

ROLE OF INDIAN NEWSPAPERS TO ANALYSE INDO-BANGLADESH RELATIONS

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Abstract: *International communication is effective to determine the way in which the reader can perceive the causes of those international issues in a collective manner. Media play an effective role in covering international relations. India and Bangladesh are neighbour countries and share the history of old civilisation in the world. In this regard, foreign relations between India and Bangladesh are presented by different media houses. This study helps to examine the quantity of newspaper coverage on international issues between India and Bangladesh. The language of the news coverage of the international conflict and analysis of the international news is evaluated in this research study. Analysis of various news reporting in several newspapers in India is described in this research article. Media framing is a vital part to know the perspective of news reporting. The policies of various newspaper houses vary and reflect on the international news coverage related Indo-Bangladesh relations, the writing style of the news and the presentation of the foreign issue. Within the study of communication, contemporary foreign dissension has generated analytical distinctions among several kinds of news associated with India and Bangladesh. For this reason, it is essential to highlight the language of news stories and the presentation of regional media in India considering some recent international issues. This study suggests a context for evaluation of the newspaper coverage in India and its role in presenting the relations of India and Bangladesh.*

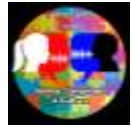
Keywords: *Media coverage, International Relations, Readers, Newspapers.*

Introduction

Diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh have begun in 1971 with the recognition of India as an independent country Bangladesh which has been formerly known as East Pakistan. International communication between two countries is essential in order to maintain the integrity, equality as well as the sovereignty of both nations in the world. In this regard, it can be possible to elucidate that the media play a crucial role in informing people regarding the international issues which affect both countries. There are certain internal conflicts between Bangladesh and India which are covered by the media. In the case of India, media houses play an effective role to disseminate information regarding international relations between both countries. This study is to focus on the media houses' news coverage of India regarding international issues and the presentation of Indo-Bangladesh relations among the target readers. Factors affecting the international news coverage of different media houses on Indo-Bangladesh relations are analysed in this study.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to investigate the role of media coverage to analyse the relations between two neighbour countries, India and Bangladesh.



The objectives of the study are given below:

- To understand the liaison between India and Bangladesh
- To evaluate the role of media coverage to inform people about the recent development of Indo-Bangladesh relations
- To analyse the news covered by newspapers of India regarding Indo-Bangladesh relations

Literature review

Post liberation relations of Indo-Bangladesh

India is the first country to recognise Bangladesh as an independent country and since then both countries are maintaining diplomatic ties to strengthen foreign relations with each other. In addition to this, the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Peace was signed between Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on 19 March 1972 for a period of 25 years.

Management of border and security between India and Bangladesh

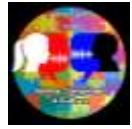
In the year 2020, it has been found that the 51st DGLT or Director-General Level Talks between Border Guard Bangladesh as well as Border Security Force (BSF) of India have been held from 22nd December to 26th December (mea.gov.in, 2021). The DGLT has been organised in Guwahati, India. In this regard, it has been seen that Outlook India has presented the news as the DGLT has been held outside Delhi for the first time for enhancing cooperation between the two countries (outlookindia.com, 2020). These bilateral talks have helped to increase coordination between both countries which has been mentioned in the media coverage. The discussion regarding security and management of 4096.7 Km of the land border of India and Bangladesh helps to strengthen the liaison between the two nations.

During Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina's state visit to New Delhi in 2019, had a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, where he has highly appreciated the Bangladesh Government's zero-tolerance policy for its determined efforts to ensure peace, security and stability in the whole region. Additionally, also recognized by the two leaders that terrorism remains one of the main topics of great importance to the level of peace as well as stability of countries and regions (Chatterjee, Sen & Bengal, 2019).

However, the Prime Ministers of the two countries have expressed and restated their belief and promise to resolutely eradicate all forms of expression and emphasize avoiding terrorism. In addition, the two prime ministers mentioned fruitful discussions between the Bangladeshi and Indian Interior ministers during the Bangladeshi Home Affairs Minister's visit to India in August 2019, in which he has agreed to work more closely to combat radical extremist groups, terrorist organisations, and smuggling of weapons, drugs and counterfeit money as well as organised crime as a common priority.

Energy cooperation between Bangladesh and India

India recently launched the concept of a regional electricity exchange system that will help different parts of the country reduce their electricity deficit by transferring excess electricity from another area. Under the Electricity Act 2003, Indian firms can pool their electricity in



one exchange. Consumers are free to purchase it from anybody. The idea of energy resources in India can also be extended to neighbouring countries like Bangladesh after the formation of a sub-regional energy group and the essential connections between these nations are in place. This could eventually form a power source in the region, thus creating an enormous prospect for electricity trading in the region. From the point of view of Karim

& Islam (2018) Bangladesh is involved in both the export of services and low-end manufactured goods. In addition, the region has a wide variety of conventional as well as renewable energy sources.

Adani Power announced on 8 November 2017 that its subsidiary Adani Power (Jharkhand) has signed a long-term agreement with the Bangladesh Electricity Development Board in order to supply electricity from their upcoming 1,600 MW power plant in Godda in Jharkhand. In this regard, it has been found that the Times of India has presented a news article where it shows India is going to supply around 20 per cent more power to Bangladesh (timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 2021). This news is presented in such a way that helps to analyse an effective liaison between the mentioned two nations.

In addition to this, it can be stated that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has wanted India to help in the promotion of green energy which is based on hydropower. The ties between Dhaka and Delhi can be strengthened with this promotion (economictimes.indiatimes.com, 2021). Green energy sources along with solar power are useful for a country like Bangladesh if India would help Bangladesh in this aspect. This kind of cooperation can be effective for both nations according to the news coverage of The Economic Times.

High-level exchange and visit between India and Bangladesh

The two countries have had regular exchanges and high-level meetings, including frequent meetings between ministerial and senior officials regularly. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bangladesh on 6th June 2015. On the other hand, in the year 2017, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina has paid her visit to India on 7th April 2017. During this visit, around 36 bilateral documents have been concluded in different areas such as technology areas of Space, Civil Nuclear Energy, Information Technology, Capacity building as well as Defence and so on (mea.gov.in, 2017).

In this aspect, it is seen that India and Bangladesh always try to maintain a strong relationship considering the economic as well as cultural perspective. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Bangladesh on 26th March 2021 however, that particular visit has turned deadly as the violence protest against him. According to the reporting of The Economics Times, four people have been killed in Bangladesh during the visit of PM Modi (economictimes.indiatimes.com, 2021). This news is also covered by other media houses such as India Today, The Hindu, News 18, NDTV as well as Deccan Chronicle. It has been found that the frequency of the coverage of this news is not more than one to two times for each news media house.

Methodology

The current study has followed a methodology considering research approach, philosophy along with research design. Data collection and analysis are also evaluated in this study on a detailed note.



Research philosophy

In this research study, post positivism philosophy has been used to describe the analysed data properly. It is because opinion based analysis helps to establish the media coverage on the relation between India and Bangladesh.

Research approach

This study has followed a deductive research approach for drawing a profound conclusion at the end of the study. This approach is quite helpful to analyse qualitative data effectively.

Research design

A descriptive research design has been followed in this study. This design of the research helps to analyse the collected data from different sources effectively.

Data collection and analysis

Qualitative data is used in this study. Different newspapers' e-version has been chosen in order to analyse the media coverage on several aspects related to Indo-Bangladesh relations. The e-version of the newspapers has been collected using databases such as Google.com and Google Scholar. From 2016 to 2021, coverage of newspapers is considered in this research study to understand the role of the development of India and Bangladesh relations in an in-depth manner. Some research articles are also chosen for analysing factors affecting news treatment of international issues in India related to Indo-Bangladesh relations. Different issues and aspects are chosen considering content analysis. Newspaper contents are used in this research study to evaluate the Indo-Bangladesh relations.

Selection criteria for research article and e-newspaper

Certain inclusion criteria are listed below:

- Articles and news in the English language
- Articles and news published between 2016 to 2021
- News and articles cover Indo-Bangladesh relations

Certain exclusion criteria are given below:

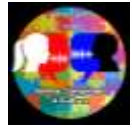
- Articles and news which are not related to this research objectives
- News and articles are not written in the English language
- Articles and news published before 2016

Sampling process

A simple random sampling process is used by searching some keywords in the search engine. Total 12 sources have been chosen using an online database. Among 10 sources, 9 e-versions of different newspapers are chosen and 3 research articles are selected.

Findings and discussion

Impacts of media coverage on Indo-Bangladesh relation



In addition to this, it can be evaluated from the newspaper reporting that Indo-Bangladesh relation has a great impact on the social aspects of both countries. It is because the victory of free Bangladesh is one of the major accomplishments of India in world politics. Every year, 16th December Vijay Diwas is observed to mark the victory of India in this regard. Defence cooperation helps to manage the Land Boundary Agreement (LBA) between Bangladesh and India. It is needed to improve the liaison between both countries, for this reason, river cooperation is also important to be managed. Bangladesh and India share 54 rivers (Dubey, 2021). Since 1972, India and Bangladesh have been working on the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) for getting benefits from common rivers in the countries. These aspects are covered in the newspapers of India as well as Bangladesh positively.

Recent issues affecting Indo-Bangladesh relations

It has been found that there are certain issues that affect the relation between India and Bangladesh. Due to those issues, liaisons between these two countries have been negatively affected however, newspapers have covered those incidents not very frequently by circulating the news day-by-day. In this context, it can be said that it is only decided by the media house owner to cover the news story based on the demands and needs of the readers in the society.

In the month of October 2021, attackers have attacked Durga puja pandals in Bangladesh. Vandalism against the idol of Devi Durga has been reported in the country. This has been violence against Hindu culture which has been reported in different newspapers in India. At Nanua Dighi in Comilla, it has been reported that the idol of Devi Durga has been thrown into a pond (timesnownews.com, 2021). This has been one of the scandalous days in the history of Bangladesh which has a negative effect on India also. This vandalism has been covered by different newspapers in India. The Times of India has reported that 6 idols have been vandalised in the temple of Munshiganj. This newspaper has also reported that communal violence broke out at several places in Bangladesh after news broke on social media about the alleged desecration of the Holy Quran at a Durga Puja venue on the bank of Nanuar Dighi. Multiple puja venues have been vandalised within the area of Bandarban, Chittagong, Chandpur, Gazipur, Chapainawabganj and Moulvibazar. The clashes resulted in several casualties (timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 2021).

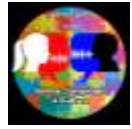
In this regard, it has been identified from the newspaper reporting that the communal violence in Bangladesh has a large impact on people. It is because several newspapers have covered the protest in India against the communal violence in Bangladesh.

Factors affecting news coverage of international issues

It can be stated that some factors affect the presentation and coverage of international news in newspapers. In the case of Indo-Bangladesh relations, there are certain factors that influence the international news coverage in Indian newspapers. These are outlined below:

Impact of the issue

It has been identified from the study of Arafat (2019), Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated countries in the world, for this reason, any issues happening in Bangladesh, it might have an impact on India as this is the neighbour country of India. It can be explained that the impact of the issues is determined by the cause and effects of the incidents. In this regard, how many people can be affected by the news are also considered. The news values,



as well as news elements, help to determine the impact of the issue on the target audience. In the case of events related to Indo-Bangladesh relations, impacts of the incident or happenings help the newspaper to determine the frequency of the news stories to be covered on that particular event.

Demands of the target readers

It can be stated that the demand of the target audience is one of the main factors to present news stories among the masses. In this context, it is needed to focus on the needs of the target audience. It is possible to analyse news on the basis of the requirements of the audience. The newspapers try to repeat the news stories by including more interesting facts. News events associated with Indo-Bangladesh relations are being published in different newspapers in India. The Hindu has reported a news article where it is said that India and Bangladesh relations are the role model for international affairs (thehindu.com, 2021). It indicates that the audience prefers to get news of India and Bangladesh relations rather than other international relations with India. On the other hand, Indian Express has presented that the joint exercise of Bangladesh and India regarding counter terrorism events provides a strong signal to other countries (indianexpress.com, 2017). These two newspapers analyse the news based on the demands of the audience.

Location of the nations

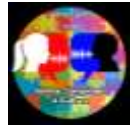
Location of the nation is important for maintaining international relations. A country always tries to maintain a strong liaison with neighbour nations. For this reason, India maintains a strong relationship with Bangladesh. Moreover, it is also necessary to understand that both countries provide a promising note to each other in order to maintain cultural ties effectively. According to the reporting of The Economics Times, a new passenger train has been inaugurated by PM Sheikh Hasina and PM Narendra Modi that connects Dhaka and New Jalpaiguri (economictimes.indiatimes.com, 2021). For this reason, the location of the nations also influences the newspaper to cover international affairs.

Cultural affinity

The link of India with Bangladesh is based on the social aspect, economic aspect, cultural aspect and civilisational aspect. It is because both countries share the history of undivided Bharatbarsha. The Hindustan Times has covered a news article where it is written in its headline that the international bond of Bangladesh and India is clearly dominated by domestic forces (hindustantimes.com, 2018).

The recent development of Indo-Bangladesh relations

India is the trade partner of Bangladesh. It is because, for a country like Bangladesh, India is one of the largest sources of imports (ipcs.org, 2021). It has been seen that recently Bangladesh and India maintain their tie to protect countrymen from Covid-19 disease. India and Bangladesh have strengthened the tie of CoronaVirus Vaccine diplomacy in the world (business-standard.com, 2020). In addition to this, it has been found that this kind of news always attracts readers as both countries have cultural ties with each other. For this reason, it is also required to focus on the news content that helps to attract the attention of the readers. The Business Standards has written in its news article that the vaccination against Covid-19 has brought two nations together after the failure of the Teesta river water agreement. On the



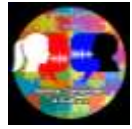
other hand, The Times of India has covered that India has sent medical oxygen to Bangladesh after sending vaccination against Covid-19 (timesofindia.indiatimes.com, 2021). This aspect is analysed in this newspaper for evaluating the bonding between Bangladesh and India in international diplomacy.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that newspaper reporting helps to analyse the news content related to international affairs based on the impact of the issues and demands of the audience. Moreover, the location of the country also plays an important role in evaluating foreign relations in world diplomacy. Different newspapers present several international events related to India and Bangladesh liaisons in the world. The frequency of news coverage depends on the demands of the audience, cultural affinity as well as location of the countries in the world. It has been found from the above discussion that vandalism against the idol of Devi Durga has been covered by several newspapers in India. On the other hand, news associated with Covid-19 vaccine diplomacy between India and Bangladesh is also covered by several newspapers. Bangladesh has got support from India considering medical oxygen. It is summarised that media coverage is essential for informing people about the development of the India and Bangladesh liaison. Based on the needs of the audience and impacts of the issues, newspapers cover the issues time-to-time. Therefore, the media play a vital role in presenting international events effectively.

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