



Covid19 Pandemic and Media Performance in Bangladesh: A Youth Perspective Study

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Abstract

Mass Media plays a crucial role in the contemporary world and it has become more significant in health information communication since the covid19 pandemic emerged. The study aims to identify how the Bangladeshi mass media responded and performed in tackling the outbreak situation from the perception of selected youths. Employing a mixed research method, the study collected data from selected 100 respondents from an online questionnaire survey. The major findings of the study reveal that to some extent Bangladeshi media performed well in the pandemic updating regular news about the virus, giving advertisements, launching various programs, guidelines regarding health issues and seeking out information in covid related corruption cases. Nevertheless, media helped citizens with information few drawbacks of media has been found for publishing fake news which results rumor and decline of trust in the citizens regarding their programs. The findings appear that majority of the respondents reprimand the health ministry for insufficiency in disseminating health guidelines through effective programs, discontinuing daily press briefing of corona patient. Besides, a great concern has also been expressed as the freedom of media and journalists hampered in the covid19 pandemic, disrupting their work in that challenging time. The overall study finds out that the media performed moderately during covid19 pandemic whereas it could have served better in that situation. The study suggests that media in Bangladesh can perform better if provided adequate freedom to carry out appropriate investigations, develop creative contents to make citizens more aware and familiar with the pandemic, update credible sources of information, and avoid any sort of infodemics, follow international media sources to be more effective and efficient.

Keywords: Covid19 Pandemic; Media; Media in Bangladesh; Media and Covid19 Pandemic

Introduction

Coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic has produced a global health crisis that has had a deeper impact on the way we comprehend our world and our everyday living. For the spread rate of contagion that endangered our sense of security, safety measures needed to be put in place as social and physical distancing. And within this context of physical threat, the role of the different media or mass media at the societal levels cannot be underestimated. Media has always influenced our lives bringing contemporary issues with their pros and cons so that we may know what is happening around us as well as all over the world. Information is power and with information, we ought to know what we are supposed to do and what we are not. In this pandemic situation, rural to urban people are suffering from day-to-day life as people around us are facing death because of this coronavirus. Thereby it is media that shows us guidelines as to how we should maintain our daily routine to survive in this pandemic situation. Social media for instance lead to more communication and more opinion about any sort of incident that occurs around the globe. But it's also true that it does give fake information sometimes. Regardless of this problem, its positive outcome cannot be underestimated.

The first covid19 case was identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei, China, and has resulted in an ongoing pandemic (Coronavirus disease, 2020). Gradually the cases increased in countries like Italy, the USA, Spain, and others; facing several death cases and at some point, these countries-initiated lockdowns to control this outbreak. However, the media has brought this information to all as a safeguard institution. Even when developed nations suffered socially and economically, for a developing country like Bangladesh encountering such a pandemic was a major challenge. The first cases of Covid-19 in Bangladesh were confirmed on 8 March when the entire country was getting ready to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Nahid, 2020). The number of confirmed cases began to rise on the following week that the government took the decision to shut down all educational institutions and a few days later government announced the closure of all public and private offices from March 26 to April 4 in 2020 as part of its efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus (Fighting coronavirus, 2020). However, hospitals, drug stores, and banks remained open with some regulations and people have also been advised not to go out of their homes unless they need to collect food, medicines, or receive any sort of treatment. Public transport services were limited as well.

Media telecast the information to the people as whatever initiatives the government took including regular updates of covid19 affected cases, and live telecasts of press briefings of the health ministry to make citizens informed. Furthermore, covid19-related advertisements, doctors, and, specialist views on talk shows developed consciousness among people to maintain health measures as prescribed by WHO. However, besides showing people these cautious measures media provide major contributions in terms of exposing corruption cases. More than a dozen Bangladeshi health workers have been arrested on charges of selling thousands of fake covid-19 negative certificates (Sumon, 2020). Media brought these offenders in front of the people so that they can be more aware of such corruption. Along with these health workers several local-level corrupted elected officials were brought into the light as some of the journalists have covered the misappropriation of food aid when the government launched a special Open Market Sale operation. Many journalists have been awarded by Transparency International Bangladesh for their investigative approach towards corruption as Ekattor Television's Senior Correspondent Mufti Parvez Nadir Reza won the award for his report which exposed that manufacturer were using toxic chemicals such as methanol in hand sanitizers (TIB awards journalists, 2021).

Despite these positive outcomes, sometimes the media is criticized for fabricating information, not complying with accuracy in news sharing, and also for irregularities in maintaining the standards compared to international standards. During the covid19 pandemic, a lot of eyes are on the news of media, taking this as an advantage media served unauthentic reports without adequate observations. Pandey & Kaioum (2020) analyzed some misinformation and rumors amid covid19 where they discover some of the

decisions of the Bangladesh government which were misinterpreted on social media such as relinquishing house rent for one month for all the dwellers, postponement of electricity bills for three months.

We live in the information era where our life is greatly influenced by worldwide information. Media brings news to us as to what is happening out there, what an individual person should do, what initiatives the government is taking, and all other information so that we can fight pandemics like covid19. People can also know what other countries did in the pandemic situation to tackle the adversity and can compare the democratic nations as well as autocratic nations or developed and developing nations. And for that fact, knowing the global perspective raises the question, of what is happening within our country; where media affects the greater mass. However, taking cues from literature this study tries to zoom in on the context, to find to what extent citizens are satisfied with the performance of our media, and whether Bangladeshi Mass Media is responding enough to make people aware of such a pandemic from the perspective of the youths.

Rationale of the Study

Health communication is the practice of communicating health information, as in public health campaigns, or health education. The purpose of disseminating health information is to influence personal health choices by improving health literacy. In this pandemic situation, media plays a prominent role in disseminating those effective guidelines regarding health communication or proper health-related information.

Bangladeshi media's rank dropped to 146 in 2018 from its position of 144 in 2016 out of a total of 180 countries based on the Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Index (Mass media in Bangladesh, 2020). It seems to have a greater concern that Bangladeshi media is appeared to be globally backward. It's a matter of fact that if the media cannot perform well enough to provide health-related information and guidelines, the country could barely tackle the pandemic crisis. Bangladeshi media's pros cannot be ignored but unfortunately, its cons are more highlighted over the years & majority of the population nowadays barely trust the media & its reliability.

Since media acts as an important factor in governing the affairs of a state, studies have been carried out from people's perspectives in a few countries to know media's capability of guiding mass people during this outbreak, and educating people about health care actions to be taken as well as some negatives noticed in the contemporary activities of media through those studies. The study of Shalvee & Sambhav (2020) for instance found that though the majority of people are content with the services of media, the media itself faced many challenges in India during covid-19, especially regarding the crisis of credibility as many channels and journalists have been reprimanded for spreading fake news. Another study conducted by Gottfried et. al. (2020) on Americans' views of news media provides the evidence that more Americans hold a positive outlook toward media coverage as opposed to negative views and suggests that 59% of the U.S. adults get the required information from media and nearly half of them (49%) said the information media provides is largely accurate.

Many sectors or fields in Bangladesh have been covered in academia during the pandemic such as the health sector in which a study by Al-Zaman (2020) on the health care crisis in Bangladesh, a study by Bhuyan et. al. (2020) on medical college hospital was conducted. Then there was a study by Alam et. al. (2021) on public trust in govt. during the pandemic. Studies on the garment sector have also been carried out as Hossain et. al. (2021) & Hossain & Alam (2022) conducted studies on the impact of covid19 on garment workers, and garment sectors. Abundant studies have been carried out in the education sector such as the impact of covid19 in tertiary education in Bangladesh by Dutta and Smita (2020), prospects and challenges of online education during the covid19 by Das (2021), the covid19 impact on the education sector in Bangladesh by Barua (n.d.). There are some studies on governance that for example

Mollah & Parvin, (2020), and Arif et. al. (2021) can be found where they studied government response during covid19, crisis, and challenges of governance in Bangladesh during covid19. However, the study of media has hardly been covered. Some studies of the media may have been conducted such as the impact of creative social media during a pandemic by Islam et al (2021), social media users' trust in government during the covid19 by Islam et. al. (2021), journalism in Bangladesh by Sultana et. al. (2020) from the perspective of selected journalists but no comprehensive study has been carried out from citizen perspective to capture the performance of media, how the media responded during the pandemic crisis and the level of satisfaction of citizens' towards Bangladeshi media in terms of health communication and other preventive measures during the pandemic crisis.

To fill the gap in literature researchers have undertaken research in these regards to gather information and to know how Bangladeshi media was working in the covid19 situation through people's perspectives. The reader will gain a view of media and its role in the context of Bangladesh as how it influenced our lives regarding covid19 situation in health communication; whether the media in Bangladesh was performing well enough to make awareness among the citizen or whether it required more strategies and upgrades to provide more awareness among the citizens. This study can be used further by policymakers, researchers, and stakeholders to know the contribution of media during the pandemic.

Theoretical clarifications: Review of relevant literature

To comprehend the topic, content analysis has been employed from the available secondary sources of materials like journal articles, blog posts, and newspaper articles. The following points clarify what media is, which comprises Bangladeshi media, how media operates, and related policies and regulations in Bangladesh.

Media: A theoretical concept

Media simply put is a vessel of communication that disseminates information from one source to another whereas mass media can be defined as a means of communication where the information is intended to reach a larger or grander level of population or mass audiences. The most common and popular types of mass media include Print media such as newspapers, magazines, and journals, electronic media such as television, and radio, and digital media or the internet such as different websites like Facebook, online/web pages, etc.

The Bangladeshi media typically refers to Print Media, Broadcast Media; television and radio, & Online Media. The print media of Bangladesh includes different types of dailies, weeklies, biweeklies, & monthlies; there is a single state-owned channel named Bangladesh Television (BTV) and the list of private channels is around 30 (Nayem, 2019). There are an estimated 11.4 million internet users in Bangladesh, and a huge number of online newspapers & news portals are available on different websites; also, some social media, such as Facebook, Twitter become powerful media in Bangladesh (Mass media in Bangladesh, 2020). The major laws that exert influence on Bangladeshi media include the Special Powers Act of 1974, the Official Secrets Act of 1923, the Information & Communication Technology Act of 2006, the Digital Security Act of 2018 & others (Azad, n.d.).

Bangladeshi Media in Covid19: The corona virus was confirmed to have spread to Bangladesh in March 2020. A series of hotline numbers, email addresses & the Facebook page of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) are provided for people to contact if they suspect covid-19 infection or need more information (Covid-19 pandemic in Bangladesh, 2020).

One of the published reports in The Daily Star mentioned that nine foreign diplomats in Bangladesh have taken to social media, calling for upholding the freedom of expression and saying facts, during any crisis, are more important than ever to save lives (Media more important than ever, 2020). Another publishing says how ‘Mission Save Bangladesh’ has amplified the role and reach of print media. During such trying times, publishers should ensure authentic news & encourage brands & partners to support each other to sustain the industry, & help society (Hassan, 2020).

The Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Mohammad Javed Patwary has expressed his gratitude to news reporters who covered the police's relentless hard work to tackle the coronavirus pandemic and he thanked all the media journalists, including print and electronic media, for their unwavering support and the public service alongside Bangladesh Police amidst the coronavirus situation (IGP thanks media, 2020). All these data show how media has an impact on our lives regarding this outbreak situation in Bangladesh & how this media is working towards the betterment of people.

Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to identify the performance of media in the covid19 pandemic situation in Bangladesh from the perception of youths.

Specific Objectives

- a) To know how media addresses the mass audiences about covid19 information.
- b) To identify the contemporary responses media took in the covid19 pandemic.
- c) To measure the competency of media in covid19 pandemic.
- d) To know people's level of reliability and satisfaction in Bangladeshi media during covid19.

Conceptual/Analytical Framework

The framework of this study is built up according to the research title, research objectives, and the study of relevant literature. The dependent and independent variables of the study are identified based on their relationship and are presented below in the following figure:

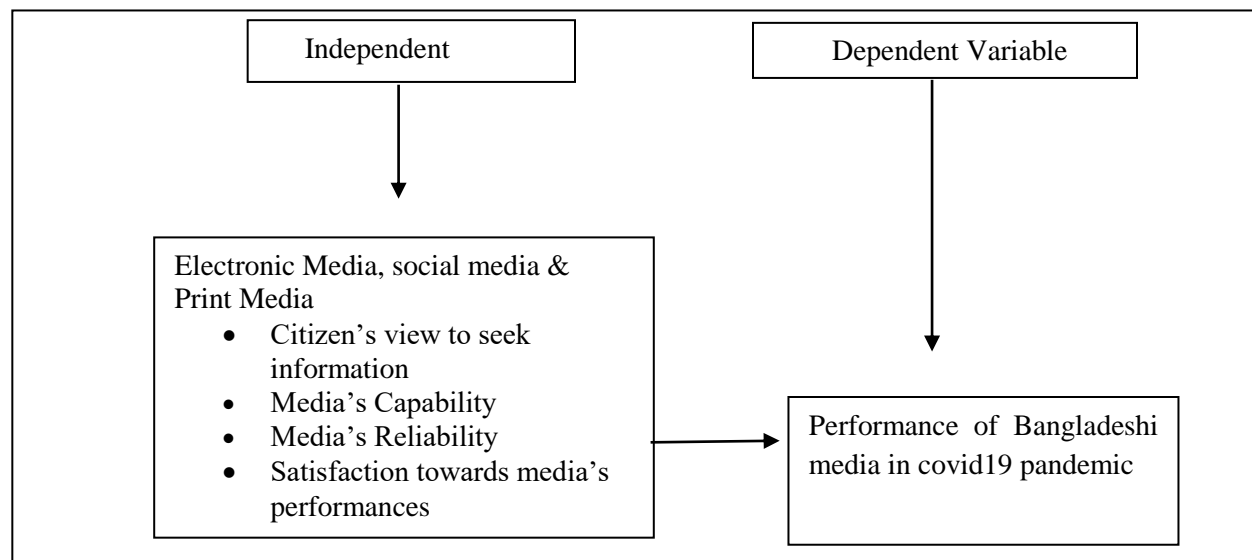


Figure 1: Relation between independent and dependent variable

Research Methodology

The present research is exploratory research as it investigates and studies the phenomenon of people's perception of media performances during the covid19 pandemic crisis in Bangladesh which has not been studied before and it will have a contribution to the social science literature. The study uses data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected from a number of 100 respondents while secondary sources of data have been searched from electronic sources. The respondents are between the ages of 18 to 30 and are selected through a purposive sampling method who were able to respond suitably and were university students, job seekers, freelancers, and different professionals. This youth age group of respondents were selected because they are engaged with different websites or social media platform and they are likely to be more informative and updated through present time digital and electronic media. The data were collected through a questionnaire survey online. The structured questionnaire with both open-ended and close-ended questions was taken into consideration. The data presentation is done through descriptive statistics and presented in tables and charts. Some methodological limitations of this research are limited research studies on this topic since it is a very recent phenomenon and the insufficient sample size.

Data Findings and Analysis

The research is exploratory research where primary data has been collected through 100 respondents in an online goggle form between September and October 2020. The respondents were asked both open and close-ended questions and based on their responses overall analysis has been made, and for some clarification and, comparison secondary sources are brought into consideration. The analysis is presented below;

1. Information Seeking

• Preference for Knowing Regular Updates of Information

To know people's perspectives towards the media this study needs to know how much they are interested in the news regarding covid19 since two crucial steps in this very outbreak situation are to be informed and to be prepared. This study finds out that among 100 respondents only 40% look for regular corona updates whereas 11.7% do not and 48.9% gave a partial answer. Those who do not look for a regular update of news might face certain problems or risks such as news might publish that in a certain area a newly infected person is identified and if those people do not know about this they might get infected as well. It is important to be updated.

When the respondents were asked what kind of information is particularly important to them regarding covid19, major responses were; worldwide virus trends, precaution measures, awareness-building programs or campaigns, and regular press briefings.

• Source of Getting Information about Covid19

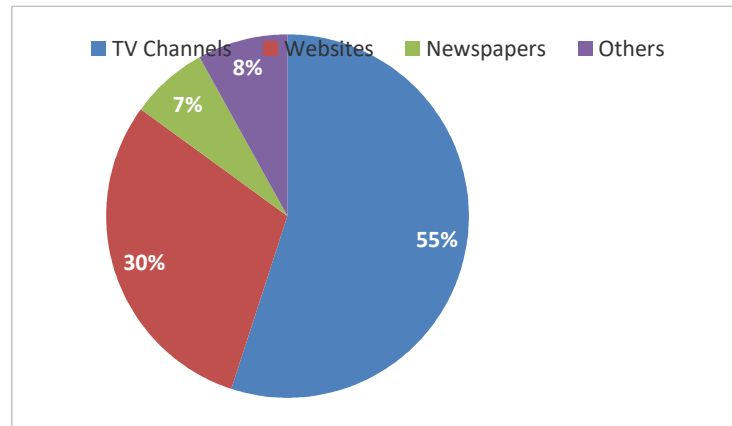


Figure 2, Source: Online Survey, 2020

As the data shows the majority (55%) are interested in TV channels for getting news about the virus followed by Websites (30%), Others (8%), and Newspapers (7%). People nowadays skip newspapers which were once the major source for getting information. Now electronic media is at the peak of providing all sorts of information and many people are following electronic media as their main source to be updated.

• Press Briefing

A press briefing is a media event in which notable individuals or organizations invite journalists to hear them speak and ask necessary questions. During covid19 it has been a very important phenomenon and the Directorate General of Health Service (DGHS) had been conducting regular health bulletins per se. But DGHS's regular online health bulletin on the coronavirus situation in the country was no longer available from August 12, 2020, according to DGHS sources (Daily coronavirus updates, 2020). When the respondents were asked about its appropriateness majority (51.7%) answered it was inappropriate to stop press briefing, 18.3% remain neutral, 13.3% answered it was appropriate and 16.7% gave no comment.

One of the respondents (respondent number 12) who thinks it was appropriate said,

‘Every day, the information was more or less the same. We can get it from headlines of TV news’.

However, another respondent (respondent number 63) who thinks it was inappropriate said,

‘Press briefing is important because sometimes reporters asked necessary questions to the authorities which can be helpful and government officials can be held accountable.’

2. Media's Capability

Whenever there are an outbreak or any major incident people tend to turn to the media for information. Awareness about the pandemic is essential for the citizen to cope with the outbreak and when the respondents were asked if being aware of the virus is necessary or not 100% of the respondents agreed to it. However, when it comes to awareness it raises the question of the media's capabilities to initiate such awareness through health education or health communication. Among our respondents,

46.7% answered in favor of media that the media is able to make people aware whereas 16.7% said no and 36.6% gave a partial answer.

• Guidelines & Programs

Mass media has an imperative role in today's world and in this very pandemic situation where it can provide a unified platform for all public health communications, comprehensive healthcare education guidelines, and robust social distancing strategies while still maintaining social connections (Anwar et. al. 2020). The respondents were asked how much media at this pandemic situation through their guidelines and awareness programs such as talk shows, reporting, advertising, covid19 related awareness campaigning helps them to fight or understand covid19 & their answer is given below in the table based on the percentage.

Table 1, Source: Online Survey, 2020

Responses	No. of Respondents (100) Percentage (%)
A Great Deal	20%
A Fair Amount	50%
Not Very Much	26.7%
Not at all	3.3%

Only 20% of the total respondents answered that the media helps them a great deal in this covid19 situation whereas 50% said media helps them a fair amount and 26.7% answered media helps but not very much regarding the covid19 situation and 3.3% answered negatively on this regard. This data shows that majority are agreed or somewhat agreed that the media is capable of helping them in this pandemic.

• Role in Curbing Corruption

Mass media not only raises public awareness about corruption, its causes, consequences, and possible remedies but also investigates and reports incidences of corruption. In this study, 45% of the respondents agreed that the media helps bring the corrupted officials to light and make people more aware of such corruption during this pandemic where false certificates and medicines are given by the officials and, doctors. However, 41.7% remain neutral followed by 6.7% who disagreed and 6.2% who strongly agreed and 0.4% strongly disagreed.

Some of the respondents expressed their views in the following manner:

"... journalists through their investigative programs exposed a lot of corrupted officials, politicians and doctors and we people can be more conscious about these corruptions" (Respondent Number 6)

"...many journalists discover politicians who stole rice & oil that were for the poor people" (Respondent Number 13)

"Bangladeshi media helps to disclose the unethical activities of health professionals such as Dr. Sabrina Chowdhury, and Shahed were arrested for graving misconduct". (Respondent Number 73)

These responses gave this study an outlook on the media and its role to show people the corruption happening in the country. Regent Hospital Chairman/owner Md. Shahed was arrested over his involvement in the covid-19 test scam and several other fraudulent activities such as embezzling money from the patients and a number of 6000 fake covid19 test certificates were found by the RAB (Rapid Action Battalion) after their raid in Uttara and Mirpur branches of Regent Hospital (Covid-19 certificate forgery, 2020). The police also arrested JKG Health Care Chairman Dr. Sabrina Arif Chowdhury in a case filed over her alleged involvement in a recent Covid-19 testing scam (JKG chairman Sabrina arrested, 2020).

During the first phases of the lockdown period, the government launched several operations or food assistance programs such as seven stimulus packages, Open-Market Sale, and the Vulnerable Group Feeding program to help targeted beneficiaries as millions of people got unemployed during that time. But most of the time, misappropriation of food aid was visible where hundreds of elected officials and ruling party members were stealing the subsidized rice that was meant for the poor, and also there were targeted beneficiaries who belong to well-off families. On 9 July 2020, based on some investigation, Daily Prothom Alo reported about a discrepancy where the vice president of the Rajshahi City Farmer's League, a branch of the ruling party, received cash assistance of TK 2,500, although it was meant for the poor beneficiary (Lata, 2020).

• Freedom of Media

This study found that 100% of respondents agreed when they were asked if media should have freedom or they should be free of political restraints.

One of the respondents (Respondent Number 7) said,

“In many cases, journalists have been sued whenever they tried to investigate/report corruption.”

Another respondent (Respondent Number 32) said,

“Many times, our journalists and newspapers could not bring forth the corruption cases because of political restraints and some of the laws even create barriers in this case as well”

Many activists also commented on the media that the pandemic has worsened freedom of the press in Bangladesh, with the government increasingly using a digital security law to stifle criticism. A study on 200 journalists conducted by Sultana et al. (2020) during this pandemic, pointed out that 63% of journalists believed government is not sincere toward the free flow of information although media freedom is important from both citizen's and journalist's perspectives.

Rezaur Rahman Lenin, a UN rights consultant, said that at least 85 journalists have been charged under the 2018 law during the pandemic. As such cases can be seen when on April 18, 2020, four journalists were sued under Digital Security Act 2018, when a complaint was filed by a ruling party leader. One of the accused claimed that a lawsuit was filed against them so that they do not report on corruption committed by ruling party politicians (Bay, 2020).

The arrest of Rozina Islam, a senior female reporter of the Bangladeshi daily Prothom Alo, during covid19 on allegations of stealing confidential official documents and espionage was another depiction of such an instance that create widespread unrest and protest nationwide. Bangladesh government has faced severe backlash or criticism both nationally and internationally for the incident as it was directly related to the freedom of information, and freedom of media. The UN, Amnesty International, and many international non-governmental organizations such as Human Rights Watch, National Press Club in Washington D.C., and the National Press Club Journalism Institute (U.S.) have condemned and

expressed concern over the arrest of Rozina Islam and have urged the release of Islam (Arrest of Rozina Islam, 2021).

3. Media's Reliability

• Information Distortion

It cannot be ignored that the media sometimes gave people fake information about various phenomena and in this pandemic situation, this could be a major issue.

Based on a report by WHO, in the first 3 months of 2020, nearly 6 000 people around the globe were hospitalized because of coronavirus misinformation & at least 800 people may have died due to such infodemics related to covid-19 (Fighting misinformation in covid-19, 2021).

The respondents were asked about the media's corruption of giving fake information regarding covid19 and their answers which are followed by a pie chart are given below.

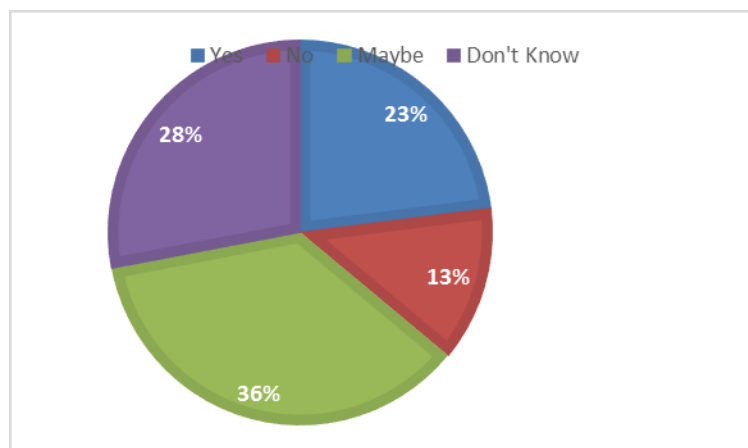


Figure 3, Source: Online Survey, 2020

As the study shows 23% of the respondents said media provides fake information whereas only 13% believe that media doesn't provide any fake information & 36% of the respondents gave a partial answer & 28% answered they don't know actually if media provide such fake information.

When they were asked about the source or channel which provided fake information some of them answered and others prefer not to tell anything about this regard. Most of the respondents point their fingers at social media which disseminates most of the fake information.

One of the respondents (Respondent Number 18) mentioned it was Somoy TV that broadcast fake information, another respondent (Respondent Number 26) mentioned that it was some YouTube content and some other respondents answered that every news channel has more or less distorted information with one another and the information of being fake is almost possible for every channel. This can lead to a lack of trust in the media as well as panic among people.

Several infodemics were pointed out by the respondents like Queen Elizabeth tested positive for coronavirus, Vladimir Putin has dropped 800 tigers and lions all over the country to push people to stay home, police are beating ordinary people during the lockdown in Spain, "good Muslims" won't get affected by corona, as a tropical country the virus won't hit Bangladesh, an infant uttering the remedy for coronavirus after being born, were on many websites, especially on FB.

• Bangladesh Media in Comparison with International Media

Nowadays people are not only looking for information from national media but also from international media such as CNN, BBC, and. More than 80% of respondents replied that they look for corona updates on international media as well and when they were asked which media is more reliable to them 55.2% answered both whereas 32.8% answered international and 10.3% didn't respond and 1.7% said national media. The respondents who said international media is more reliable put down some reasons which focus on distorted information between National and International media.

One of the respondents (Respondent Number 60) said,

"The amount of covid19 affected people declared (observed) by international authorities are greater than Nation authorities".

Another respondent (Respondent Number 32) replied that,

"Sometimes international media launches various programs regarding this pandemic whereas our media lacks initiative in this regard"

4. Satisfaction towards Media

Data (Figure 3) shows 56.7% respondents rated 3 which is neither bad nor good but more or less on a moderate satisfactory level whereas 5% rated 1 followed by 11.7% rated 2, 25% rated 4 and 1.6% rated 5. In total this outcome is moderately good although the media can even do better depending on certain objectives and initiatives; however, the data is still optimistic.



Figure 4, Source: Online Survey, 2020

And the figure shows that Bangladeshi mass media is at a mid-level of performance. This average rating is the reflection of respondents' outlook as a great deal of misleading information causes dissatisfaction among them which leads to a lack of trust & many are not satisfied with the programs & guidelines demonstrated by the media, as for many, they are not getting enough or required information.

But if we look at the study by Nielsen et al. (2020) in six countries (Argentina, Germany, South Korea, Spain, the UK, and the US), collected in late March and early April 2020, discovered that in every country majority of respondents rate news organizations relatively trustworthy and a majority of respondents mentioned that media working in their countries have helped them to understand the crisis and explain what they can do at that moment; in every country, only minority mentioned that they have

come across a great deal of false and misleading information whereas the majority of the respondents didn't.

Looking at the bright side it can be said that the media of a developing nation like Bangladesh is doing well which may not be as satisfactory as those developed nations. However, with proper response/initiatives, Bangladeshi media can do better in the future & can make citizens more satisfied.

Discussion & Recommendation

Bangladeshi mass media has a major role to play amid the covid19 pandemic to inform and aware people. The study findings reveal that media is doing better in certain criteria although it lacks initiative and competency in other criteria too. Media has the power to calm the mind of the people as well as drive people towards positive and necessary action. However, media is also capable to terrorize people and make chaos as many instances were found where Bangladeshi mass media disseminate infodemics among citizens.

Even Sultana et al. (2020) in their studies showed that 36% of journalists believe Bangladeshi media is responsible for fake news and rumors. Some of the respondents point out that media workers in Bangladesh should collect information only from credible sources and should maintain credibility to stop confusing or contradicting facts whether it is Facebook/Twitter pages, news publishers, YouTube content, or any other media.

More than half of the respondents criticized the closing of the press briefing and many respondents said press briefing should be continued and highlighted that those potential legitimate questions can be asked during a press briefing that can be acknowledged as well as addressed and can make people better understand the overall situation.

Bangladeshi media need to respond better than it is responding now because people mostly in the rural area are illiterate and they more or less don't care about the virus because of their fatalistic attitudes and in this situation only the media can make them understand with more active and creative outcomes. As for many respondents, the guidelines and programs seem not to be enough and some of them put some recommendations as Bangladeshi media should provide more awareness programs, recruit more resourceful staff, show their professional skills, and make creative content so that people can understand the importance of being aware. A study on social media by Islam et al. (2021) find out that creative social media can have a significant effect on Covid-19 prevention, as it helps enhance the knowledge of Covid-19 precautions online, and this knowledge contributes to preventing the covid-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. The respondents also recommend that Bangladeshi Media can follow various international channels as in their report system and it should organize more talk shows on television or via online programs.

Many corruption cases have been brought to light through different media and journalists and this is a very vital function of media according to the respondents. They further recommend that the media should focus more on the activities of authorities, doctors, and officials so that they can be held accountable. For this, they strongly encourage and support media freedom without any political restraints.

Conclusions

People are not living in the same world they used to due to this worldwide pandemic. Their daily lifestyles have changed, and certain standards are now prescribed to maintain their lives or to survive. Mass media help people to understand the current situation. Without media and its process of transmitting information, people might not have any knowledge of the virus, and what they should do, what

government and other nations are doing, what sort of steps can hamper their lives. Thus, the importance of media cannot be underestimated. This study has been conducted to identify the responses of media during this pandemic crisis, its competency, level of satisfaction, and reliability of citizens towards Bangladeshi media. Since no comprehensive study has been undertaken regarding these aspects during this outbreak from the perspective of citizens this study gave a major outlook from such perspective and revealed major positive and negative aspects of media contributions. The primary data of this exploratory research via 100 respondents show that Bangladeshi media is doing somewhat better as people are moderately satisfied with the performance of Bangladeshi media with the programs and guidelines it launches, with the investigative approaches through which it exposes culprits. However, as per the study, people think Bangladeshi media is neither credible nor competent enough in this very pandemic situation as media spread a lot of rumors and fake news as well and people want more awareness programs, more creative content, more talk shows, and our media are not doing enough in these criteria. Bangladeshi media should focus on these and launch various awareness programs or initiate guidelines programs as per international standards and with major creative content. Besides people believe this is high time government should give more freedom to the media so that they can investigate more corruption which is often clamped down by the powerful politicians and authorities. Bangladeshi media should also avoid publishing fake news because it makes media unreliable to the people. With better performances and responses media can bring positive changes to society in this very situation.

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