

A Political Economy of the Emerging Television News Industry in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to critically examine how the unprecedented expansion of television industry in Bangladesh became possible over the past decade, and how the increasingly market-liberalization trend of this country constitutes the structure, content and process of news production amongst the TV channels. This is the first time South Asia has experienced the phenomenon of a TV media 'boom' in Bangladesh, in spite of the background of politically violent and prospective new democracy. However, the escalating commercialization is triggering a divide between the actual role of television and the potential role it could play in a progressive society. Since the government permitted private broadcasting satellite TV channels in 1997, a massive investment in the production and advertisement sector has been systematically facilitated by the dominant political and commercial elites of the country. The number of television networks has increased by 19 over last 11 years. In this perspective, this article traces the answers to the questions - why and how a country with \$440 per capita GNP should need 19 television channels? What is the power-structure behind the abnormal growth of TV industry? Who invests and what are the sources of asset? Aiming what profit? What backing keeps these channels running? How are the owners' political and business networks affecting the fate of news content? The paper also highlights a contradiction between the television industry of Bangladesh and the international economic powers. On the one hand, the reformation pressures from many donor agencies indirectly influenced the recent Caretaker government to eliminate corruption, and ensure an untroubled access for the international corporation's investment and business. As a part of this operation, Ministry of Information has shut down several corrupt-licensed TV channels. On the other hand, this article explores, advertisement and investment supports from the translational corporations have ultimately encouraged the political tycoons to expand their television outlets, and now these channels have been used as local and global business-lobbying-corruption-powerhouse. Subsequently, this paper also argues with evidence that the alarming drift of corporate takeover of news-slots through 'Corporate-Branding' and 'advertiser-media-partnership' inexorably shapes the selection and production of news. Finally, an empirical analysis of this article reveals a power-exercise-web between government, corporations, media owners and newsmakers which is radically dividing the most popular mass media of Bangladesh and transforming it into a market-oriented class media.

Introduction

This paper aims to examine how an unprecedented expansion of the television industry in Bangladesh became possible over the past decade, and how the increasing trend towards market-liberalization in this country has affected the structure, content and process of news production. The paper seeks to investigate the case of Bangladesh through a political

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economy analysis. This analysis follows Golding and Murdoch (2000), Mosco (1996) and Curran (2000, 2002). On their analysis they emphasized four criteria, such as the growth of the media industry; the extension of corporate reach; the impact of commodification; and the changing role of the state and government intervention. Taking *NTV* as a case study this article articulates the recent commercialization trends amongst the TV channels. Given this context, this article seeks to discuss the following research questions:

- When and how an unprecedented expansion of private television channels took place in the media landscape of Bangladesh.
- How the increase of viewers and advertising fuelled the growth of television channels?
- How do owners' political and business networks affect the fate of news content and journalism?
- What techniques are being used to make news production processes more and more market-oriented? In fact, how are newsmakers selling the air?

Bangladesh and the TV media boom

Bangladesh is a country of 56000 square miles, a bit more than the size of England. The estimated population of the country is 160 million making it the seventh most populous nation in the world. Its per capita GDP is very low, at only \$2053². Bangladesh gained its independence from Pakistan in 1971, following a 9-month armed struggle. The country has a deep cultural heritage, including a rich tradition of language. Freedom to use Bangla began as a language movement in 1952, and continued as the cultural-political base for the War of Liberation.³ With an impulsive response from the mass people, the country has moved away from the dictatorship of the 1990's towards a more democratic form of political rule.

Regardless of much poverty, corruption and political instability, Bangladesh is the first case in South Asia of the 'TV media boom' trend. Phenomenally, the number of television viewers in Bangladesh is more than 40 million, which is a big number of viewers for a country with merely \$440 per capita GNP. Despite a huge expansion of print and

²http://stats.uis.unesco.org/unesco/TableViewer/document.aspx?ReportId=121&IF_Language=eng&BR_Country=500

³ Based on the 1952 Bangla language movement, UNESCO has declared February 21 as International Mother Language Day, recognizing the rights of all peoples to use their indigenous language.

electronic media in the country, media experts (Khan, 2007; Ferdous, 2007) argue that ‘due to lack of a proper broadcasting policy’ there has been deepening commercialization within the media industry and a growing information divide between urban and rural people. There is also a dispute that the TV media boom costs the country of a political disparity, and a market orientation trend has undercut the independence and impartiality of the media. Moreover, the escalating commercialization is creating a divide between the actual role of television channels and the role it could playing a progressive society.

In the last decade, a great deal of support of local and transnational corporations in the way of advertising revenues and investment endorsement has encouraged the political and business tycoons of Bangladesh to expand their television outlets, leading to media conglomeration. Consequently, ‘the diagonal concentrations of ownership’ (Doyle, 2002) are being resulted in the development of a political monopoly and the growth of business lobbying powerhouses (Rahman, 2007: 231-250). This power network led market-liberalization has made an impact on the content and process of news production within every TV channels, more or less.

Growth of the television industry

There is currently only one terrestrial television station in Bangladesh, *Bangladesh Television (BTV)*. This channel has emerged as a powerful and effective mass medium since its inception in 1964. *BTV* is a state-owned channel that stepped into the arena of electronic media with objectives like dissemination of information and expansion of educational and motivational programs to expedite development works and entertainment (MPG Study Report, 2007).

At present, *BTV* is the only television station that the overwhelming majority of Bangladeshis can watch, because only 1.8% of the adult rural population has a cable connection or satellite dish in their home.⁴ The media sector in Dhaka regards *BTV*’s programming as dull and of poor quality – they claim people watch it only because they have no access to cable or satellite channels and thus have no choice.⁵ While *BTV* is owned by the state, it sells advertising. Advertising on *BTV* is the most expensive television ad space in Bangladesh (because the station has by far the greatest reach) – up to 75,000 Taka (1088

⁴ AC Nielsen 2006 Demographic Media Survey, carried out in June and July of 2006

⁵ *Daily Star* City Editor, Sharier Khan and Staff Correspondent, Ashfaq Wares Kahan, (EiA, 2007) *Television & Related Output*, English in Action Project Bangladesh, BBC World Service Trust, 7 Sept 2007.

USD) per minute.⁶ Even though it has produced many award-winning programs (including the most popular drama serial ever - Ettiady) it has often been criticized for being the mouthpiece of the ruling government. With politicisation of artiste recruitment for different programmes, the quality of *BTV* as an entertainment media has also diminished (Roy, 2006).

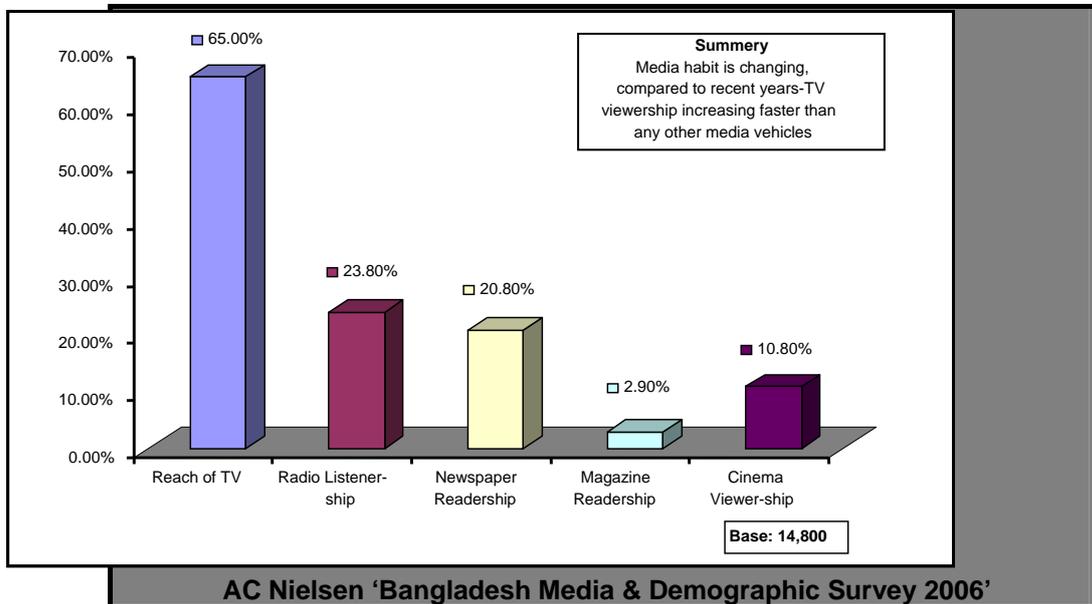
Bangladesh entered the era of satellite broadcasting in 1992, by giving access to *CNN* and the *BBC* to broadcast on the government-regulated channel – *BTV*. After this, it was long expected that broadcast media would bring down the barriers stopping poor and marginalised groups accessing information⁷. In the context of a dominance of foreign satellite channels in the country, *ATN Bangla* came into being on July 15, 1997. The first Bangla private satellite channel, *ATN Bangla* aimed at telecasting programmes in Bangla for viewers in more than a hundred countries across the world. *Channel-i*, established in 1999, is the first-ever digital Bangla television channel in Bangladesh. *Ekushey Television (ETV)*, the first private terrestrial channel in Bangladesh, began transmission on 2000. *ETV* changed all traditional approaches to TV media and set a new standard in a short span of time⁸. Thus, the TV viewers found a relief from and a better alternative to the monotonous and monopolised news presentation on the *BTV*. Since then, television has indeed become the most popular medium in Bangladesh (Figure 1).

⁶ Mahbub Rahim Udo, General Manager of Marketing, *Channel I* (EiA, 2007)

⁷ <http://www.asiamedia.ucla.edu/article-southasia.asp?parentid=51962>

⁸ However, under a court order, *ETV* was closed down on August 29, 2002. The government once again gave *ETV* a permission to continue satellite transmission on April 14, 2005, and the channel resumed its transmission on December 1, 2006. Its official transmission started on March 29, 2007 and became a 24-hour channel on June 1 (MPG Study Report, 2007).

Figure 1: Audience reach of different media in Bangladesh (2006-2007).



According to AC Nielsen's 2006 Demographic Media Survey, 64.6% of adults in Bangladesh watch TV (approximately 61.37 million people).⁹ Television ownership has increased dramatically during the last decade. Forty-one per cent of households now have a television, whereas only 8% owned a television in 1995.¹⁰

Increase of viewership and popularity

It can be argued that television has altered the entire media industry of Bangladesh within a decade. It has also changed the habit of audience how they get information. People in rural areas like to watch television, even if it means going to a neighbour's home because they do not have a TV set. More people in rural areas watch TV than have access to electricity or own a television because 32.2% watch television at a neighbour's home; 8.7% watch television in a shop; 4.4% watch television in a relative's home and 3.3% watch television in the market (bazaar).¹¹

Due to limited access to electricity and television ownership, watching TV is a communal activity in Bangladesh. In rural areas, more than eight people typically watch

⁹ AC Nielsen 2006 Demographic Media Survey, carried out in June and July of 2006 – this data is based on the question – "Have you watched TV in the last 7-10 days"

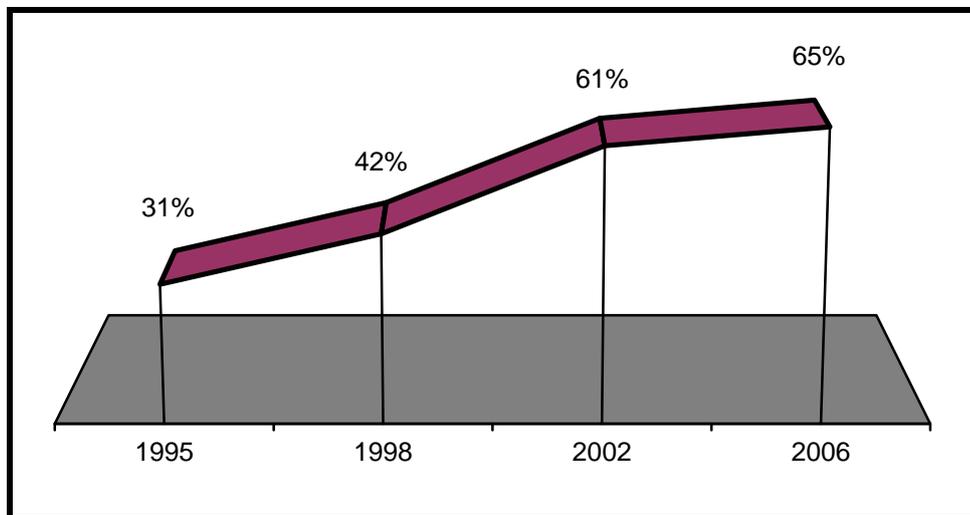
¹⁰ Dr Khalid Hasan, Managing Director of ACNielsen Bangladesh of AC Nielsen in survey launch press release

¹¹ AC Nielsen 2006 Demographic Media Survey, carried out in June and July of 2006

television together. In urban areas this number decreases to five people and in the metropolitan cities, four people typically watch television together.¹² This communal nature of the audience attracts the advertisers to use television as a most effective means to reach their target consumers.

Not only is television popular, but access to the medium has increased significantly between 1995 and 2006. While in 1995, television has reached to the 31 percent of the total population, the access to television has increased to 65 percent in 2006 (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Growth of access to television media in Bangladesh¹³



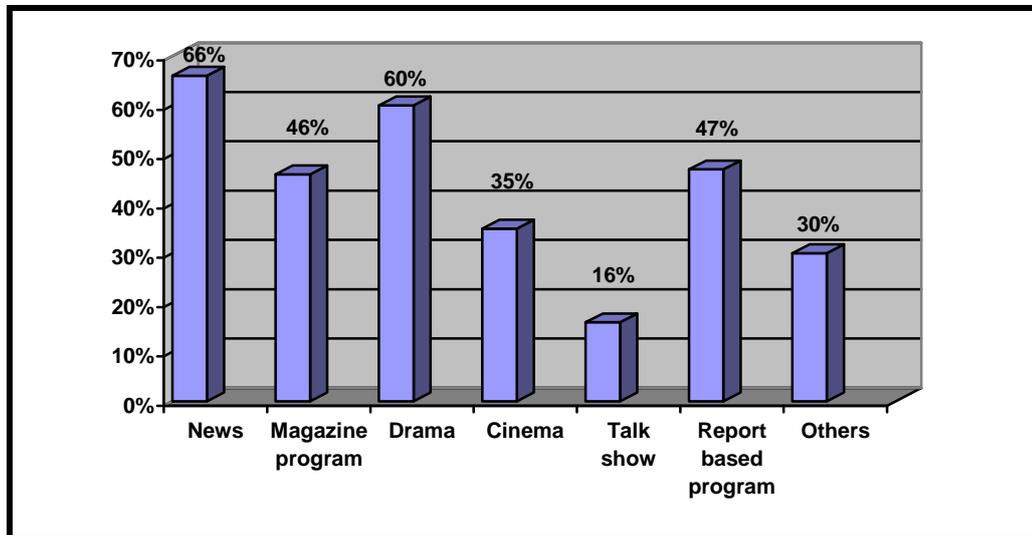
The growth in television viewership is largely being driven by satellite television. The upward trend in cable and satellite viewing is likely to increase. Connections are relatively cheap by international standards and there is anecdotal evidence that cable and satellite penetration follows electrification (EiA, 2007).

According to a Buddecomm report (2008), Bangladesh’s television households are served by more than 2000 cable operators. With the development of studios, digital video editing technology, producers and journalists - news has become a more popular genre of programme (66%) among all; followed by drama (60%), report based program (47%), magazine programs (46%), cinema (35%), talk shows (16%) or other programs (Figure 3).

¹² AC Nielsen 2006 Demographic Media Survey, carried out in June and July of 2006

¹³ Source: National Media Survey 2002; National Media & Demographic Survey 2006, AC Nielsen

Figure 3: Popularity of television programs in Bangladesh¹⁴



Increase of advertising

Growth in the cable and satellite television industry has been in turn driven by massive growth in the telecommunications sector.¹⁵ According to the head of an ad agency Adcom, “Television viewership is growing at a rate of 15-20 percent a year. Because of the huge spending by telecom companies and some local and multinational companies, the advertisement market has also doubled in five years.”¹⁶

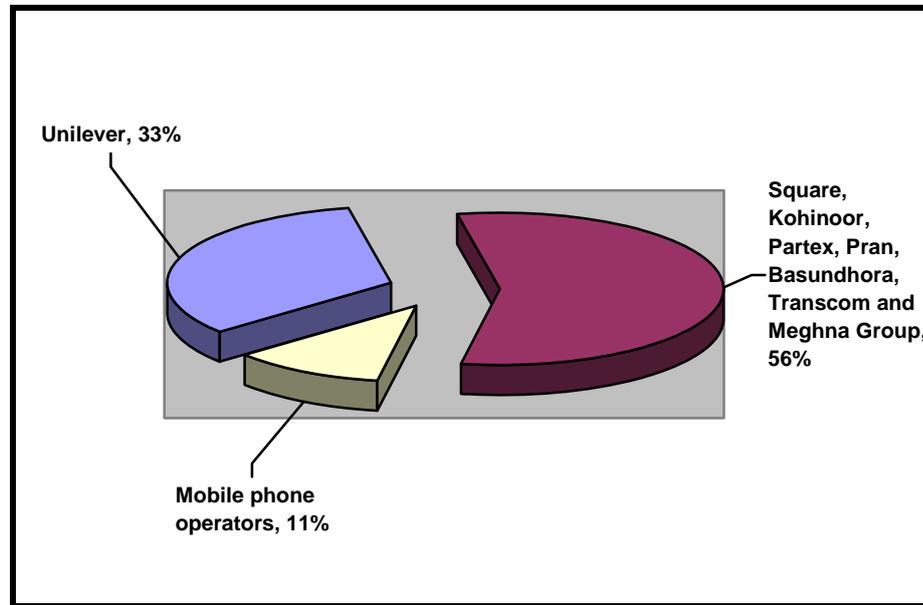
The Katalyst survey found that television commercials are largely dominated by multinational companies’ consumer products, mobile telecom services and products of leading local business houses (Figure 4). Multinational company Unilever (33 per cent) topped the list of top 10 advertisers in television, followed by local corporate houses—Square, Kohinoor, Partex, Pran, Basundhora, Transcom and Meghna Group—with 56 per cent together, and then mobile phone operators (11 per cent). Private television channels earn most of their revenue from the peak time commercials (Roy, 2006).

¹⁴ Source: Massline Media Centre (MMC) Survey: 2001.

¹⁵ Nawazish Ali Khan, Senior Vice President, Programmes; Mahbub Rahim Udooy, Assistant General Manager, Marketing, *Channel I*

¹⁶ Radio netherlands website (EiA, 2007)

Figure 4: Top 10 multinational and local advertisers of Bangladeshi TV channels



Advertisements or commercials are lifeline of the media industry. It is one of the continuing financial sources of running the media organisations. There are 110 active advertising agencies in the country. Among the leading players are Unitrend Ltd, Asiatic MCL, Ad Com Ltd, Grey Advertising Bangladesh Ltd, Interspeed, Bitopi Advertising, Matra, Creative Media Ltd, Expressions and Bindu. Most of the commercials in Bangladesh media, both print and broadcasting, are on mobile phone companies, real estate, private universities, perfumery and toiletries industries, home appliance selling organisations, government and private banks, and beverages.

Ad agencies usually have some fixed clients. New clients need to come to them with their proposals. Ad agencies conduct promotional as well as publicity campaign on behalf of their clients. Different ad agencies take commissions at various rates from the media organisations in exchange of giving advertisements on behalf of their clients. Clients give money to ad agencies for putting up the advertisement. Ad agencies also take money from the client for any publicity campaign. As part of the publicity campaign, ad agencies also get commission from the media (newspaper or television or radio). Most of the ad agencies get 15

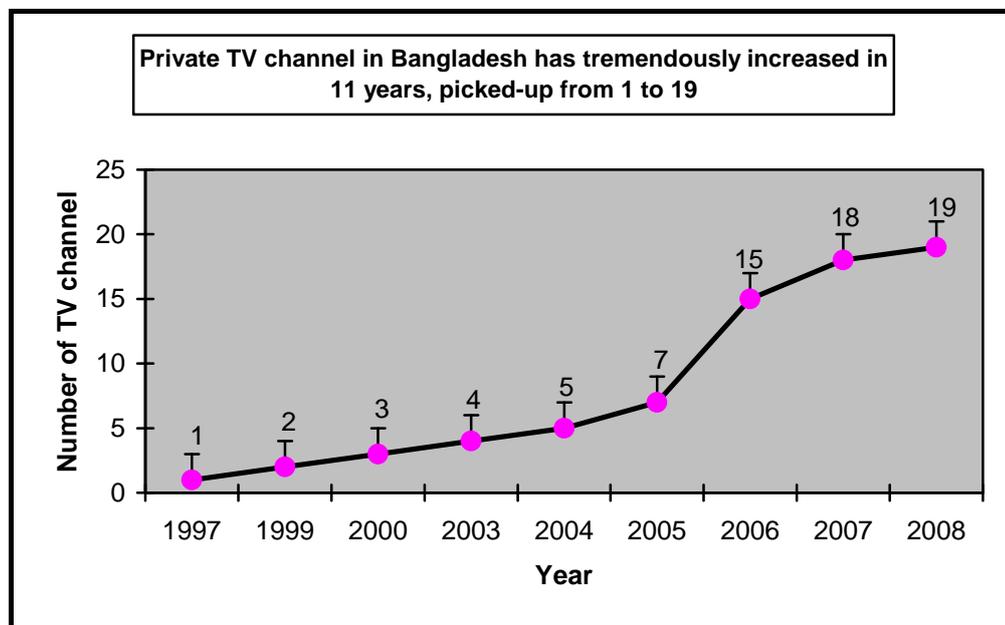
per cent commission from the media. Through this process, a pact has developed between the media and ad agencies (Roy, 2006)¹⁷.

Political influence and growth of TV channels

From the previous discussions, it becomes clear that since the government of Bangladesh permitted private satellite TV channels a decade ago, a massive investment in the TV production and advertisement sectors has been systematically facilitated by the dominant political and commercial elites of the country, similar to the ‘Clientalism’ relationship noted by Hallin and Mancini (2004).

Popularity of television, increase of viewership, and growth of advertising sector – these important factors have influenced the TV industries to become ‘increasingly big business’ (Curran, 2002: 149). It has stimulated ‘market-oriented journalism’ (Curran, 2000: 128-129)¹⁸, on the basis that the government is ‘retreating from regulation’ (Cuilenburg and McQuail, 2000: 126).

Figure 4: Growth of private TV channels in Bangladesh in a decade (1997-2007)



¹⁷ Media Professionals Group (MPG) has carried out several researches regarding this issue. One of them is Roy, Samar (2006) *Media Map and Value Chain of Media Industry in Bangladesh: Special Focus on SMEs*, Media Professionals Group: Dhaka.

¹⁸ Scholars argue that market-oriented journalism tends to generate news that is simplified, personalised, decontextualised, with a stress on action rather than process, visualization rather than abstraction, stereotypicality rather than human complexity (Epstein, 1973; Inglis, 1990; Iyenger, 1991; Giltin 1990 and 1994; Hallin, 1994, in Curran, 2000: 120-154).

The number of television channels has increased sharply, by 19 over the last 11 years (Figure 4). Not surprisingly, most of the owners of Bangladesh's private TV channels are extremely rich people - some are connected with the two most dominant political parties – the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Bangladesh Awami League¹⁹, while most of the channels are backed by the politicians and industrialists of the BNP.

As a result, 'the diagonal concentrations of ownership' (Doyle, 2002) are ensuing in the development of a political monopoly and the growth of business lobbying powerhouses (Rahman, 2007: 231-250).

Table 1: Television channels in Bangladesh 1997-2008		
Channel	Launching year	Present status (2008)
1 ATN Bangla	1997	On air
2 Channel i	1999	On air
3 Ekushey TV (ETV)	2000	On air
4 NTV	2003	On air
5 Ruposhi Bangla	2004	Defunct
6 RTV	2005	Defunct
7 BTV World (state owned)	2005	On air
8 Channel 1	2006	On air
9 Banglavisión	2006	On air
10 Boishakhi	2006	On air
11 Channel S	2006	Defunct
12 STV US	2006	Defunct
13 My TV	2006	Defunct
14 Bijoy TV	2006	Defunct
15 Sonar Bangla	2006	Defunct
16 CSB News	2007	On air (temporarily defunct)

¹⁹ Since the Caretaker government is in power, the Ministry of Information has shut down several accused to be politically corruptly licensed TV channels among these 18.

Channel	Launching year	Present status (2008)
17 Diganta TV	2007	On air
18 Islamic TV	2007	On air
19 Desh TV	2008	On air

Apart from the existing 19, now, more than 20 channels have been waiting to get license by the year 2009 (Rahman, 2007a). This growth is comparatively fast compared to media expansion in other South Asian countries. Astonishingly, it is happening in Bangladesh against a background of poverty and political violence, and in the frame of an emerging democracy. In the meantime, the relatively new military-backed caretaker government has attempted to escalate privatization through more market-friendly policies. This is despite the fact that this emerging media industry is *supposed* to have an obligation to build and maintain a wall between editorial decisions and advertising influence, as suggested by McAllister (2000: 102). However, the turn towards marketization has paved the way for ‘substantial external pressure’ (Boyd-Barrett, 1977: 117) from developed countries and transnational corporations.

Caretaker Government and decline of TV industry

There have been some significant changes in the satellite industry during the last two years. The fortunes of *NTV* have steadily declined since the owner of the station was arrested on corruption charges and a fire destroyed a major portion of the station’s offices, including its studios.²⁰

The interim Caretaker Government’s anti-corruption campaign has resulted in the arrest of numerous high profile figures associated with the previous BNP government, including the owners and/or majority shareholders of the mainstream satellite TV channels, including: *NTV*, *RTV*, *Channel 1*, *Bokshakhi* and *Bangla Vision*.²¹ The grounds for these arrests are generally regarded as legitimate. According to Daily Star City Editor, Sharier Khan, “the entire satellite TV industry, with a few exceptions, is friends and family of the BNP. The BNP government decided that they would run the media sector – every minister got

²⁰ Daily Star City Editor, Sharier Khan and Staff Correspondent, Ashfaq Wares Kahan and SIRIUS Marketing and Social Research weekly television viewing survey 7-13 July 2007 (EiA, 2007)

²¹ Daily Star City Editor, Sharier Khan and Staff Correspondent, Ashfaq Wares Kahan

a channel.” *Channel 1*, *Bangla Vision* and *Boishakhi*, all with links to the BNP, received their licences on the same day: January 31, 2005. They were also allocated their broadcasting frequency from Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) within a week (Daily Star 16 March 2007). *Focus TV* (now called *CSB*) also received a license in the final week of the BNP government. In comparison to the speedy issuing of licences and frequencies, other applicants have had to undergo detailed examinations of their proposals, which in some cases have taken years, and are still not completed. “Channel i and Ekushey Television (*ETV*), had to wait for over a year to receive their licences from the information ministry before the BNP came to power.”²² Although apparently legitimate, the arrest of many leading media figures has caused a great deal of instability in the Bangladeshi media sector. Several satellite stations went defunct, and staffs are abandoning those channels with jailed leadership in droves.²³

Market orientation of the news production: Case Study NTV

As a practical part of a Masters level research in Bangladesh, the author has carried out this research for six months in *NTV*, as it was the country’s most popular channel according to the AC Nielsen *National Media & Demographic Survey 2006*. The *NTV* has been selected as a case study because the trend in Bangladesh – in keeping with the trend of global dominant corporate TV channels – is that the most popular channel is the most expert at selling its audience to advertisers. The sell means to the channels not only broadcasting advertisements but also airing advertisements from within the fabric of news.

Therefore, in order to find out the market orientation trend, the author has applied ‘Participatory Observation’ (Fishman, 1980), ‘In-depth Interview’ and ‘Source-media analysis’ (Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994; and Manning, 2001) research methods to *NTV* output. These methods allowed the author to undertake the practical observation of news-selection and newsgathering and the processing dynamics, which take place inside this channel’s newsroom.

NTV was founded in 2003 by Mosaddeq Ali Falu, a politician and former Member of Parliament and the political adviser of the former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia from Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). After the closure of *ETV* in 2002, a group of private entrepreneurs having close link with the four-party alliance BNP government in mid 2003

²²Daily Star article, written by Staff Correspondent, Ashfaq Wares Kahan (EiA, 2007)

²³Daily Star City Editor, Sharier Khan and Staff Correspondent, Ashfaq Wares Kahan (EiA, 2007)

started the operation of *NTV*. It has over 190 employees working full time, making it the biggest satellite channel of the country (Roy, 2006).

NTV is a model that tells how the owners' political and business network influences the news selection, treatment and production in the most of the television channels in Bangladesh. *The Daily Star* describes *NTV* as “the jewel in the crown of BNP linked TV empire” (16 March 2007). According to the Daily Star: “Falu's *NTV* showed the way for others on how to exert political influence to acquire TV licences and then flex his political muscles to gain advertising. Eighteen days is all it took for Falu to push through *NTV*'s licence at the information ministry, without any necessary meetings, inquiries or interviews by the ministry to check whether *NTV* met the criteria outlined in the government's private television channel guidelines. The channel was also allocated a frequency within a week by BTRC.

Hybrid news-advertisement technologies

Findings from the research suggest that the second licence to run a TV channel comes from local and multinational advertisers. Their marketing pressures have instigated an alarming drift towards corporate takeover of news-slots through cross-promotional ‘Corporate-branding’ and ‘advertiser-media-joint program partnership’, all of which inexorably shape the selection and production of news. Like much global corporate media, television channels in Bangladesh are “carpet-bombing people with advertising and commercialization, whether they like it or not” (McChesney, 2001:17). News is the most popular program among all features, and so it is bent to suit the needs of market elites, not poor people. In the research, author has analyzed the daily reporting assignment schedules as document study. These schedules show evidence of direct gatekeeping within the pre-production, selection and treatment of news. Bangladesh has similarities in its journalism to that seen in the United States and Britain, in the sense of editorial pressure and risk reduction - “story selection is influenced by calculations based on what editors will accept and what is more likely to produce a ‘newsworthy’ story” (Davis, 2007: 45).

It is irrefutable that the organization of so called ‘beats’ within the assignment schedules is such that journalists dig up stories largely from corporate and official government agencies. There is no easy escape from this network, and “there are not only varieties of political-economic structures of news production, but each gives rise to own characteristic evasions, collusion and corruption” (Schudson, 2000: 180). The research outcomes indicate

that among 1653 reporting assignments at *NTV*, 68 per cent were biased to a political and/or market agenda; comparatively only 16 per cent of assignments were related to public good (Rahman, 2007a). Thus, the government, political parties, corporations and television channels are better seen as partner, advancing towards the global voyage of market liberalization. In terms of news-production, the first three filters of Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model – are perfectly prevalent in Bangladesh²⁴. Few examples gathered from the participatory observation during the field work have been presented here.

Video Clip 1 shows how the owner of a TV channel uses the station for manufacturing mass consent in favour of his own political party. The owner of *NTV* – who was the Member of Parliament and Chief Political Advisor of the Former Prime Minister of BNP led government - was a regular chief element of news.

Video Clip 1: The Owner of *NTV* is desperately doing public serving work – (so please remember this footage while you vote in next parliament election) - it is the main element of news (19 September 2006, 7.30pm primetime News Bulletin).

Video Clip 2 exemplifies a hybrid news-advertisement technology - how advertisers become an embedded part of news slots in a poor excuse for corporate-branding. Corporate branding is the most profitable means to sell the news for the TV channel, and it is the most sophisticated way to brand the news in favour of corporatism and consumerism for the advertisers.

Video Clip 2: Banglalink – a cell phone company – successfully branded the sports news slot of *NTV* with own logo, slogan and trademark – so that if you are sports news viewer you must should be a prestigious Banglalink customer. Therefore, the reality we are watching in this news – is through the 'Banglalink spectacle' (Sept – Oct 2006, primetime News Bulletins).

As Corporate-branding is not enough – newsmakers needed to show more gratitude to the advertisers in a more explicit way. Video clip 3 demonstrates what the newsmakers can do the best to satisfy market-orientation, producing 'newsvertisement'.

Video Clip 3: Now, Banglalink is not only advertiser. It is now news of *NTV*. They are launching new cell phone package. Hence, the nation should be aware of this “newsworthy event” (27 May 2006, Dindarpan News program). Sometime the Reporting Assignment Schedule clearly indicates to the reporters that this kind of promotional news from high-

²⁴ Harman and Chomsky elaborated the first filter as size, ownership, and profit orientation of the mass media; the second filter as the advertisement – license to do business; and the third filter as sourcing mass-media news (Harman and Chomsky, 2002).

profile advertisers must be covered, even if it is needed a cameraman can be send to collect the video footage which would supplement a press release.

Market-oriented journalism tends to generate news that is simplified, decontextualised and sensationalised. Video Clip 4 epitomizes how the news-production of *NTV* can involve juicy elements to divert the attention of the audience towards indulgence rather than critical engagement.

Video Clip 4: Can you see any ‘children’ in this clip? It is coverage of Grameenphone-*NTV* jointly organised ‘Concert for Children’ program. Grameenphone is the largest cell phone corporation of the country, and of course, the largest advertiser and joint-program sponsor. Consequently, you cannot imagine of any investigative story against the exorbitantly pricing calling rate of Grameenphone in *NTV* news - actually nor in any television channel, neither in mainstream newspaper (13 September 2006, 2pm News Bulletin).

Conclusion

It is safe to assert this article does not represent the entire news coverage trends in the television industry of Bangladesh. Neither *NTV* could represent as the most popular TV channels as in 2008 the popularity of *NTV* have declined and the ATN Bangla, Channel I, and Ekushe TV placed the top popularity. These three channels which are less connected to the former BNP led political power network have succeed to gain public trust for the eminent parliament election 2008.

NTV has aired many reports that have been acclaimed for its objectivity and political insights. However, apart form judging the whole contents of news, this article has mainly attempted to illustrate its market orientation trends. The video clip examples additionally helped us to understand is how and why in *NTV* news we see the coverage of CocaCola Fun Island Raffle Draw, Babool Toothpaste product Launching Ceremony, and Unilever Fair & Lovely scholarship program. Due to this media-advertiser joint program and sponsorship, the interdependency of media and corporations is burgeoning in Bangladesh, which is directly and indirectly affecting the objectivity and impartiality of news.

Corporate branding of news slots, advertisement inside the news bulletins, media-advertiser joint program - these trends are almost similar to the global media marketization around the world according to studies of political economy, comparative media systems and

policies, and typologies of media systems.²⁵ Therefore, this trends signals that it is now time to propose detailed regulatory rationales for ‘balancing economic justification and public service’ (Feintuck, 1999: 43) within the web of power involving government, media corporations, and newsmakers.

Broadcasting is the field where the struggle for cultural hegemony becomes most visible and acute, not only for competing corporate interests within national economies but also among policy-makers at an international level (Chakravartty and Sarikakis, 2006: 87). Bangladesh still has no broadcasting regulation policy. Moreover, in spite of growing commercialization and the decline of public service broadcasting, research regarding the political economy of the television industry is still underdeveloped within the history of media research in Bangladesh. This research, of course in a limited way, suggests the following features that should be implemented immediately:

- An Independent and high profile Media Monitoring Commission
- Public service oriented broadcasting policy
- Full autonomy of government regulated radio and television
- Licensing restriction for member of parliaments
- Banning corporate-branding
- No advertisement inside news
- No media-corporate joint-venture news

Evidently, a larger phase of nationwide media research is immediately needed that might contribute towards mapping a much-needed broadcasting policy and regulatory framework for the nation’s television industry. This policy should be collated with a broader framework of socio-economic contextualization and coherent with print media, radio and other media industry constituents.

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²⁵ Such as Harman and Chomsky, 2002; Zhao, 1998 and 2008; Waisbord, 1995; Lee, 1997; Mattelart, 1991; Curran and Seaton, 2003; Fishman, 1980; Sparks, 1998; Schudson, 2003; Garnham, 2001; Bagdikian, 2004; Thussu 1998 and 2008; Hallin and Manchini, 2004; Wasco, 2004; Smithy, 2001; Gandy, 1992; McChesney, 2001; Freedman, 2008; Tunstall, 2008; Collins, 1994.

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