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Journalist Insecurity & State Control over Journalism in Bangladesh

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Master in International Studies

Supervisor: PhD. Cátia Miriam Costa, Integrated Researcher and Invited Assistant Professor, Center for International Studies

ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon

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SOCIOLOGIA
E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

Department of History

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Abstract:

The media upholds democracy and rights of mass people in the contemporary globe, and it is regarded as the fourth estate of a state. It is known to all that freedom of press is a fundamental right of citizens in a democracy. This fundamental right is being questioned by world governments bearing manifold interpretation in the related laws and systems along with different kinds of insecurity issues like killing, force disappearance, attacking or being threatened. Mass-media systems of the world vary from one another according to the economy, polity, religion, and culture of different societies. Journalism and freedom of speech has been an important part of a democratic society from the very beginning of modern history. Violence, threats, and insecurity against journalists all over the world have been increasing steadily. Additionally, fear of losing jobs, political pressure and harassment by the state-authority or political leaders, providing anti-public law and self-censorship are suffocating media freedoms every now and then. A good number of researches have been done; and published literature on the subject matter is also ample. But there are very few on the issue of media-control and journalist insecurity in Bangladesh. This research is an attempt to explore the journalists' insecurity issues and overt/covered control mechanisms by the state that has been practiced over the mainstream news media in Bangladesh in different times. The study mostly focused on the socio-political environment of journalists' insecurity and state-sponsored media-control mechanisms in Bangladesh. There were possibilities to work with other countries, but the area has been chosen based on Bangladeshi Media to add something new to that gap.

Key Words: Bangladesh, State, Control, Threat, Journalist, Insecurity, Journalism, Press Freedom

Resumo:

Os meios de comunicação social defendem a democracia e os direitos das pessoas de massas no mundo contemporâneo, e é considerado como o quarto estado. Todos sabem que a liberdade de imprensa é um direito fundamental dos cidadãos numa democracia. Este direito fundamental está a ser questionado por governos mundiais com múltiplas interpretações nas leis e sistemas relacionados, juntamente com diferentes tipos de questões de insegurança como matar, forçar o desaparecimento, atacar ou ser ameaçado. Os sistemas de mass-media do mundo variam uns dos outros de acordo com a economia, política, religião e cultura de diferentes sociedades. O jornalismo e a liberdade de expressão têm sido uma parte importante de uma sociedade democrática desde o início da história moderna. A violência, as ameaças e a insegurança contra os jornalistas em todo o mundo têm vindo a aumentar constantemente. Além disso, o medo de perder empregos, a pressão política e o assédio por parte da autoridade do Estado ou dos líderes políticos, proporcionando leis anti-públicas e auto-censura, sufocam de vez em quando as liberdades dos meios de comunicação social. Um bom número de pesquisas tem sido feito; e a literatura publicada sobre o assunto também é ampla. Mas há muito poucos sobre a questão do controlo dos media e da insegurança dos jornalistas no Bangladesh. Esta investigação é uma tentativa de explorar as questões de insegurança dos jornalistas e os mecanismos de controlo aberto/coberto pelo Estado que tem sido praticado sobre os principais meios de comunicação social no Bangladesh em diferentes épocas. O estudo centrou-se principalmente no ambiente sócio-político da insegurança dos jornalistas e nos mecanismos de controlo dos meios de comunicação social patrocinados pelo Estado no Bangladesh. Havia possibilidades de trabalhar com outros países, mas a área foi escolhida com base nos meios de comunicação social do Bangladesh para acrescentar algo de novo a essa lacuna.

Palavras-chave: Bangladeche, Estado, Controlo, Ameaça, Jornalista, Insegurança, Jornalismo, Liberdade de Imprensa

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	8
1.1. Background of the Study.....	8
Control mechanism over news media: historical overview.....	9
Worldwide control mechanisms by democratic or monarchic sate.....	11
Freedom of press: Some fatal consequences in Bangladesh.....	13
1.2 Research objectives.....	15
1.3 Hypotheses	16
1.4 Research Method.....	17
1.5 Significance of Research.....	18
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	19
1.7 Limitation of the Study	19
1.8 Research Ethics	20
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	22
2.1. Freedom of Press.....	23
2.2 Early days of print & control mechanism of print media.....	23
2.3 The press restrictions at the USA.....	25
2.4 New Zealand.....	26
2.5 Egypt.....	27
2.6 Situation all over Europe.....	28
2.7 TEN Most Censored Countries.....	30
CHAPTER THREE: JOURNALISM IN BANGLADESH.....	33
Secured, Free or Controlled? Facts and strategies	
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION	53
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	57

Glossary of Acronyms

CPI- Committee to Protect Journalists

FH- Freedom House

RSF- Reporters Sans Frontiers

NPCB- National Press Club of Bangladesh

DRU- Dhaka Reporters unity

CRAB- Crime Reporters Association Bangladesh

PIB- Press Institute Bangladesh

ICB- Information Commission Bangladesh

CIA- Central Intelligence Agency

FM- frequency modulation

ICT- Information and Communication Technology

VOA- Voice of America

UNHC- United Nations High Commission

EU- European Union

DUJ- Dhaka Union of Journalists

BFUJ- Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists

NOAB- Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh

BJCB- Broadcast Journalist Center Bangladesh

RAB - Rapid Action Battalion

DJFI- Directorate General of Forces Intelligence

NSI- National Security Intelligence

TIB- Transparency international Bangladesh

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study:

Freedom of speech has been considered as an important pillar of democracy. The liberty of the news media is also essential to the nature of the Free State. Every free man has an undoubted right to express his thoughts before the public; and freedom of press works for strengthening democracy and peoples' rights. But this freedom is being hindered due to the states' authoritarian attitudes and controlling mechanisms to the journalists and mainstream media. Formulation and implementation of related laws with certain terms bearing manifold interpretations to regulate press-freedom has been manifested in many countries. The government of Bangladesh has also enacted several such laws in past years. The authority is empowered to implement the related laws, that takes the opportunity of diverging interpretation of the terms and the use of the word 'Govt.' is prone to act for wrongful gain and sometimes for malicious purpose. Article 7 of Bangladesh's constitution ensures that all powers of the Republic belong to the people. In Bangladesh, democratic government is exercising powers through the persons elected by the people; and such a government claims their transparency and accountability (Rahman, 2013)¹.

This research reflects the insecurity issues and announced-unannounced or various kinds of control mechanisms by the state practiced over the mainstream media in Bangladesh. As we all know, freedom of speech is a fundamental right to every citizen of Bangladesh. This fundamental right is being questioned due to the institutional intervention with the use of the word 'government' and other employed terms that bear manifold interpretation in the related systems. This research mostly discusses different insecurity issues of journalists, various overt and covered control mechanisms

along with some black laws in the aspects of news media in Bangladesh. In this section the researcher tries to give an overview of the subject matter of this research.

As my research topic is about the insecurity issues for journalists and state control over the news media in Bangladesh, first we must know the definition of different media and censorship of media. According to The Columbia encyclopedia definition, media control or censorship refers to the boundaries provided by those who are in the power to regulate and oversee media. This control may be the state control, ownership control, business control or various kinds of control (The Columbia encyclopedia, 2001).

Censorship is an institutional mechanism to control and suppress any expression that can be a potential threat to the state. From an historical time, censorship has been used to monitor public morals, to control public awareness, and to silence dissent opinions. The origin of official censorship can be traced back to Rome in 443 BC. China introduced its first censorship law in 300 AD (Newth, 2010). Usually, the government censors media i.e. newspapers, magazines, books, news broadcasts, and movies – before publish, broadcast or release (Bennett and Naim, 2015).

According to the World Press Freedom Index 2021 of Reporters Without Border (RSF), Bangladesh is one of the most dangerous and violent countries in South Asia for media journalists (RSF, 2021). Along with different criminal groups, sometimes threats come from the state authority as well. The risks are increasing day by day with killing, harassment, torture, arrest, force disappearance and death threats to the journalists for the news reports or opinions which expose the truth or hurt the interest of a specific group. The deterrent on news publication or broadcast and embargo on giving advertisement to the media- are new forms of control mechanisms that have been witnessed in Bangladesh. This creates an impact to the financial security of mass media workers directly.

Control mechanism over news media: historical overview

For this research work it is needed to learn the early days of journalists' insecurity and state control briefly in the introductory part. As print media is the first form of news media, we will focus on its history in this part. History of print media and written communication follows the progress of civilization which, in turn, moves in response to changing cultural technologies. The transfer of complex information, ideas and concepts from one individual to another, or to a group, underwent extreme evolution since prehistoric times. It's been 30,000 years since the first evidence of written

communication recorded; and it is still dramatically changing in different forms. With the boon of amazing advances in technology in recent years, nowadays the scenario is changing faster than ever before. Technical breakthrough alters the way we perceive the universe and the way we communicate with one another. The print-media is the most important and acceptable form of communication that is being threatened by state from the very beginning of its journey (Piechota, 2002)².

The Licensing of the Press Act 1662 is an important example of restrictions over print media in its early times from any government. It was an act of the Parliament of England that titles “An Act for preventing the frequent abuses in printing seditious treasonable and unlicensed Books and Pamphlets and for regulating of Printing and Printing Presses.” It was repealed by the Statute Law Revision Act 1863. Printing Press was not to be set up without notice to the Stationer’s Company. A king’s messenger had power by warrant of the king or a Secretary of the state to enter and search for unlicensed presses and printing. Severe penalties by fine and imprisonment were denounced against offenders. The act was successively renewed up to 1679 (Patterson, 1993)³.

Then Vernacular Press Act, in British India, law enacted in 1878 to curtail the freedom of the Indian-language (non-English) press. This one is an important example of first provided restrictions from the government in Indian subcontinent proposed by Lord Lytton, then Viceroy of India (governed 1876–80), the act was intended to prevent the vernacular press from expressing criticism of British policies-notably, the opposition that had grown with the outset of the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–80). The act excluded language publications (Britannica, 2015)⁴.

Daya Thussu, a Professor of International Communication explored different control mechanisms over media from state in his different scientific articles. Thussu (2006) deals with the relationship between media and modernization- a topic which has raised a lively debate within the field of media and communication. Changes in communication technologies have been widely regarded as a tool to political and economic development, although the assessments of the outcomes (and beneficiaries) of such changes have varied. Ruling authority from different times put power on

² D Patterson Ray, 1993, “*The Exclusive Right*”, GA: University of Georgia Press.

³D Britannica,2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Vernacular-Press-Act>, accessed 18 October 2020.

⁴ CPJ report 2015, <https://cpj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CPJ.2015.Annual.Report.pdf>, accessed October 2020.

the media using different means. According to Thussu, the media have been dominated by the influential groups of the society (Thussu, 2006).

Nielsen and Levy (2009) have tried to explore the intertwined connection between journalism and democracy. According to them Journalism and democracy are inter-connected where society is changing rapidly. But people are to decide what kind of journalism they prefer, what kind of democracy they want and what kind of connection they endure.

Worldwide control mechanisms by democratic or monarchic state:

Here, the 2015 list of 10 Most Censored Countries from the part of the Committee to Protect Journalists' (CPJ) annual publication, titled "Attacks on the Press" can be discussed briefly. Their research found out that Eritrea and North Korea are the first and second most censored countries worldwide, where the press is most restricted. The list is based on the research that used the criteria ranging from imprisonment and repressive laws to harassment of journalists and restrictions on Internet access. According to their research, seven of the 10 most censored countries are- Eritrea, Ethiopia, Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Iran, China, and Myanmar; that are also among the top 10 worst jailers of journalists worldwide (CPJ, 2015). Bangladesh was also on the list but not among those 10. More than half of the print journalists who have been imprisoned globally are charged with anti-state crimes, including in China, the world's worst jailer and the eighth most censored country. Of the 44 journalists imprisoned- the largest figure is in China since CPJ began its annual census in 1990; 29 were held on anti-state charges. Other countries that use the charge to crush critical voices include Saudi Arabia (third most censored), where the ruling monarchy, not satisfied with silencing domestic dissent, teamed up with other governments in the Gulf Cooperation Council to ensure that criticism of leadership in any member state is dealt with severely (CPJ, 2015)⁵.

American Journalist Dave Roos wrote an article titled "Are there limits to freedom of the press in the U.S.?" where he described the press freedom of USA mentioning different laws or restrictions provided by state to press (Roos, ND)⁶. He states, "*It's important to understand that in most cases,*

⁵Dave Roos, "Are there limits to freedom of the press in the U.S.?" <http://people.howstuffworks.com/freedom-of-the-press.html>, accessed 18 October 2020.

⁶howtolaw.com, ND, Restrictions on the freedom of the media, <http://www.howtolaw.co/restrictions-on-the-freedom-of-the-media-392220>, accessed October 2020.

freedom of the press is identical to freedom of speech under the law. Members of the media enjoy the same rights and are subject to the same restrictions as members of the public. However, some states have passed shield laws that offer journalists stronger protections against accusations of libel or naming confidential sources in non-federal cases.”

According to his findings, in 2005, New York Times reporter Judith Miller was in jail for 85 days accused of contempt of the court, when she refused to reveal the name of the source who leaked the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame. In the next year, two journalists for the San Francisco Chronicle also spent time in jail for refusing the source who leaked the closed grand jury testimony in the Barry Bonds false case. The New Zealand Bill Of Rights of Act 1990 guarantees the right of freedom of expression. However, the exercise of this right by the press and print Medias are subject to the restrictions (howtolaw.co, ND)⁷.

Prior to independence, Bangladeshi media history began under the authority of the colonial governments. In 1931, the India Press (Emergency Power) Act was passed giving the local government authority to forfeit the press. Another landmark measure took effect in 1965 under the Pakistani Government, the Defiance of Pakistan Ordinance, which restricted the freedom of Press altogether. *The Daily Ittefaq* and *the New Nation Press* were penalized for criticizing the Government. Just before the independence in 1971, four daily newspapers and a periodical were found abandoned and their ownership was vested with the government (Haider, 2014)⁸.

In 1972, the Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh was formally endorsed. In this new Constitution, the right of every citizen of freedom of speech and expression and freedom of the press was guaranteed. In 1973, The Printing Presses and Publication (Declaration and Registration) Act was introduced. In 2001, the Dramatic Performance Act of 1876 was repealed; and the Copyright Ordinance of 1962 was revised and became law in 2000 (Freedom house, 2013). Bangladesh’s media environment remained relatively open in 2012, despite some worrying signs of intolerance by the government and an increase in physical harassment against

⁷ Julfiqar D Haider, 2014, “Bangladesher Songbadpotro O Sangbadikota” (History of Bangladeshi newspaper and journalism), Dhaka: Nabajug Prokashoni.

⁸Freedom House, 2013, “Freedom of the press”, retrieved from <https://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FOTP%202013%20Full%20Report.pdf>.

the press. Although the constitution provides for freedom of expression subject to “reasonable restrictions,” the press can be constrained by national security legislation as well as by sedition and criminal libel laws. The punishment for sedition ranges from three years to life in prison. The 15th amendment to the constitution, passed in July 2011, includes language that equates criticism of the constitution with sedition. Journalists can also be arrested under the 1974 Special Powers Act—which allows detentions of up to 90 days without trial—for stories that are critical of government officials or policies, or they can be charged with contempt of court. Arrests stemming from defamation charges continued to occur in 2012 (Freedom house, 2013)⁹

Freedom of Press: Some Fatal Consequences in Bangladesh

This part can be started with a recent and most talked incident that happened with a dexterous investigative journalist of most popular daily newspaper “*Prothom Alo*” named Rozina Islam. According to a news report published on *The Daily Star* in Bangladesh, a case has been filed against Senior Reporter Rozina Islam under the Official Secrets Act. The researcher has found that a deputy secretary of the Health Services Division under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare filed the case against the journalist. *The Daily Star* report said, Rozina Islam has been charged under sections 379 and 411 of the Penal Code and sections 3 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act. Rozina went to the health ministry in the Secretariat to perform her professional duties. She was confined in a room of the ministry and her mobile phone was confiscated. At one stage, she fell sick there. Before this incident Rozina made some brilliant news reports against some big corruptions of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. DRU, BFUJ, DUJ, BJCB, CRAB, NOAB and all other journalist associations stood beside Rozina and protested her arrest.

Not only this case but also it is found that Print and Electronic media Journalists continue to be threatened and attacked with impunity by organized crime groups, party activists, and Islamist groups but most of the time no action has taken by state. Three journalists were killed in 2012, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists—the first journalist deaths in the country in seven years. In February, Sagar Sarwar, editor with the private channel *Maasranga TV*, and his wife Meherun Runi, reporter from the *ATN Bangla* channel, were murdered in their home in

⁹https://www.sciencedaily.com/terms/news_media.htm, n.a, accessed on May 3, 2021.

Dhaka. No arrests were made, and the motive is unknown. In June, reporter Jamal Uddin of the daily *Gramer Kagoj* was stabbed to death, possibly because of his reporting on a local drug-smuggling syndicate. Three arrests were made in the case. Physical harassment of the press also increased. In May 2012, nine journalists were injured when armed men attacked the newsroom of the *bdnews24.com* – the renowned online news portal, and several other violent attacks on individual journalists occurred in the same month. The local rights group *Odhikar* reported that dozens of cases of threats and physical harassment leading to injury had taken place during the year. Impunity is the norm for those who perpetrate crimes against journalists, with at least 24 murders since 1998 remaining unpunished, according to the International Press Institute. Investigations of such crimes generally proceed slowly, if at all. With hundreds of daily and weekly publications, the privately owned print media continue to present an array of views, although political coverage at many newspapers is highly partisan. Private broadcasting has expanded in recent years, with more than 20 satellite and cable television channels and a few private radio stations now operating, including 3 private FM stations and a dozen community radio stations. A few private broadcast outlets are owned by individuals with close political or official affiliations (Freedom house, 2013).

The Center for Governance Studies- an independent Bangladeshi research group showed that the Digital Security Act has been used most against opposition politicians- that is followed by journalists, since it has been adopted-2018. In a report published in April 2021, the organization claimed that the law has "disproportionately impacted the journalists" (Center for Governance Studies, 2021).

According to this information the point I have been found or it can be said that the control mechanism by state or other ways over print media are being increased day by day in whole world. It is very important to secure journalists from different threats to get the exact news and it should be from the state. It is a matter of great regret that the state is not conscious enough to ensure security to print or electronic media journalists; rather they create restrictions over it.

Journalists try to dig out and make reports on the corruptions and irregularities of the society, but they face obstacles because of various pressures from local political elites and administration as well. Consequently, it is not always possible to give accurate news. The media cannot provide all the news, nor is it possible. There are various political pressures behind this. Not only is there political pressure, but there is also corporate pressure on journalists, sometimes from advertising or other influential sources. On the other hand, some issues often force journalists into self-censorship. There are various types of laws in Bangladesh such as the Section 57 of the Digital Security Act-2018. This Section forces journalists to think about self-censorship. Before writing a report, the journalist becomes concerned that s/he might get in trouble because of the report.

In Bangladesh, there are instances of media being shut down in various ways, attempts to control it, and even temporary shutdown of the media house. A year ago, the online editions of two well-known media outlets in Dhaka were temporarily shut down. Moreover, journalists kidnapping, or murder has become a common phenomenon. These incidents created a crisis for the media. If an organization acts legally, there is legal protection against it. But that is not happening in Bangladesh. It is not clear how any unseen force is controlling or monitoring the media here. As a result, it is a panic. When any influential big media is at stake, it further shrinks the work of other media as well.

1.2 Research objectives:

Since 1990, Bangladeshi media have enjoyed a moderate level of press freedom where government control is concerned. But after a few years, lots of changes happened. Lots of ways are being followed to control the media. According to a study by Reporters Sans Frontiers (RSF), Bangladesh's position is the 118th in terms of press freedom and it is because 'political parties constantly endanger the lives of journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) on March 5, 2004 described Bangladesh as the most violent country for newsmen in Asia. Besides governmental control by laws and strict watch and physical harassment against journalists,

corporate control by advertising and other media business related matters, restricts media to perform proper journalism (Rahman, 2004: 8, 71). Against this backdrop, the research intends to explore the issues to look into more insights from the ground. The main objective of the research is to find out the nature of insecurity of the journalists, and state control mechanisms over the media. To conform to the main objective, the study will also try to understand the reasons behind attacking journalists or control mechanisms over media from the state, as perceived by the stakeholders. It will find out the measures or actions by the government if journalists are affected. Finally, the study will find out the strategies adopted by the media in order to cope with these situations.

To comply with the subject matter and to understand the phenomenon, the following will be the research questions of this study:

- What is the scenario of the state-control mechanism over journalism in Bangladesh?
- How does the media manage to maintain press freedom?
- Are Bangladeshi journalists secured to practice free journalism in Bangladesh?

There will be an attempt to look for the answers of these three core research questions throughout the study.

1.3 Hypotheses

The dominant paradigm in press freedom or censorship has long been asserted, but yet to provide solid evidence that manifests the control mechanism by state to media or different insecurity issues of mainstream journalists in Bangladesh. Meanwhile, the state control paradigm has posited that culture is one of the most important antecedents of press freedom in Bangladesh, an argument that also remains to be empirically evaluated. Because the measurement of state control faced criticism for, among other things, the criteria for evaluation, the indices themselves must also be considered in drawing conclusions. The question of whether they would affect the independence of the media and how systems can make the journalist secure in different cases remains unanswered. By taking

all these into consideration, and based on relevant work and empirical issues in the field; the following hypotheses can be presented that will be tested throughout the research:

- The state-sponsored institutional regulatory mechanisms have impacts on the free media practice in Bangladesh.
- The media-control policy by the government of Bangladesh strangles the freedom of journalists that also creates threat to their life and professionalism.

1.4 Research Method

This study is qualitative research, based on empirical aspects of the subject matter. Data has been collected through fieldwork by taking Bangladesh as a case study. To collect data, the interview method has been followed, as it serves the purpose of the inquiry of this study. To explore the issues in the research questions and hypotheses, the interview method has brought the insights that have been narrated in the part III of this dissertation. Interviews have been conducted with in-depth and open-ended questionnaires. The interviews have been taken via digital mode of communications i.e. Skype, Zoom, Google Meet, and messenger apps. The keen observation method has also been followed to understand and explore the issues. This method has made the research more naturalistic, which has also been reflected in the dissertation writing. A vast amount of empirical literature has been reviewed and discussed on the literature review part that have guided the researcher to understand the phenomenon from a global perspective and make it related to the case of Bangladesh. For sampling, the researcher has chosen five prominent media personalities purposively for interviews who are the stakeholders of the media industry in Bangladesh. They are media critics, and former government personnel who have or had direct involvement with the subject matter of the research. The data have been analyzed for the documentation; and findings from the fieldwork have been reflected in the form of narration in the final two chapters of the study.

1.5 Significance of the research:

The freedom refers to the state of liberty, or right and privileged to speak and act according to one's own will. Press and media (print, electronic and online) are the most important medium of expressing opinion of the people in a democratic country that justifies one's individual right to speech and expression. The press and media should work towards strengthening the sovereignty and integrity of a nation. It is the duty of the press and media to build an environment where the people of the country can cultivate unity and harmony.

Recent developments in the Bangladesh media sector are impressive, but the necessary actions towards reforming the media system look indecisive. Security of journalists, policies, rules, and regulations that govern the country's media and communication, advertisement and entertainment industries are either insufficient or not comprehensive enough to meet the contemporary needs. Beside this, professional security like job sustainability, regular salary, salary enhancement, promotion and other issues are also being questioned.

While free press and independent media are essential to protect and enable human rights and fundamental freedoms, journalists, media, and freedom of speech are under threat all over the world along with Bangladeshi media. Of course, they are serving their best but if some issues are solved or they can work with full security and freedom, society will be more benefited. A free media press and independent media primarily are enablers of basic human rights and channels through which citizens communicate, if diverse and pluralist, they also have social and active effects on societies, politics, and debates. This research will contribute to making the people aware about the media from different kinds of restrictions. They will be informed about the types of insecurities or restrictions. It will be helpful for society to gather some knowledge about this issue.

Bangladeshi printing and broadcasting media have the experience of receiving "telephone advice", instructions and "directives" from time to time by the ruling party or the managing committee. As media owners are from the government side, they also do the same thing when something goes against the government's interest. For example, Bangladeshi media people used to get various directives and advice from the caretaker government (2006-2009) authorities on do's and don'ts of programming agendas. The exploration of the issues more deeply from an academic perspective

might be important and helpful for the students and enthusiasts of journalism. It might also pave the ways for new avenues of further exploration that would reflect the practice of journalism in Bangladesh.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Mass Media systems of the world vary from one another according to the economy, polity, religion, and culture of different societal aspects. There were possibilities to work with other violent countries where journalists and media are vulnerable and struggling with the adverse situation. But I would focus on the issues related to the journalists' insecurity and media-control mechanisms in Bangladesh. To limit the scope of the study, I will confine myself to the media domain and journalists who are working in Bangladesh; and this would be the area of study in this research.

1.7 Limitation of the study:

The researcher has faced some difficulties to conduct the study as the field of research i.e. Bangladesh is far away from Portugal where he is studying and living. The researcher has faced difficulties while conducting the interview- the interviewer and interviewees were in different time zones and there is a five hours gap. The global pandemic Covid-19 has also created an adverse situation to get the interviewees available to talk for a long time.

The current government officials were not willing to be available for an interview due to their professional barriers, as they felt the issues are sensitive and their outspoken statements can go against the ruling government. The arising difficulties have pushed the researcher to approach the former officials for an interview. The media critics were also hesitant to comment on the issues on state-control mechanisms over media because of the fear of possible application of the 'Digital Security Act-2018', as it has been applied several times earlier to the people who have criticized the government explicitly.

There are not enough studies conducted on the subject matter of this research, especially on Bangladesh. So, it was also a tiring job for the researcher to find the related literature that talked about the journalist insecurity and the state-control mechanism over media. To find the related data and case study the researcher had to rely on the reports of the Rights' groups mostly.

1.8 Research Ethics:

Ethical issues and dilemmas arise in all forms of research practice. It is an important part of the research study since it represents the quality results (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). This is a matter of fact that, at the time of conducting research, researchers sometimes get biased or affected by their perspective and experiences. Ethical issues are followed strongly to make this research neutral, authentic and acceptable. These have been taken into consideration throughout the research. The identities of the interviewers have been used with their prior permission; and some issues have been documented anonymously where they were reluctant to be identified.

CHAPTER II

Literature Reviews & Theoretical Framework

This chapter reviews relevant literature about news media, insecurity issues for media workers, media censorship, control-mechanisms by the states and other stakeholders, the situation of free-media practice all over the world, types of control mechanism; and its impact on news media.

Before going into the details, we need to understand the ‘news media’ first. Different definitions have been found to explain ‘news media’ in different literature. Among these, the researcher has chosen the definition by Science Daily that says, “The news media are those elements of the mass media that focus on delivering news to the public or a target public. These include print media (newspapers, newsmagazines), broadcast news (radio and television), and more recently the Internet (online newspapers, news blogs, etc.).”¹⁰ They have also articulated the definition of journalists or employees who are directly involved with all these media industries.

Having defined what news media is- this chapter discusses insecurity issues of journalists, media control or censorship of media. Researchers have included the term ‘censorship’ as this is the most used term to control mass media. Since the centrality of this research is based on this term, it is very pertinent to review literature on media control or censorship of media to understand the literary definition of this phenomenon.

The researchers Irum Saeed Abbasi and Laila Al-Sharqi have given a brilliant explanation of media censorship in their research paper ‘Media censorship: Freedom versus responsibility’. According to them, Media censorship is a global phenomenon that has foreshadowed information outlets for centuries. A common ground for censorship is maintenance of an orderly state whereas, the underlying motive is to keep the public ignorant of the information that can potentially threaten authorities. Censorship is used to officially control and suppress any expression that can potentially jeopardize the order of the state. Historically, censorship has been used to monitor public morals, to control public awareness, and to silence opposition (Abbasi and Laila, 2015).¹¹

¹⁰Irum Saeed Abbasi and Laila Al-Sharqi, “Media censorship: Freedom versus responsibility,” *Journal of Law and Conflict Resolution* Vol. 7(4), pp. 21-25.

¹¹Robert, D McChensey, 1997, “*Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy*”, New York: Seven Stories Prees.

As the research is about journalist insecurity and State control on news media in Bangladesh it is very much relevant to reflect on the situation of press freedom around the world, and the importance of press freedom for a country by understanding its meaning, nature and practice throughout the globe.

2.1 Freedom of Press:

While everyone acknowledges that a “free” press is essential for a “free” society, there is considerable ambiguity about precisely what the word “free” means. The standard view is that the “free” in free press means a press that is free from government control, and this, in turn, means a free market press. A free-market press serves the interest of a free society; the reasoning goes, because market competition will guarantee an open arena for the exchange and dissemination of ideas. In this view, McChesney argues that the greatest threat to a free press is government authority, government control and censorship (McChesney, 1997).¹²

From the very beginning of mass media, it is seen that there are various kinds of control mechanisms being provided to print media. This process is changing gradually and getting reshaped in the contemporary world. At the end of the first decade of the 21st century the future existence of a vibrant ‘free’ press in a robust democracy cannot be taken for granted. Many newspapers have folded. In order to cope with market challenges, the remaining mass media, especially the print media, have drastically cut their staff. In this regard, Nichols and McChesney argue that “in a nutshell, media corporations, after running journalism into the ground, have determined that news gathering, and reporting are not profit-making propositions. So, they're jumping ship” (Nichols & McChesney, 2009).¹³ The author has also presented a historical evolution of control mechanisms in media.

2.2 Early days of print & control mechanism of print media:

The Licensing of the Press Act 1662 is an Act of the Parliament of England (14 Car. II. c. 33), long title “An Act for preventing the frequent Abuses in printing seditious treasonable and unlicensed

¹²J. Nichols & R. W. McChesney, R. W, 2009, “The death and life of great American newspapers,” *Nation*, 288,(13), 11-14.

¹³Patterson L. R, *Copyright and "The Exclusive Right " of Authors*, 1 J. INTELL. PROP. L. 1 (1993). Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.uga.edu/jipl/vol1/iss1/5>

Books and Pamphlets and for regulating of Printing and Printing Presses.” It was repealed by the Statute Law Revision Act 1863. The Act was originally limited to two years. The provisions as to importation of books, the appointment of licensers, and the number of printers and founders were practically re-enactments of the similar provisions in an order of the Star Chamber of 1637. Printing presses were not to be set up without notice to the Stationers’ Company. A king’s messenger had power by warrant of the king or a secretary of state to enter and search for unlicensed presses and printing. Severe penalties by fine and imprisonment were denounced against offenders. The act was successively renewed up to 1679 (Patterson,1993).¹⁴ Then Vernacular Press Act, in British India, law enacted in 1878 to curtail the freedom of the Indian-language (i.e., non-English) press. Proposed by Lord Lytton, then viceroy of India (governed 1876–80), the act was intended to prevent the vernacular press from expressing criticism of British policies—notably, the opposition that had grown with the outset of the Second Anglo-Afghan War (1878–80). The act excluded language publications. It elicited strong and sustained protests from a wide spectrum of the Indian populace. The law was repealed in 1881 by Lytton’s successor as viceroy, Lord Ripon governed 1880–84 (Britannica, 2015)¹⁵.

In the next part I would like to focus on the state restrictions upon media or press in different parts of the world. Restrictions are being provided by the state or the government to the media to protect themselves from the public in different cases. Though some restrictions are really needed for state security, most of the time some extra restrictions are imposed on the media that really question the press freedom.

Additionally, the journalists around the world have to go through some other difficulties like-newsroom constraints include deadlines, limited budgets, scarcity of electronic and library resources, distribution difficulties and draconian media laws. All these drawbacks have been reflected in their daily output (Limpitlaw, 2013).

Bora Erdem (2018) has explored the elements of freedom of expression on the European concept of human rights. He has identified three components for freedom of expression i.e. a) the freedom

¹⁴ Britannica, “Vernacular Press Act”,2015, <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Vernacular-Press-Act>, accessed 18 December 2015.

¹⁵Dave Roos, “Are there limits to freedom of the press in the U.S.?” <http://people.howstuffworks.com/freedom-of-the-press.html>, accessed 18 October 2020.

to examine, research, learn and obtain information to make an opinion. b) freedom of opinion that is buttressed by beliefs attained by previous examination. c) the declaration and dissemination of thought and opinion. According to Erdem, all three of these steps are crucial to maintain the foundation of freedom of expression (Erdem, 2018).

2.3 The press restrictions at USA

American Journalist Dave Roos wrote an article in a magazine titled “Are there limits to freedom of the press in the U.S.?” where he described the press freedom of the USA mentioning different laws or restrictions provided by the state to press (Roos, ND).¹⁶

He argues that freedom of the press is established in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which states that “Congress shall make no law (...) abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.” Although the text of the amendment only specifically prohibits infringement by Congress, the Supreme Court has broadened the scope of the First Amendment to protect the freedoms of speech and press from censorship by any government entity, from the federal government down to the local police. However, the Supreme Court has also recognized specific situations in which the government is allowed to limit the freedom of the press, Roos also added (Roos,ND).

Mentioning source he told that, In 2005, New York Times reporter Judith Miller served 85 days in jail for contempt of court when she refused to name the source who leaked the identity of undercover Valerie Plame. Bloggers, however, are something of a special case when it comes to press freedom: In 2011, an “investigative blogger” was found guilty of libel when she posted inaccurate and damaging statements about an Oregon lawyer. The federal judge ruled that Oregon’s shield law, which protected journalists from most libel claims, did not cover bloggers or other citizen journalists who are not affiliated with a mainstream media organization. Defamation is also prohibited by law in specific cases. Defamation by the press is called libel. In the landmark 1964 case *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, the court ruled that the press is not guilty of libel

¹⁶Caretaker government was a neutral government formed before every national election of Bangladesh. The last Caretaker govt. formed before 2008 national election and then next ruling govt banned this system.

against public figures unless the injured party can prove actual malice -- knowingly and recklessly publishing false information -- rather than mere reckless reporting. The ruling lifted restrictions on the press that had prevented it from reporting fully on the civil rights movement in the South. However, the Court ruled in later decisions that the press can still be found guilty of libel in defamation cases involving private citizens and private matters without proof of actual malice. Obscenity is another type of speech or published material that is not protected by the First Amendment. In its ruling on the 1973 case of *Miller v. California*, the Supreme Court established the “Miller test” for deciding what types of material qualified as obscene. The material must be offensive to an average citizen applying “contemporary community standards” and have no redeeming “literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.”(Roos, ND)

Another limit on the press concerns speech designed to incite immediate violence or unlawful activity. These prohibitions were established in two separate rulings. In the 1969 case *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, the court ruled that only speech that is “directed to inciting or producing imminent lawless action” can be legally censored. In an earlier decision, Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes compared such speech to shouting fire in a crowded theater, creating a “clear and present danger”. “Fighting words” are also illegal. In *Chaplinsky vs. New Hampshire* case (1942), the Court ruled that speech that “inflict injury or tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace” has so much social value and can be curtailed (Roos, 2011).

By mentioning sources, he described the press restrictions in the USA. Only a quarter of the world's nations have “good” press freedom, down from 26 percent last year. The United States has fallen from 45th to 48th, the biggest drop of any nation. Reporters without borders explicitly blamed President Donald Trump. He has declared the press an “enemy of the American people” and attempted to block White House access to multiple media outlets, and routinely uses the term “fake news” in retaliation for critical reporting.

2.4 The Cases of New Zealand

Popular website *'howtolaw.com'* discusses some laws of New Zealand that made press more restricted. The New Zealand Bill Of Rights Act 1990 guarantees the right of freedom of expression

along with the press. However, the exercise of this right by the press and other media is subject to the restrictions that have been outlined below.

Probably the most substantial restrictions on the freedom of the media are those that apply to the reporting of court proceedings. The court has the power in certain circumstances to make suppression orders banning the media from reporting certain details about a case; there are also specific rules that apply to court reporting of sexual cases. The court also has a general power to prohibit the media from publishing the name, address or occupation of the person accused or convicted of the offence, or of any other person connected with the proceedings. Permanent name suppression for defendants is ordered only rarely, as there is a strong presumption by the court that it is in the public interest to make the names available. If anything is printed or displayed about you that is untrue and that damages your reputation, you may bring an action against the publisher of the material for defamation. Any limitation of the right to freedom of press must be truly necessary. Even if a limitation is in accordance with a clear law and serves a legitimate aim, it will only pass the test if it is truly necessary for the protection of that legitimate aim (howtolaw.co, ND).

New Zealand is one of the paragon states of media freedom. Compared to other countries, New Zealand's press enjoys more independence because their population expects a high standard from their journalists and citizens do not hold back criticism when it is required. The official Information Act was used to access the Government's COVID-19 activities proves that their media freedom systems are robust, even in times of crisis. As a result, New Zealand has again ranked in the top ten countries in the world on media freedom. Moreover, New Zealand is the only country in the Southern Hemisphere to be ranked in the top-ten, and, except for Costa Rica, is the only country bordering the Pacific Ocean to score that high.

2.5 THE CASES FROM EGYPT

Journalist Mohamed Elshinnawi wrote an article on November 15, 2014 in voice of America news titled "Media Restrictions, Other Free Speech Issues Remain in Egypt" where he talked about some anti restrictions to media in Egypt. He wrote that the controversy over media freedom in

Egypt intensified this month after several hundred Egyptian journalists rejected a declaration by newspaper editors pledging support to the government and banning criticism of the police, judiciary, and army in their reports. The crackdown on freedom of expression in Egypt has increased since the military coup in 2013 and has included the detention of journalists – like the imprisonment of three Al Jazeera English staff – and on-going efforts by the government to stifle critics.

“The current government has gone to a further extent in limiting press freedom,” said Stephen McInerney, executive director of the Program for Middle East Democracy. “Countless incidents of intimidation and direct threats to journalists and their sources, censorship of articles and removing print copies of newspapers from circulation,” he added (Elshinnawi, 2014).

After 10 years from the pro-democracy movement, press defenders say the Egyptian media face a serious decline, with many journalists deemed critical of Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi’s government finding themselves behind bars, and independent outlets forced to close or banned, often under the justification of protecting national interests. 11 journalists have been killed in Egypt since 2011 while on assignment. Egyptian authorities since 2017 have acted without judicial authorization to block an estimated 600 websites containing news on politics and human rights. As a result, in recent years thousands gathered in Cairo’s Tahrir Square demanding democracy and greater freedoms, including for the media. Therefore, it is conspicuous that like everywhere in the world, press freedom in Egypt is being questioned day by day. It is necessary to know about the situation all over Europe.

2.6 SITUATION ALL OVER EUROPE:

Central European University Press published a book titled “MEDIA FREEDOM AND PLURALISM” -Media Policy Challenges in Enlarged Europe written by Beata Klimkiewicz which Open Edition published on 04 February 2013. Its chapter 5 was written by Péter Molnár titled “A Failure in limiting restrictions on Freedom of speech”- The Case of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. In its 5.1 chapter he described Justifications for media-specific restrictions on freedom of speech or press. The quote from Dworkin reflects a salient question. Under which circumstances and to what extent can/should states or a group of states limit freedom of speech in order to protect the rights of those to whom the speech is addressed? At this point it

is important to make a distinction between general restrictions that apply to expressions uttered in any part of the public sphere and media-specific restrictions that apply only to a particular segment of the public sphere.

A relevant example of general restrictions on freedom of speech is found in the second paragraph of article 10 on freedom of expression of the Council of Europe's Convention for the Protection of Human rights:

“The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with its duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary” (Council of Europe, 1950, article 10.2) (Klimkiewicz, 2010)

Among the most widespread threats to journalists' safety in Europe today is police violence against journalists covering demonstrations. For instance,

In Ukraine, with tensions heightened during the demonstrations in February, more than one hundred journalists were attacked, including using stun grenades and rubber bullets. Most tragically, a journalist of Vesti newspaper was lethally shot in the chest by unknown thugs during the demonstrations, while in May a photographer was killed. With them, five journalists have been killed in Europe since February 2013.

In Bosnia, too, some journalists and TV operators covering the demonstrations against corruption and austerity have been treated violently by the police. Policing of demonstrations has also sometimes impinged on press freedom in Spain. At the end of March this year, for example, a group of journalists and photographers were beaten by the police in spite of having identified themselves as members of the press.

Conflict zones also remain dangerous places for journalists. Meanwhile, press members have been kidnapped, intimidated, and denied access, and had their material confiscated by armed people.

Tensions between Russia and Ukraine have had further repercussions on the media in both countries. Pressures on independent journalists in Russia have increased, while Ukraine has prevented some Russian journalists from entering the country, thus sparking new tensions after its decision to block a number of Russian television broadcasters. In the east of Ukraine, journalists have recently been detained, ill-treated, threatened, and harassed and are increasingly coming under attack from all the sides involved in the tensions.

2.7 TEN MOST CENSORED COUNTRIES

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) is an independent, nonprofit organization that promotes press freedom worldwide. They publish reports annually on the press restriction issue all over the world. They argued that Eritrea and North Korea are the first and second most censored countries worldwide, according to a list compiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists of the 10 countries where the press is most restricted. The list is based on research into the use of tactics ranging from imprisonment and repressive laws to harassment of journalists and restrictions on Internet access.

They wrote that, In Eritrea, President Isaias A fewer has succeeded in his campaign to crush independent journalism, creating a media climate so oppressive that even reporters for state-run news outlets live in constant fear of arrest. The threat of imprisonment has led many journalists to choose exile rather than risk arrest. Eritrea is Africa's worst jailer of journalists, with at least 23 behind bars-none of whom has been tried in court or even charged with a crime. Fearing the spread of Arab Spring uprisings, Eritrea scrapped plans in 2011 to provide mobile Internet for its citizens, limiting the possibility of access to independent information. Although Internet is available, it is through slow dial-up connections, and fewer than 1 percent of the population goes online, according to U.N. International Telecommunication Union figures. Eritrea also has the lowest figure globally of cell phone users, with just 5.6 percent of the population owning one.

According to CPJ's annual report, in North Korea, 9.7 percent of the population has cell phones, a number that excludes access to phones smuggled in from China. In place of the global Internet, to which only a select few powerful individuals have access, some schools and other institutions have access to a tightly controlled intranet. And despite the arrival of an Associated Press bureau

in Pyongyang in 2012, the state has such a tight grip on the news agenda that newsreel was re-edited to remove Kim Jong Un's disgraced uncle from the archives after his execution.

Their research found that the tactics used by Eritrea and North Korea are mirrored to varying degrees in other heavily censored countries. To keep their grip on power, repressive regimes use a combination of media monopoly, harassment, spying, threats of journalist imprisonment, and restriction of journalists' entry into or movements within their countries.

Imprisonment is the most effective form of intimidation and harassment used against journalists.

Seven of the 10 most censored countries-Eritrea, Ethiopia, Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Iran, China, and Myanmar-are also among the top 10 worst jailers of journalists worldwide, according to CPJ's annual prison census. More than half of the journalists imprisoned globally are charged with anti-state crimes, including in China, the world's worst jailer and the eighth most censored country. Of the 44 journalists imprisoned-the largest figure for China since CPJ began its annual census in 1990-29 were held on anti-state charges. Other countries that use the charge to crush critical voices include Saudi Arabia (third most censored), where the ruling monarchy, not satisfied with silencing domestic dissent, teamed up with other governments in the Gulf Cooperation Council to ensure that criticism of leadership in any member state is dealt with severely.

In Ethiopia--number four on CPJ's most censored list--the threat of imprisonment has contributed to a steep increase in the number of journalist exiles. Amid a broad crackdown on bloggers and independent publications in 2014, more than 30 journalists were forced to flee, CPJ research shows. Ethiopia's 2009 anti-terrorism law, which criminalizes any reporting that authorities deem to "encourage" or "provide moral support" to banned groups, has been levied against many of the 17 journalists in jail there. Vietnam (sixth most censored) uses a vague law against "abusing democratic freedom" to jail bloggers, and Myanmar (ninth most censored) relies on its 1923 Official Secrets Act to prevent critical reporting on its military.

Restricting journalists' movements and barring foreign correspondents is also a common tactic used by censoring governments. In Eritrea, the last remaining accredited international reporter was expelled in 2007, and the few outside reporters invited in occasionally to interview the president are closely monitored; in China, foreign correspondents have been subjected to arbitrary delays in visa applications (CPJ, 2015).

CHAPTER III

JOURNALISM IN BANGLADESH: SECURED, FREE OR CONTROLLED? FACTS AND STRATEGIES

This chapter will discuss Journalism as a profession in Bangladesh along with history of Bangladeshi news media and restrictions on it. It will be focused on the justification of the context of the research that includes journalists' insecurity; and state-control mechanisms to media in Bangladesh. This process has been done through case studies and interviews.

Bangladesh is a severely polarized political country. Several factors pose a serious threat for human rights activists who attempt to promote freedom of expression online or offline without undertaking the local political context, history, and culture. Currently, the most remarkable obstacle to freedom of expression online which must be addressed are content blocking, access to the internet, violation of the right to privacy, hate speech, surveillance, and the intimidation of individuals (Alam, 2018, p. 5)

Attacks on journalists are not a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. It has been happening for the last few decades. It is obvious that attacks on journalists are not only attacks on the victims, but on freedom of expression and freedom of the media as well. 29 professional and freelance journalists have been killed in Bangladesh since 1992 to 2021. Almost in all cases, the motives behind the killing are still vague. Moreover, a range of television and news outlets had to shut down in 2013 for critical reporting and remained closed since then (CPJ, 2021).

Besides, journalists are regularly harassed and violently attacked by a range of actors, including organized criminal groups, political parties and their supporters, government authorities, fundamentalist, leftist and other extremist groups. Most commonly, journalists have been attacked because of their news reporting on corruption, criminal activities, political violence, the rise of secular fundamentalism, or human rights abuses. Police brutality toward photographers attempting to document protests or other political events also remain perturbed.

The freedom of the media is the freedom of communication and expression through mediums including various electronic media and published materials. While such freedom mostly embroils the absence of interference from an overreaching state, constitutional or other legal protections may seek preservation. Authorities limit official access to journalists from certain publications. The government remained sensitive to international scrutiny. Foreign publications are subject to censorship, while foreign journalists and press freedom advocates have encountered increasing difficulties in obtaining visas to enter Bangladesh and put under surveillance while in the country. In an effort to tighten censorship laws, the government passed legislation that would enable officials to suspend the broadcast of any private satellite television channel.

The biggest problem is the “Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act-2006” that severely restricts the rights to freedom of expression in Bangladesh. This act has resulted into enforced disappearance of citizens, police brutality and hazardous workplaces in the factories of Bangladesh as per Amnesty International’s 2014/15 annual report. The report said dozens of people forcibly disappeared. Journalists and human rights defenders continued to be attacked and harassed. Violence against women is a major human rights concern. In Bangladesh, police misuse exemption. Furthermore, their torture and ill-treatment are widely known.

On the other hand, the government’s use of Section 57 of the “Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act-2006” severely restricted the right to freedom of expression. Under this section, those convicted of violating the Act could be sentenced to a maximum of 10 years in prison if the charges were brought against them before 6 October 2013. At that time, an amendment not only increased the maximum punishment to 14 years in prison but also imposed a minimum punishment of seven years.

Dozens of media workers- said that they had been threatened by security agencies for criticizing the authorities. The threats were directly given to journalists -through phone calls and also via messages to their editors. Many journalists and talk show participants said they exercised self-censorship as a result (Amnesty International, 2015). Despite of guarantee by the Constitution of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh as its Article 32 clearly states that “*no person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty, save in accordance with the law,*” but torture and extrajudicial killing are common phenomenon in Bangladesh, and it is continuing. All this is happening despite

repeated assurances to stop. Since the declaration of “zero” tolerance on torture and extrajudicial killings by the government during the Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council, around 281 people were killed without judicial procedure and 34 people torture at the hand of law enforcement agencies which is more alarming. Recently, the government passed a law criminalizing torture, but so far, the law has yielded no positive results. Most of the time, the law enforcing agencies denied any knowledge about the disappearances.

In recent years, involuntary disappearances have proliferated. For this new trend in Bangladesh, people are abducted and disappeared from various places in broad daylight by – men claiming to be members of law enforcement agencies. Some are found dead after their kidnapping. In many cases, families of the missing persons claim that law-enforcing agencies picked up the victims.

However, the judicial system in Bangladesh is independent in writing. Nevertheless, the judiciary, especially the court, is not sovereign in practice yet. Under these circumstances, there is a need for a vigorous internet freedom strategy, which would establish the political, social, cultural, environmental, institutional, and professional conditions to guarantee internet freedom for every citizen of Bangladesh.

For the sake of those who have already lost their lives in the most atrocious way, this killing practice must be stopped. The Bangladesh government now has a critical responsibility to all Bangladeshis to send a clear message that these machete murders of journalists, bloggers and media workers will not be tolerated and those responsible will meet the punishment. Justice must be ensured. Freedom of expression cannot be suppressed by fear, intimidation and the spectra of murder in an independent democratic country like Bangladesh.

Writer Zulfiqar Haydar described the restrictive situation of Bangladeshi newspapers in his book, titled “*Bangladesher Songbadpotro O Sangbadikota*” (Newspaper and Journalism of Bangladesh). He described the different restrictions to print media in his book. He conjectured that the first printed piece from this printing press was a weekly newspaper named *Rangapur Barttabaha* in August 1847. Additionally, the first two Bengali weekly newspapers were from *Rangpur* –currently an administrative division and a district in northern Bangladesh. Printing

machines took more than sixty years to reach East Bengal or Dhaka from Kolkata. *Rangapur Barttabaha* had also some restrictions to publish the news against Pakistan govt.

The Political Emergency of 1975 brought the proliferation of media in Bengal into a sudden stand still. The entire contingent of vocal media was gagged by the government; press censorship, hitherto unprecedented, was imposed in all the states; in each and every state, some government officials were deputed to supervise and oversee each and every copy (Sengupta, 1982). Also, power cuts were inflicted on newspapers, primarily not so much to curb attempted defiance but to enable the government to gain time to work out modalities for enforcing censorship (Palmer, 1976). Bulk of the papers were compelled to write either in the favor of the government or forced to remain silent on the critical social, economic and political issues; it was a media of the government, by the government and for the government. Thus, the media including the majority of the newspapers, radio and television channels (*Doordarshan*) could speak what the government wanted them to talk on. Media virtually played into the hands of the Indira Gandhi Government who silenced every voice during the emergency. As a result, most of the newspapers in Bengal, like the other states in India, gradually turned pro-government newspapers echoing only one voice— that of the Congress party. Not only were the anti-government sentiments curbed, all voices of dissent including that of the journalists were also put down from time to time. Eminent journalists and political columnists from Bengal like- Gour Kishore Ghose, Barun Sengupta and Jyotirmoy Datta were arrested and taken to custody during the Emergency by the Government (Hayder, 2014).

Freedom House has published different articles regarding recent press restriction issues in Bangladesh. Their annual report in 2013 showed that the print media are generally allowed more leeway than other media along with broadcasters of new media like- private television channels that provide 24-hour news coverage in Bangladesh. Authorities reportedly drafted unofficial guidelines for media houses regarding newspaper columns and television talk shows in 2009, noting that “provocative statements” could lead to the banning of a show. In March 2012, the transmissions of several television stations and publication of some newspapers were suspended shortly before a planned opposition rally. Attempts to censor internet-based content occasionally occur; in September the government blocked access to YouTube following a global uproar over a video produced in the U.S. of the prophet Muhammad. Some journalists practice self-

ensorship when reporting on sensitive topics like the military and judiciary. Sensitivity regarding reporting on the proceedings of the International War Crimes Tribunal heightened during the year. Coverage of labor disputes has also become more slanted as garment factory owners have moved into the media sector, buying up both print and broadcast outlets; as a result, stories often highlight violence or work disruptions initiated by workers rather than labor rights issues (Freedom House, 2013).

Author finds some important data about journalists and their professional conditions from journal article “Journalism as a profession in Bangladesh: An Overview” by Muhammad Zakaria, A.K. Azad the two university professors. According to them, Media or press are also in a very powerful position in Bangladesh. But Media professionals in Bangladesh have to face lots of obstacles to perform their jobs. Especially journalists of print media do their jobs with poor salary and nominal facilities, and face lots of pressures and threats from different corners. Moreover, there is little or no job security in this profession. Such problematic situations compel a big portion of journalists to shift themselves to other lucrative professions. Despite such hindrances, the ratio of journalists is not very few who want to continue their job considering it as a challenging and glamorous one (Zakaria and Azad, 2009).

Mentioning different sources Zakaria and Azad argued that Journalism is a prestigious job in Bangladesh and those who are involved in this noble profession play a vital role in different sectors of this country. Although as a profession journalism is a very important one, no qualification is specified for becoming a journalist-like politician in Bangladesh. However, this situation has changed slightly in the last few years. A graduate can join the media organization, but in some cases university degree in journalism is a prerequisite condition of the recruitment in established media houses. Authors quoted the former chairman of Bangladesh Press Council Justice Sultan Hossain Khan that the number of published dailies is huge in comparison to the economic condition of Bangladesh. He also stated that the publication of newspapers should be regarded as a commercial project. The people who are financially affluent should come forward to take initiative to develop the news media industry. Moreover, to uphold the freedom of press, the minimum financial solvency of journalists should be prioritized. But it is a matter of regret that

journalists are often not receiving salary for months after months in Bangladesh. The condition of journalists working in local areas is more pathetic. A good number of the dailies and television do not provide salary properly to their local correspondents. In a research done in 2000 regarding the condition of journalists, it is found that 50 percent of journalists are not satisfied with their salary and other facilities. This research was based on the interview of Journalists of 67 dailies published from six divisions including Dhaka at that time. The research showed that 68 percent of pressmen felt disappointed being connected with the journalism profession (Zakaria and Azad, 2009).

Media and journalists have been striving for ages for their independence, tolerance and understanding in their profession but they got disappointed establishing their career. A range of current laws are affecting the Bangladesh news media that need to be revised in order to respond to the needs of the 21st century and so that they are in line with international standards in this field. There is an urgent need for a broadcasting policy to regulate the ongoing expansion of the broadcasting sector and ensure, among other issues, that the allocation of frequencies is carried out in a fair and inclusive manner.

The press in any country plays a very positive and constructive role in a democracy. It keeps the people informed about the national and international incidents. Similarly, it keeps the Government aware of the people's problems, difficulties, hopes and aspirations. Thus, the press plays a dual role. It serves as a bridge between the Government and general people. Government cannot directly influence any news coverage or suppress any event. Unfortunately, the Government of Bangladesh in different times subjugates electronic, print as well as new media by regulating with law and continuous monitoring through different intelligence agencies. Media experts, especially broadcast industry insiders, are concerned about the draft national broadcasting policy as well. There is now a crying need for legal reforms and a stronger commitment to press freedom to develop internal governance structures that ensure editorial independence as well as strengthen freedom of press. To sum up, Bangladesh must eradicate violence against the journalists and every person behind making news.

There is a serious debate about the role of the media outside of independence and through globalization. Some Asian political leaders embraced the Western notion of an independent media as a "watchdog" of the government. Instead, they play a more powerful role in the

partnership of the press for social and economic development than the government or a cooperative government to lead the society including the press. Nevertheless, in the 90's it has gone beyond questions about this debate. The development of journalism has lessened due to mismanagement, control, and pressure from the government.

Media development in post-colonial countries suffered from a plethora of plights. For instance, small market economies, inadequate training and obsolete equipment, lack of repair servicing, little tradition of independent news systems, lack of infrastructure for circulation of newspapers outside urban areas, low literacy rates etc. Among all of them, the government's control over the media is the most adverse in the development of free press. An ongoing change from broadcasting owned and run by the government to private, semi-independent, and parallel radio and television services emerged as a significant change. The shift included the wide introduction of advertising commercials even in government services. These practices have penetrated in the media industry for the last few decades, which is an alarming sign for any democratic country. Political control of the news continues to be a crux. Asian leaders, Transnational News, and Entertainment Corporations have differing views on how political and social values are embedded in news reporting. Attention to the news media varies from country to country based on internal factors as well as external sources. Audiences find negative values in local as well as transnational programming. Audiences look for improved transnational news sources when inadequate resources or political control weakens indigenous systems (Richstad, 2010)

When the theory coincides with the reality of the press freedom concept and position in Bangladesh, the prevailing notions of the pressures and evolution of press freedom driven by democratic weaknesses and autocratic regimes observe a paradigm shift. The notion of such ideological concepts crashes to the ground thus challenging the assessment method. The current political dynamics such as- the internal structure of the political economy, democratic status, laws, policies, ownership, types of self-regulation/ censorship and privacy are being considered as previously established barriers in a democratic government. Thus, pressures and obstructions on the print media are inevitable in the current political dynamics, although the idea was that reforms within power structures and institutions would change the trends. Proper research and appropriate action are needed for the better understanding of the new field of conflict in the notion of press freedom and the world press freedom in the upcoming years.

Government control is not the only threat for free press; corporate journalism is also one of the leading obstacles in the case of freedom of press. The primary objective of the corporate media in Bangladesh is to protect the profits of its patronized business group sincerely and smoothly. The survey by Chowdhury & Akhther (2017) makes it apparent that there is a remarkable increase in the corporate advertisement in the Place of News. The results show that within the entire corporate culture of journalism in the Bangladesh perspective it is now practiced almost everywhere. The study makes it evident that contemporary media in Bangladesh is influenced by the corporate sector because the political economy of the media under corporate ownership is influencing the media economy and then corporate media has turned the corporate sector agenda into the agenda of the common people. This means that the corporate media is establishing their ideological views on the people through the corporate agenda. It is crystal clear that the corporate body has a dominant presence in the political economy of Bangladesh that also influences the media in the country.

Another study (Herman, 1997) also shows plenty of non-news-able news published in the newspaper to protect the business profit in corporate journalism. The main reason behind it is the advert. The analysis also shows that on average, 38 corporate news, which is about 7.21% of the total news, had been published every day in the four national dailies in Bangladesh. Among the four national dailies, *Kaler Kantho* had the most news advertisement, it was 20 (52.63% of the corporate news). *The Prothom Alo*, *The Independent*, and *The Daily Star* have the advertisement news of 8.97, 6.25, 2.27 percent respectively. That means the non-news-able news had the monopoly of dominance in the news advertisement. In this way, the place for news has been sold to the advertisers.

To justify the findings from literature review I have interviewed some media personnel including the authority of media houses to make the research clearer and more acceptable.

Tushar Abdullah is the Head of news in *Somoy Television*; and a well-known media figure who has authored many books on journalism in Bangladesh. I spoke to him regarding the facts and freedom in the aspect of News media in Bangladesh. According to Abdullah, the newspaper industry in Bangladesh was booming in 1990, when General Ershad left his military regime.

During that period, a lot of investigative reporting came out where a lot of young reporters were involved in the news media. Weekly magazines were so popular at that time and many people used to buy 2/3 weekly magazines to get updated. With the new spectrum of reporting, journalism got a new aspect where media were cherishing freedom to express their opinions. They could make a cartoon to portray corruption; lots of new thoughts, progressive movements for democracy; secular thoughts etc. were emerging in late 1990s in Bangladesh. There were two main political parties of Bangladesh namely- *Bangladesh Nationalist party* (BNP) and *Bangladesh Awami league* (BAL) who used to be friendly to press freedom.

To note, there was a divide between these two political parties about the ideology, structural format of power and history. A major contribution includes that the journalists were also divided with these two political ideologies. A huge number of newspapers supported BAL and BNP separately. After the national election of 1991, democracy appeared in Bangladesh where BNP came to power. A lot of corporate houses or big industries owners built their own news Media like daily or weekly newspaper agencies or tried to make a good relationship with some media or newspaper houses. Businessmen used to give money to the newspaper and supervised some media houses as well. After that, the influence of corporate houses became explicit where some businessmen thought that journalists are similar to the labor of industries. The corporate owners of the media houses tried to impose censorship, news manipulation for the sake of their own benefit or according to their political ideologies. Lots of businessmen were involved with the political parties who had their own news media houses, and the situation became worse day after day; and the freedom of expression has been squeezed in the media industry.

In 1999, *Ekushey Television* and *Channel i* started to broadcast in Bangladesh and a new era in the television sector was revealed. *Ekushey television* was the first popular news and program-based channel in Bangladesh. In the 2001 Election, few Television media got license by the newly elected government by the political party- BNP. In that time, different businessmen compromised with the government to get licenses for new television channels. It is important to note that the government and businessmen of different sectors made a deal to make new television channels for the first time in Bangladesh. With this backdrop, TV media felt the concept of slavery from the corporate industry and elected government as well. The political government and the businessmen both used

to think that the media is a ‘spokesperson’ for their own benefit and some journalists’ leaders were involved with this vicious cycle for their personal benefit.

Over the years, journalist leaders have made some professional organizations. The influence of the political parties and the government has become so high; now-a-days it is very difficult to break this chain and make an environment where freedom of expression can be ensured in the news media industry in Bangladesh. Mr. Abdullah said that the *CSB* was the first news channel in Bangladesh that came into broadcast in 2007; but the television channel lost its license and was closed by the decision of the Caretaker Government who came in power in 2007.¹⁷ *Salauddin Quader Chowdhury* was an influential political leader of BNP (later hanged by the war crime tribunal). His family was the owner of this television channel. After that, few more corporate houses came up with the news channel in Bangladesh within years. The 24/7 news channels *Somoy Media Limited*, *Independent Television*, *Dhaka Bangla Channel (DBC)*, *ATN news*, *Jamuna Television*, *Ekattor Television etc.* have come into broadcast after 2010 and are still on-air.

After the bombing of the newspaper and Television industry, now-a-days news media have been facing a lot of challenges and this industry has been moving forward with lots of struggles and hardships. Some of the media houses cannot maintain the proper salary scale for their employees; lots of reporters lost their jobs; no promotion for the editors; cutting down salaries are the common issues of the newspaper and television channels in Bangladesh. To pull out from the crisis, some corporate industries have come up with first-hand benefits that do not have any plan of investments in the television and newspaper industry.

The sponsors of the media houses are not well-aware about the sustainability of the news channels. The concept of professionalism was not present in Bangladesh as well. The training or technical development of employees of Newspaper or Television media is not a common culture in the media houses in Bangladesh. There is no specific budget by the owners for the development of the newspaper agencies or television channels. For these reasons, a newspaper and television channel cannot produce skilled manpower; and corporate industries have no plan for the sustainability of

the newspaper or television channel; they only reap the short-term benefits rather than the development of the news media industry. No television news channel came up with any field survey or the audience choices in Bangladesh for their quality development.

It is also noted that the struggle of the reporters to make impactful news for the society is increasing day by day. It is also common for the Newspaper and television reporters to face threats, harassments and lawsuits filed against them for making news. The political influences are so important now-a-days that it is difficult to make authentic news in a specific event as well. It is also a matter of fact that the media channel owner and politicians are not friendly enough to the media houses in Bangladesh. In addition to that, the Digital Security Act-2018 has become a draconian law to choke the voice of media and common people in digital platforms against the government and government officials' corruptions.

Imposing censorship from the state is also an alarming factor for media-freedom in Bangladesh. Few Media owners have become the Members of Parliament (MP), Ministers of the Cabinet with the political affiliation. Their media houses do not telecast or make a report that goes against the favor of the government and their activities. But still there are some media houses that are against any political favor; and try to avoid the partiality for the sake of peoples' well-being. They usually make constructive criticisms against odds and corruption in the society.

Khaled Mohiuddin – the team leader of the Bengali section at Deutsche Welle (DW) of Germany, a renowned journalist who studied journalism in University of Westminster, United Kingdom; and worked for different media houses in Bangladesh for a long time. The researcher in this study has approached him with an open-ended questionnaire.

When he was asked about the pressure or imposition from the government to the news media in Bangladesh, Mohiuddin opined that the pressure from government to the news media in Bangladesh is similar to the other part of the world. According to him, this is not a newly imposed phenomenon, this practice has been happening for a long time. In some cases, media owners are not willing to go against the ruling government, in Bangladesh it has been witnessed that the media has not published the proper election result or reports that goes against the favor of the ruling party or in cases of security agencies. He also stated that a lot of media house owners want to collaborate

with the government; they want to be involved with the political power structure benefits, so they want to woo government officials. Sometimes, it might be a wish for a tour abroad with the Prime Minister or as part of the entourage. Linkage with the political parties by using the media profile is a common phenomenon in Bangladesh that also helps to make an ally with the ‘big fish’ of the political domain or business tycoon of the country. It also paves the way to get more advertisements for their television channel or news agencies. Market analysis is not a prerequisite concept of making a new news channel or newspaper agency in Bangladesh.

Presently, news media do not telecast or make reports for the people; they try to make the government happy. It is an undeniable fact that media owners never go against the wave of social media or the majority's perception. For instance, the rise and dominance of the *Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh*-- a right-wing party in Bangladesh who has strong supports from the people with Islami sentiments. Though, their activities are disputed and go against the core principle of the constitution that envisages for a secular Bangladesh; a very few media houses show courage to make news against the *Hefazat-e-Islam Bangladesh*.

According to Mohiuddin, news media owners in Bangladesh never try to make a revolutionary step for the people; they only serve their purpose and make their own financial or social benefits. A huge number of senior journalists are busy with organizational politics, posts, affiliation with the government, rather than professional activities or investigative journalism that might be impactful for the society.

In the case of the job security of the journalist, there is a lack of unity among the journalists to uphold their demand to the government for the well-being of the profession. Journalists are divided into different fractions who have individual affiliation with different groups of the political parties. Political parties also use the journalist associations for their own benefits

Khaled Mohiuddin, also reflects that, the professional accuracy of the journalists is declining in Bangladesh, rather than investigative or analytical journalism they are more inclined to ‘bite-based’ reporting that only contain that political statement of the leaders; or a press release-based reporting. Journalists are the front-liners in a society who are supposed to dig out the problems and make people aware of them. But now-a-days journalists are not attached with the people’s choice.

The job and livelihood security of the journalists are also at stake in Bangladesh. Though, there is a wage board to determine the salary structure and job security for the journalists, but the private media houses do not follow this. So, there is no benchmark for recruiting and fixing salaries for the journalists. Professional skill is not being maintained by the agencies of the newspaper or Television channel. Practically, there is no basic difference between the other profession and Journalism in Bangladesh. The commercial or advertisement is the only source to the media houses that also depends on the TRP (Television Rating Point) for TV channels, and number of circulations for the newspapers. So, media house owners are keen to achieve their commercial goals. No one has the value-add concept to the professional. No one has any responsibility to make the future of the industry.

In the aspects of local journalism at the district level of Bangladesh, the salary structure of local journalists is not good enough. It is very difficult for them to survive with only the Journalism profession. There is a vital difference between the district level journalism and Dhaka (Capital and main city in Bangladesh) based reporting. The job importance of the local reporter from a district level is not well taken care of by the agencies. A lot of reporters from district level are involved with some charity organization or the governing body of a school committee. This is not a suitable position for a local reporter. It is also a truth that no reporter or agency has a basic focus to build their own audience. The televisions or newspapers have less creativity that has an impact on the local reporters of district level. Sometimes, local reporters make news for their personal benefits; for instance- land dispute between two families or power clash in local politics. There are few district level correspondents who are working hard. The struggle of the local journalists is full of hardships. No one can afford a car except the news editors of the newspaper or a television channel.

According to the statements of Khaled Mohiuddin, the impact of newspapers in society is not good enough these days. Their reports are not people friendly. Journalists are supposed to change society but still they are struggling with professional knowledge, organizational structure or workflow. Reporters have no creativity to show or make a focus for the attraction of the audience. Program based television channels have no creativity to make a good show to attract the audience. Mainly, there is no planning for the establishment of a newspaper or a television channel in Bangladesh; expect the making relationship between the journalist, businessman or political parties for their respective benefits.

The power structure of the society is playing a major role in Bangladesh. Organizational posts, relationships with the government officials and political leaders are the key factors to get financial benefits for a journalist. The post for 'Press Minister' in a Foreign Mission or Embassy or media post of the government office is a hot cake for the journalist these days. Some journalists are involved with the negotiation of the tender of the ministry's work as well; these jobs are far beyond their professional activities. This scenario should be changed for the sake of development of the press freedom and professionalism of the media sector in Bangladesh-- Khaled Mohiuddin commented.

Nurul Kabir is the Editor of the English daily *The New Age* in Bangladesh, who is also a prominent media figure in the country. The researcher approached him to explore the issue of the state-control mechanism over media in Bangladesh. To reply on a question regarding the issue, he said state interference on journalism in Bangladesh varies on the political situation of the country. When practically there is a one-party government in the country, it is difficult for the government to continue its activities with the existence of different opinions. To establish its position, the government needs to show its own contribution to the country and praise their own activities more flamboyantly. In the ruling system of Bangladesh, the government uses the state institutions like administration, police, security forces and intelligence agencies to implement their own political agenda. As a result, the government needs two things to consider, one is having persistent sovereignty over media, and if it does not work then they move to the two- using the forcible institutions that have been mentioned earlier. But sometimes it is not possible to force all people. So, they take the strategy of direct and indirect control over newspapers; they participate in making decisions about publications by giving advice or direction. Sometimes some newspapers accept it, sometimes not. The media-control mechanism in Bangladesh is embedded with the process of providing license for it. During giving the license, they filter the authority of the media houses according to the benefit of their own political party. In Bangladesh, the government's advertisement is the huge source of income of the media houses. They are dependent on this source by and large for their earnings. The pro-government media houses got the benefits of these advertisements; and those who do not flatter the government or criticize them; they are deprived from this financial support through government advertisements. When a media house faces financial difficulty, it impacts on their overall management from employees' salary to the other

cost of news production. So, the state-system is fueled to shrink the freedom of press by controlling financially, politically, organizationally, and legally.

Regarding press freedom Nurul Kabir also opined that, if any journalist has a different opinion, s/he cannot maintain and express it freely because of their financial bindings to the media house to whom s/he work for. He mentioned the “Information and Communication Technology Act, 2006”; and “Digital Security Act-2018” that have also created barriers to express the free opinion even in digital platforms. Due to the Digital Security Act, journalists are facing problems collecting information from their sources. This Act has annulled the easy access to the government office for journalists to get information for reports. Now journalists have to be more careful than ever before to practice investigative journalism in Bangladesh. Sometimes information sources do not want to talk over phone or communicate in fear of lawsuit under the Digital Security Act-2018.

To reply to a question about the obstacles of ‘journalistic objectivity’ in Bangladesh, Nurul Kabir stated that it is always challenging. The practice of professional journalism is more challenging in rural areas of Bangladesh rather than Dhaka (The capital of Bangladesh) or in a metro city. Local journalists have to face the muscle power of the local politics and power rivalry. Additionally, the journalists are divided into many groups that are affiliated with the political parties- this is an obstacle to flourish the practice of professional journalism in the country. This is also one of the internal challenges about journalism. To overcome this, journalists have to be inclined with their professionalism by maintaining their neutrality while reporting. On the other hand, media houses also have responsibility in the aspect of recruiting the employee based on neutral journalism.

As an answer of professional, job, and livelihood security of the journalists, Nurul Kabir said it is still a risky profession in Bangladesh. Journalism is somehow a capital-based institution. There is no media house that fights for their employees, their health-insurance, job security and overall well-being. News professionals do not have a common union or platform that can bargain for their rights. He added that, during the early days of the military governments, newspapers and media remained silent, but gradually they got a strong voice by complying with the peoples’ perception. During the *Ershad regime* (1983-1990), peoples’ sentiments grew slowly against the military government for a democracy; and newspapers, media industry played a crucial role for political

and social changes in the country. So, the reaction of media institutions depends on the reaction of the common people and political parties as a whole.

According to him, the media is an art for society, but it is losing its influence to society because of political and corporate affiliation. Business interest of the media houses has taken the nobility far away from its origin. The society of Bangladesh is a good platform for professional journalism; but the mal-practice of political parties has ruined the market for news-media. “We need to do good work to achieve the professional goals of ‘journalistic objectivity’ in Bangladesh”- he commented. According to Nurul Kabir, freedom of press is essential to build an institutional democracy in the country.

Mahmood Menon Khan is also a prominent journalist in Bangladesh especially, in the field of online news portals. The researcher has talked with him on the issues of state control on journalism and journalists’ insecurity. He states that the state-control mechanism on media and journalists in Bangladesh is embedded with the media policy in the country. It is more concerned about how to control the media rather than to flourish its growth.

Khan said, the easiest answer is there is an online media policy. One can go through the policy and realize that it is not focusing on the flourishing or established growth of Bangladesh media, but the primary focus of this policy is how to control it regarding language, clauses, etc.

Focusing on the booming of the digital news media platform, he stated that when new pattern of media develops, two things should be taken into consideration; one is how to manage it properly, and secondly, to look into its growth in a realistic way that is compatible with the political and social aspiration of the citizen of a country. In his opinion, in the case of Bangladesh, this media policy is not giving anything that can help the media-growth with a strong base. In the contemporary world, people are more inclined to the online media rather than the traditional one. Bangladesh is not in a good position to accept the new phenomenon. With the boom of globalization, where the globe is moving towards open access to the information, Bangladesh's policy of controlling it is totally opposite. Controlling the freedom of expression and free journalism in digital platforms can hamper democracy and social progress.

Khan said, Mainstream Bangladeshi media do not perform anything where digital security act should be applied. The Digital Security Act is mainly for controlling free expression in social media. Media should have the freedom to practice free journalism in the country. But the Digital Security Act has some clauses that impede the practice of investigative journalism in Bangladesh. For instance, when a journalist comes across confidential evidence and records it in mobile or in another digital device, it is considered as an ‘offence’ and sometimes ‘non-bailable offence’ for carrying the sensitive information in a digital device under the Digital Security Act. There is a possibility to misuse the related clauses of the Act. Because earlier the journalists have published so many reports and news about the corruption of government officials; but now if any official thinks s\he is undermined by any sentence or even any word or reports in public media or social media, they can lodge a lawsuit against the journalist under the Digital Security Act; where the journalist can be arrested without bail eligibility. There are some cases where the Digital Security Act has been misused.

According to Khan, there has been no practice of investigative journalism in Bangladesh since the last ten years. So, the phrase ‘press freedom’ is vague in the aspects of professional journalism in the country. He opined that the media in Bangladesh is evolving with some rapid changes as well. There are lots of events and incidents around every day. The issues in the society go viral in social media; the traditional media also try to catch up the issues to go along with the public interests. Sometimes a new event, incident covers, overlaps the previous one, so the follow-up news or further investigation on an issue remains uncovered.

In the aspect of the job security of journalists in Bangladesh, Khan expressed his concern and identified the inadequate market of advertisement that is not enough for the huge media industry in the country. The financial crisis of the media houses has an impact of job insecurity for journalists in Bangladesh.

Dr. Golam Rahman is a media researcher and communication expert in Bangladesh. He worked as the Chairman of the Information Commission of Bangladesh. The researcher has interviewed him on the issue of state-censorship in the media. According to his opinion, there is no constitutional law to censor the news; and no direct pressure on the media from the government; but a few

incidents happened where the authority of some media houses felt that they were under pressure from the Government. He mentioned Digital Security Act-2018, where journalists' organizations and media authorities have shown grave concern for their freedom to write and publish news. He said, sometimes the internet users in Bangladesh have been charged under the Digital Security Act; because of the abuse of Internet, or Social Media propaganda, or spreading hate speeches.

According to the statement of Golam Rahman, the Right to Information Act (2009) is a milestone achievement for the freedom of press and people's choice to get the information from any government organization. But people are not well-aware about this; and they are not willing to get the information from any specific national issue. Government should take necessary steps to make it popular among the citizens.

He also commented that the limitation of press media is a 'common concern' in the world. In Bangladesh a lot of television channels are working freely; where they broadcast 'aggressive' talk shows, Newspapers can write against the government decisions, corruption, institutional autocracy or various social events. Freedom of press is a constitutional right in Bangladesh.

According to him, sometimes reporters may not get enough cooperation to get accurate information from government officials or organizations, but they can write the facts as well. He also mentioned that a lot of corruption reports are coming out that have been manifested by the reports of civil society organizations like TIB (Transparency International, Bangladesh).

He has reflected on the issue of media ownership in Bangladesh. There is no transmission law or monitoring committee for broadcast media. So, the job security of the journalists and other media employees has not been determined in a framed way. There is no basic job structure, pay scale, increment scale or assurance of personal benefits. It is obvious that the corporate culture or profit oriented media practice is the 'harsh reality' in Bangladeshi Media. In Bangladesh, broadcast media licensing policy has not been formulated because of the lack of information from the television channel or Broadcast media owners; they never show the permanent office or employee structure of the company. No investment format or market survey is required to create a new broadcast media in Bangladesh. So, there is anarchy in this sector that needs to be addressed by the competent authority-- Golam Rahman opined. Though there is a specific law for the print

media, it is flexible, and the government is not monitoring it for development. There is a press council for the professional quality development of the journalists or broadcast crews, but they are not highly involved with the facts and findings of the problems of the broadcast and print media industry.

According to him, no one is playing an active role to solve the problems of media houses. The cycle between the broadcast media owners, government and the employees of the media houses has a lack of professionalism as well. There should be a strong monitoring body to solve the problems of media houses. Sometimes, Media Professionals made some organization to solve these issues. But political ideology and lack of professionalism, interpersonal clashes are the basic barriers to make this venture a success. To increase the Professionalism, Media houses can build their own funds, making financial stability for the sustainability of the house. Media authorities can arrange some training courses for the newcomers to the industry. In reality, media owners are busy with various political protests for their own personal benefits rather than the development of the industry-- according to the statement of Rahman.

To conclude the interviews and opinions, we can deduce that the Bangladeshi media industry is facing challenges; both in the aspects of 'free media' and "journalists' job and livelihood security". To gain the financial and political benefits sometimes media owners make affiliation with the government or political parties that manifests the possible crisis of the media industry in Bangladesh. The emerging media industry is moving forward with struggle and hardships. Bangladesh has passed fifty years of independence that came in 1971. But the media industry has not been formulated in a systematic way that can contribute to the democracy and well-being of the society.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

The literature and interviews from field study have explored the contemporary scenario of the media-censorship and journalists' insecurity in Bangladesh. Mostly, there is no job security for journalists in Bangladesh. Lack of financial support from the media houses is mostly responsible for the job and livelihood insecurity, but the socio-political culture of the media industry in the country also plays a crucial role for creating the adverse situation. The inadequacy of the advertisement market and profits of the media owners are the concerns of low salary structure of the journalists in Bangladesh. As the New Media is expanding the country exponentially, the number of unregulated media houses are also on the rise. The government is very concerned about bringing them under some laws and regulations. Additionally, these media houses are not capable enough to maintain their staff with salary, so they try to involve themselves in corruption. There is no institutional scheme for social security for journalists. Their health security has not been assured by the employer. If someone falls in any accident while performing a job, there is no guarantee for financial support from the employer or government. Their professional or job security is not assured by the employer as well. On the other hand, the journalists do not get any support from the employer if s/he falls in trouble from government agencies for making reports that go against the interest of the government.

While most of the country ensures job and livelihood security for the journalists; the insecurity, feeling of life and livelihood of the journalists in Bangladesh are intertwined with the political culture and the practice of journalism. On the other hand, the state-sponsored media censorship in Bangladesh is like the other parts of the world. Ruling parties always try to oversee the media if they can take political advantage from it. In a democratic country the government is concerned to highlight its activities and achievement to the citizens and international community; and hide their failure, corruption, or inability by controlling the media. Findings of this study from the literature and field data also support the phenomenon. Haider (2014) has highlighted the history and practice of media and journalism in Bangladesh, where Freedom House along with other writers discussed the restrictions of media in different times. But it is not enough to understand the variation of control mechanisms from state to the media. The narratives from the interviews have shed some

lights on the issues of the subject matter of this research. Some insights of the media industry have come out that manifest the multi-faceted crises in the media sector of Bangladesh.

According to this present media structure format, few Journalist leaders make some professional organization and their influence in political parties and government become so high that now-a-days that is very difficult to break the chain and make an opportunity to develop the news media industry or to build professionalism for the industry. The Digital security act is an important law in Bangladesh. But Mainstream media does not perform anything that needs a digital security act. This is the statement from expertise. Mainly digital security act is for social media.

Way to Look Forward:

While everyone acknowledges that a “free” press is essential for a “free” society, there is considerable ambiguity about precisely what the word “free” means. The standard view is that the “free” in free press means a press that is free from government control, free from different threats and insecurity issues and this in turn, means a free market press. The research found that, despite having different security problems and state control over journalism in Bangladesh; the industry is moving forward, and it has embraced the new form of media- the digital media. A free press market also serves the interest of a free and developing society. It can be said undoubtedly that market competition will guarantee an open arena for the exchange and dissemination of ideas for a better democratic society.

The greatest threat to a free press in Bangladesh now is institutional policies that impose self-censorship rather than the traditional state-sponsored media-control mechanisms. This process of controlling news media is being changed day by day and it is continuing in the contemporary world.

In a nutshell, we can deduce that the media are working under different state-control mechanisms like laws, media policies, and regular monitoring by intelligence agencies. The media authority has to cope up with the government's demand and policy. Sometimes, they show combined valour to protest against the government's decision that goes against the public interests. In the aspects of journalists' security, it can be said- there is no standard scenario on the safety of the journalists

and freedom of their profession that can contribute to uphold democracy in a developing country like Bangladesh.

It has been tried to pinpoint on the real problems of the journalism profession of Bangladesh in this study that reveals the different aspects of journalism profession in different news media in Bangladesh like insecurity, risk, insufficient facilities, lack of proper job policy, etc. Not only a vast number of newspapers have been published but also a lot of radio and TV channels are on air in present days in Bangladesh. This number is increasing but the credibility, acceptability and professionalism in Bangladeshi news media has been decreasing because of the above-mentioned issues. The dynamic of the media industry in Bangladesh has attracted the young talents both male and female to join this honorable and challenging profession, though there is job and life insecurity. On the other hand, many talented, promising journalists have been leaving the profession for a better secured profession. To uphold the dignity of Bangladeshi news media, government and private investors should come forward to promote this prospective job industry with professionalism and commitment rather than using it for their own financial and political gains. Not only from the owners' level, but also the journalists' organizations should also play some roles to propel the pace of professional journalism to the right direction in the country.

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