **IV. OBJECTIVE**

The sole objective of this analysis is to find out how dependent Bangladeshi national newspapers are on Foreign News Agencies for propagating international news in national print newspapers (both English and Bengali) after 50 years of Mac Bride's commission, also, why those media agencies are dependent on western news agencies.

### **V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is justified by content analysis. Six national newspapers in Bengali and English were chosen randomly. Among those Bengali newspapers are Bangladesh Pratidin, Prothom Alo and Jugantor. English newspapers are The Daily Star, The Financial Express and The Business Standard. The Daily Star is the highest circulated English daily in Bangladesh, and The Bangladesh Pratidin is the highest circulated Bengali daily. Content analyzed on the date February 1, 2, and 3 of 2021. After analyzing the data, some open-ended questions were asked to the International desk deputy of those respective newspapers to know why Bangladeshi newspapers are giving more priority to western-based news agencies.

### **VI. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

This study is mainly on 6 Bangladeshi newspapers, both English and Bengali, selected randomly from national dailies. The content of newspapers was analyzed for three days of each newspaper. Quantitative content analysis is used in this study.

#### **A. Asian news agency**

According to Wikipedia, there are 48 countries in Asia, but there are 42 news agencies in Asia (Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, n.d.).<sup>[7]</sup> In Bangladesh, prominent Asian news agencies are BSS (Bangladesh), UNB (Bangladesh), Xinhua News Agency (China), Press Trust of India (India), IRNA (Iran), Fars News (Iran), Kyodo News (Japan), ITAR-TASS News Agency (Russia), Anadolu News Agency (Turkey) etc.

Other Asian news organizations include the Organization of Asia-Pacific News Agencies (OANA), a UNESCO-affiliated group of news organizations. It offers a news wire service with content contributed by members. In this area, there are several news organizations. However, this content analysis reveals that Asian news agencies are rarely involved in Bangladeshi print coverage of international news.

#### **B. Content analysis**

February 1, 2 and 3 rd of 2021 has been chosen for content analysis for Bengali newspaper. Bangladesh Pratidin is the highest circulated newspaper among this chosen newspaper in Bangladesh, which has nearly 5

lakh 53 thousand circulations. This newspaper is owned by Basundhara media limited. On those dates, a total of 43 International news has been published. The important thing is that most of the (19 news) international news has been published without mentioning any credentials, and secondly, it was under desk reports (9 news). Total 42 news is collected from agencies, and three news is collected from web-based news portals worldwide. In this newspaper, the agency name is not mentioned on the credit line. The news has been taken from, which are from the USA, Nepal, Netherlands, Pakistan, Russia, China, Myanmar, UK and India etc. Besides this, some news is also collected from international news portals like the Indian news portal [www.news18.com](http://www.news18.com). Another influential Bengali newspaper is the Daily Prothom Alo, the second-largest circulated daily newspaper in Bangladesh. This media is owned by Transcom limited. In those days, this newspaper has published 31 International news. 30 news has been collected from different news agencies and one from a web-based news portal from India; in this newspaper also they have done five reports on the name of desk report and one report collected from the Indian online portal <https://www.thequint.com/>. Another thing is that this newspaper has collected one piece of news from the Bangladesh government news agency BSS that is also related to national news. This newspaper also has 5 lakh 1 thousand 8 hundred circulations. In the credit line, they have mentioned the agency name and the place of news.

Another Bengali newspaper taken for this study is The Daily Jugantor, the third-largest circulated newspaper in Bangladesh. The Jamuna group owns this media. This newspaper also has 2 lakh 90 thousand 2 hundred circulations. In those three days, a total of 46 International news was published in this newspaper. Among that news, 14 news is collected from different news agencies. This newspaper also has done an 18 desk report that also bases on different countries around the world. It has also collected news from Germany-based DW news media, Qatar-based Al-Jazeera, Myanmar-based news portal <https://www.irrawaddy.com/>. In the credit line, they mainly mentioned the 'Jugantor desk' although this news is from different cities worldwide.

The Daily Star is the highest circulated English daily; this daily has about 44 thousand 8 hundred circulations. The Transcom group also owns this newspaper. This newspaper has published 50 International news on those selected three days. Total 48 news is collected from different news agencies, and this newspaper has taken news from 1 from <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/> and <https://www.independent.co.uk/> each. They have done eight news on the name of Agencies without mentioning any particular news agency's name. That news is based mainly on Spain, Myanmar etc. They have also published some news without mentioning any name. They have published nine news from Bangladesh-based news agency UNB, all are related to national news. In the credit line, they have mentioned the agency name and the place of news.

The Financial Express, another newspaper selected for this study, is the second-largest circulated English daily in Bangladesh and is based in Dhaka's capital city. International Publications Limited owns this newspaper. The newspaper has published 89 International news in this time frame. Among those, 86 news items have been collected from different agencies. It has published ten news reports in the name of agencies without mentioning any name of specific agencies. The news is from different parts of the world. Besides agencies, it has taken two news from Ndtv.com and one from [espn.cricinfo.com](http://espn.cricinfo.com).

The Business Standard is 29th circulated daily in Bangladesh. It has 6 thousand circulations, and also it is based in the capital city Dhaka. The Horizon Media and Publication Ltd own this newspaper. In this timeframe, this newspaper has published a total of 56 International news. Among that news, 55 news is from different agencies. They have collected news from UAE, Seoul, USA, Beijing, New York, Mumbai, Tokyo, Washington etc. In the credit line, they have mentioned the city name and agency name.

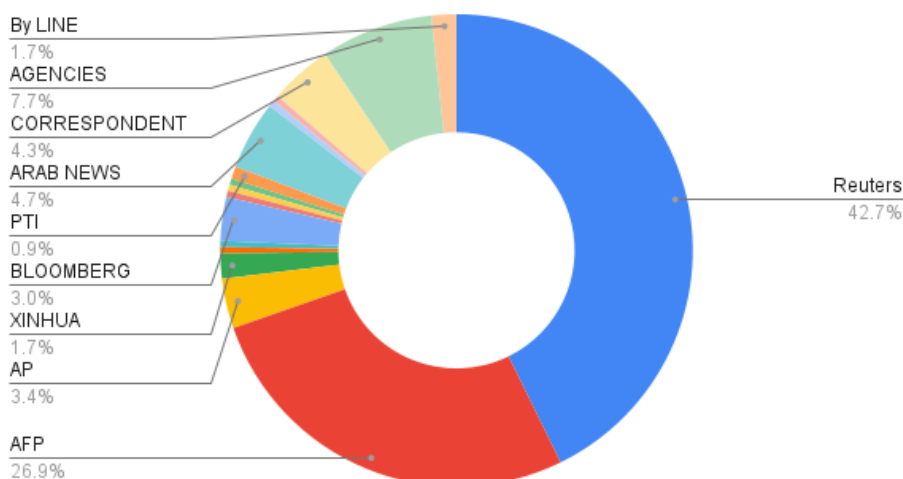
## VII. NEWS CONTENT INVOLVEMENT IN NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS (FOR INTERNATIONAL NEWS)

### A. News covered from agencies

NAME OF AGENCIES	NUMBER OF NEWS
Reuters	100
AFP	63

AP	8
XINHUA	4
MENA	1
WAM	1
BLOOMBERG	7
NEWS18	1
PROJECT SYNDICATE	1
IANIS	1
PTI	2
ARAB NEWS	11
KYODO	1
YONHAP	1
CORRESPONDENT	10
AGENCIES	18
By LINE	4

Number of news, and Name of Agencies



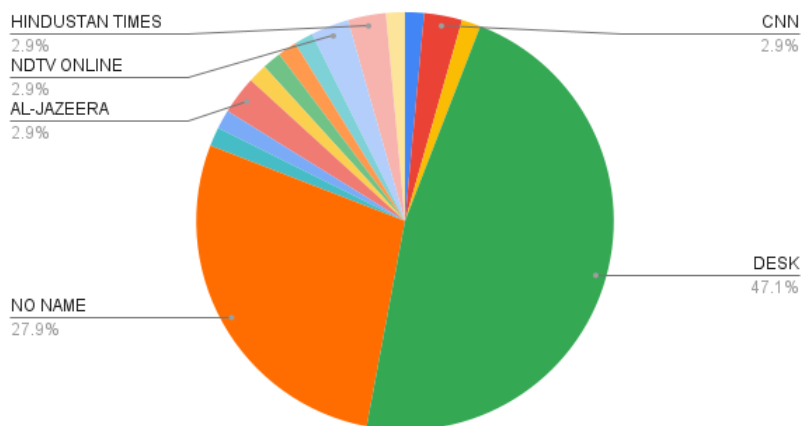
The study shows that in the six national newspapers, the Highest number of news collected from Reuters (100 news) whereas 63 news were taken from AFP. 11 news is taken from ARAB NEWS, ten news from the correspondent, eight from AP, seven from Bloomberg, 4 BYLINE and XINHUA. In the credit line on the name of 'Agencies,' they published 18 news and four news they have published on Byline.

#### B. News covered other than agencies

NAME OF MEDIA	NUMBER OF NEWS
BBC	1
CNN	2

FOREIGN POLICY	1
DESK	32
NO NAME	19
EN GADGET	1
IRRAWADDY	1
AL-JAZEERA	2
DW	1
MAIL ONLINE	1
THE INDEPENDENT UK	1
THE QUINT	1
ESPN	1
NDTV ONLINE	2
HINDUSTAN TIMES	2

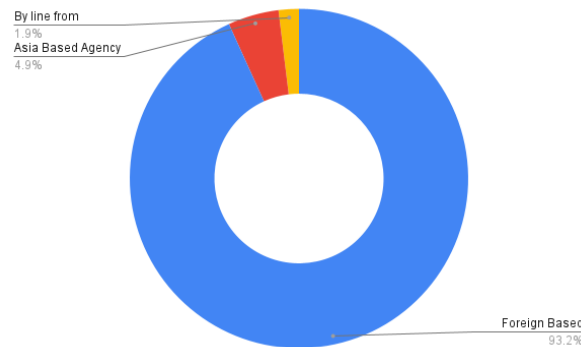
Number of News and Name of Media



Another trend followed by Bangladeshi media is that new published by the name of 'Desk'. 47.1 percent of news published in the giving Desk credentials and some newspapers publish international news without any credentials. Also, major news media like NDTV, Al Jazeera, CNN, and Hindustan Times are also major portals for International news.

#### C. Involvement of News Agencies in National Newspapers Other than the agency

Foreign Based Agency	192
Asia Based Agency	10
By line from Foreign	4



Overall, it shows that the Foreign-based news portals are responsible for 93.2 percent of International news in Bangladesh. Only 4.9 percent of news is collected from Asia-based news agency and 1.9 percent of news is by line.

### VIII. REASONS/ WHY BANGLADESHI NEWSPAPER IS DOING SO

After collecting data, several questions were asked to 3 news dailies international news editor to know more about why they depend on some particular news agencies. Question asked: Why is so much news collected from western news agencies as there are nearly 42 agencies in Asia? Is it possible to collect news from the newspaper's correspondent from abroad? And Is it possible to make equality between Western news agencies and Asian news agencies entirely dependent on Asian news agencies or the newspaper's reporter?

According to Daily Prothom Alo international news editor, newspaper authorities decided to do so, and they have subscription-only from those agencies, and it is impossible for them to appoint their journalist all over the world due to fiscal deficit. According to them, it is not possible to become independent without collecting news from western news agencies. Also, Prothom Alo, the International editor, said that Reuters and AFP could give news first than any other news agency. Also, they have said that only Xinhua has a broader network among Asian news agencies.

According to The Business Standard International news editor, News agencies in rich countries have huge cash buffers to hire better journalists and use sophisticated technology. Thus, their content is rich and reliable. Furthermore, these agencies and news outlets enjoy a higher degree of neutrality, freedom of expression as well as accountability than the ones in the developing world.

Except for a few, countries in Asia are not developed, and there are serious concerns about a rules-based order. As such, news outlets in this region rarely dare to speak the truth – making their coverage limited and often questionable. As opposed to these, Reuters, New York Times, BBC and other outlets in the developed world are far more reliable. There can be a good number of outlets and agencies in Asia and most of the low and middle-income world. But this does not mean they are financially solvent or that they can afford to be reliable.

Over the last decade, many news outlets have mushroomed in Bangladesh, mainly to support the propaganda purposes of vested parties, while many veteran journalists languish in financial instability. About the second part of the question, the same can be said. Poor financial and policy support from both the private and public sectors make it difficult for editors to send reporters abroad. Also, they have said that Asian news agencies are not reliable, and their content is often not comprehensive. Conversely, They buy material from western agencies for foreign coverage. Even while developing articles about their own countries, sometimes they build on reports prepared by Reuters and others — as western or Japanese reporters have both the political and financial support needed to go in-depth in almost anywhere in the world.

According to The Financial Express International news editor, It is easy for them to collect international news from giant news agencies like Afp and Reuters as it is fast and they have wide coverage. Also, it is impossible for them to send journalists worldwide due to financial reasons as it would be very costly; in contrast, collecting news from agencies is much more cost-efficient and fast. To some extent, the Western news agency is also impartial and far more reliable.



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## **IX. CONCLUSION**

Developed countries have a monopoly on international news coverage in Bangladeshi newspapers. Although there was a lot of discussion about news flow in the 1970s, there is not much discussion about it at present. Despite the increase in the number of news outlets, international news flow has remained the same. And that is why the people of Bangladesh have to know about Iran's nuclear, China's air pollution, Militants when it is Muslims and ordinary shooters if English, and the plight of Syria, but who is responsible for this or not. Western also has a vast global network of news outlets for which you can get fast news and pictures from them; moreover, it is definitely financially profitable to get all kinds of news in one place by subscribing. Asian news organizations, on the other hand, have little coverage, as they have fewer subscribers and less money. With the help of the government, the Asian news media can work on this. If this is not done, the developed countries will have a monopoly on international news flow.

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