

Bangladesh Press: Contours and Contents

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Introduction

The objective of the paper is two-fold: to present an overview of the state of the Bangladesh press, and to briefly review the contents of the leading daily newspapers. Even a casual observer of Bangladesh press will notice that in recent days, there is a phenomenal rise in the number of newspapers in Bangladesh. Between 1991 and 1996, the number of dailies has gone up to 262 from 107, and between 1991 and 1994 some three hundred new weeklies have been added to previous 397 (Table 1). Although the number of newspapers in Bangladesh was on the rise since the country became independent in 1971, the recent trend shows a further rapidity in the rate of increase. According to one account, after the downfall of the military-backed General Ershad's regime in 1990, between January and October 1991, forty dailies and 123 weeklies received government permission to begin their publication. These statistics clearly invite two questions: what prompted this spectacular rise and what are these newspapers offering to the readers. This paper intends to briefly answer to these questions. While the first question calls for a subjective discussion — which I will present in a short while — the second one demands both quantitative and qualitative investigation. We will limit ourselves to the quantitative inquiry, although our discussion will shed some light on the qualitative aspect.

State of the Press

Simplification of the process of issuing permit for publication of newspapers, and the primary euphoria associated with the downfall of a military-backed autocratic regime are commonly attributed to the dramatic increase in the number newspapers since the beginning of 1991. Media-observers argue that at least three other long-term factors have contributed to the proliferation of newspapers since independence. These are: total government control over electronic media, long tradition of print journalism, and the low cost of newspapers. Electronic media have remained in the hands of the government all along the history of the nation. Although in recent years there has been a massive proliferation of satellite television and almost all major news networks (e.g. BBC World Service, CNN) are available, they fail to satiate the audience's appetite for national news on the one hand, while high cost of accessing the network keeps them beyond the reach of the larger population on the other. The government control over the content of Bangladeshi electronic media has turned them into propaganda tools of the ruling party, thus creating an astoundingly big credibility gap. The region now called Bangladesh has a long tradition of print journalism. The first newspaper came out of the region as early as 1780.

Table 1
Newspaper in Bangladesh
1972 - 1994

| Year | Daily | Weekly | Fortnightly |
|--------------------|-------|--------|-------------|
| 1972 | 30 | 151 | 17 |
| 73 | 35 | 163 | 17 |
| 74 | 33 | 152 | 13 |
| 75 | 33 | 160 | 14 |
| 75 (after June 16) | 6 | 26 | n/a |
| 76 | 17 | 64 | 5 |
| 77 | 28 | 96 | 9 |
| 78 | 31 | 119 | 11 |
| 79 | 40 | 128 | 19 |
| 80 | 44 | 149 | 18 |
| 81 | 53 | 206 | 24 |
| 82 | 62 | 231 | 24 |
| 83 | 62 | 237 | 28 |
| 84 | 64 | 261 | 35 |
| 85 | 60 | 226 | 23 |
| 86 | 62 | 242 | 26 |
| 87 | 71 | 289 | 33 |
| 88/89 | 72 | 279 | 30 |
| 89/91 | 107 | 397 | 66 |
| 92 | 172 | 567 | 114 |
| 93 | 209 | 623 | 129 |
| 1994 | 251 | 697 | 149 |

Note: Sudden drop in the number of newspapers in June 1975 is due to the enactment of a legislation that forced the newspapers to discontinue their publication. This step was taken following the introduction of one-party rule. Only a handful of newspapers were allowed to continue and the government took control of the ownership. The situation changed after a military coup replaced the regime and allowed the newspapers to resume their publications.

as early as 1780. Since then newspapers have played an influential role in the political development in this region. During the late nineteenth century and also during the second colonial rule (1947-1971), newspapers contributed immensely to the spread of nationalistic feelings. The newspaper is commonly perceived as an institution which stands by the common people in safeguarding their rights and privileges against the excesses of the state. In a country with per capita income of less than \$300, cost is an important determinant on the part of users in selecting media. Newspapers are inexpensive and their availability in tea shops enable enthusiastic readers to read them on a regular basis. Apparently these are valid factors. But unfortunately, a closer examination of the scenario of print journalism in Bangladesh points to other determinants.

First of all, the enthusiasm behind this excessive proliferation of newspapers is not quite matched by necessary financial support, or even financial prudence, as it is perhaps, fuelled by an incurable, and sometimes foolhardy, desire for power and fame. Although there are few

newspapers owned by the government, newspapers are generally owned by private companies or individuals with strong and active political affiliation, sometimes members of political parties. Bangladesh's newspaper world is replete with such instances. Over the last decade, a nexus of state power, business interest and newspapers has been formed. The *Ittefaq* — the largest circulated Bengali daily, and the *Bhorer Kagoj* are cases in point. The daily *Ittefaq* is owned by two brothers, both of whom have close tie with and access to state power. One of them had been a minister in previous military regime and again become a member of the current government led by Sheikh Hasina. The other owner has expressed his political inclination towards the political party led by the former premier Khaleda Zia. The current owner of the *Bhorer Kagoj* bought the newspaper as the daily was gaining popularity but faced a serious management crisis. A businessman by profession, he joined one of the two major political parties before the last general elections and has been elected a member of the parliament. Quite often, a newspaper is used as a flagship for the larger business fleet of the owner. And the intention in such a case is no nobler than safeguarding other business through the explicit or tacit use of power of the press. Besides the *Bhorer Kagoj*, owners of the *Janakantha* and the *Sangbad* have larger business fleet.

Second factor that has helped increase the number of newspapers in Bangladesh and also influenced the contents of the newspaper is the availability of government advertisements and quotas of newsprint. There are newspapers which survive on fictitious and inflated representation of their circulation for a larger share of government advertisement and on selling their quotas of newsprint in the black market. 'The Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 1995' by the State Department of the United States, noted, "the Government, seeks to influence by the placement of advertising. Some editors complain that the Government's placement of advertising to reward supporters and to punish critical newspapers leads to self-censorship"¹. The report further noted, "the government now allows the import of newsprint, but newspapers rely on the cheaper, subsidized product from the country's one newsprint mill, which is government-owned. Although the government claims that it allocates newsprint according to a paper's circulation, some newspaper owners allege that progovernment papers receive preference in the setting of distribution quotas."² The 1996 report of the RSF also mentioned this feature: "the government relies on putting pressure on staff, setting quotas for sales and for the distribution of newsprint, and carefully choosing where it places advertisements"³.

These factors, on the one hand contributed to the increase in number of newspapers, while played a remarkable role in the rapid deterioration of the standard of journalism on the other. Despite a large number of newspapers, there are very few of them, if at all, upholding any professional standards both in terms of content and of ethical practices. It is alleged by a number of media-observers that prioritizing business interests over journalistic ethics by the owner is to blame for this. As noted by Rahman, "journalism has become a business. To make the business economically viable, the industrialist owner makes a compromise which barter away the freedom of the journalists. However journalists are given to deal with canned information by the power agencies which are in most cases irrelevant, do not have any news value and are full of redundant cliché. Publication of these things over and over again has led to narcotic dysfunction among readers"⁴.

1. *The Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 1995*, Report Submitted to the Committee on International Relations, US House of Representatives and the Committee of Foreign Relations US Senate by the Department of State. April 1996, pp. 1297.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Reporters Sans Frontieres, (1996). '1996 Report: Freedom of the Press Throughout the World', Luton: University of Luton Press. p. 214.

4. M Golam Rahman (1994), 'Newsflow and the State of the Press in South Asia', *Dhaka University Studies*. Vol. 51, No 1, June p. 60.

Contrary to ideal journalistic practices, political allegiance of the newspapers are common place. Owners as well as journalists identify themselves with political parties and make use of their position to foster the political cause they support. Often this leads to suppression of facts, partial revelation and outright manipulation. Political consideration, on many occasions, forces journalists to compromise the truth and in worst cases, their writings are filled with venom and invective directed against those whom they consider their enemy⁵. Unfortunately, this has remained a trend since the independence of the country, and increasingly becoming an accepted norm in Bangladesh. The other part of the story is equally, if not more, frustrating: "the present powers that be and once the opposition like their counterparts outside power consider the press and the information process a subject of manipulation to gain political mileage.... Politicians choose to talk to only certain reporters, management bigwigs introduce favorites to their 'insider friends' and even certain offices and agencies cultivate favorite sons."⁶ One of the major consequences of this is, newspapers, irrespective of their political orientations, try to serve the city-centered political and administrative elites⁷.

This has impacted upon the readership and circulation. Over the past few decades the total circulation of newspapers has not increased much. Addition of another new newspaper in the long list or even increase of popularity of one newspaper only meant that another newspaper has lost some of its readership. The press, as reported by RSF, 'has a small readership. Only 11% of the population read a daily at least once a week' (RSF, 1996:214) and this readership is concentrated in urban areas (Rahman, 1994:61).

Another primary problem encountered by the press over the last decades is the erosion of editorship as an institution. In the 1960s, there were a few editors in Dhaka dailies, for example, Abdus Salam of the *Pakistan Observer*, Tofazzal Hossain Manik Miah of the *Ittefaq* and Zahur Hossain Chowdhury of the *Sangbad* who symbolized editorship as an undaunted institution. Unfortunately, contrary to what is expected, the situation has changed for worse in the last three decades. After a long gap Bangladesh press saw a glimmer of hope in S M Ali, a veteran journalist who returned home in 1990 after serving international media organizations. Known on his own right S M Ali founded an English daily — *the Daily Star* — and reminded that the absence of good newspapers in Bangladesh can be largely attributed to the absence of good editorship⁸.

Despite these problems, as mentioned at the beginning, a large number of newspapers are being published regularly, which makes one inquisitive about the content of these newspapers. An analysis of the content of the leading dailies can help us find the answer.

Content of Newspapers

Method of the Study

Sampling: Purposive sampling method⁹ was applied in selecting newspapers for the study.

5. The extent of the political adherence of the journalists is reflected in the fact that since early 1990s the trade union of the journalist has been divided into two separate organizations explicitly along the political lines.
6. Afsan Chowdhury, (1997), 'The perils of crony journalism'. *Weekly Holiday*, January 31, 1997.
7. Tawhidul Anwar, (1994). 'Fewer 'Black Laws'', *Press Systems in SAARC*. Singapore: AMIC. p.24
8. Mr. Ali died in 1994. He has been succeeded by Mr. Mahfuz Anam.
9. 'A purposive sampling includes subjects selected on the basis of specific characteristics of qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria.' (Roger D Wimmer and Joseph R Dominick, 1987, *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, p.72).

Primarily two criterion were used as the basis of the selection. These are: at least two years of continuous publication, and also the availability of the paper in district level towns. The newspapers which met these qualities were then scrutinized on the basis of three more conditions: the ownership, political orientation and language. As mentioned before, there are two types of ownership: government and private. In terms of political orientation newspapers in Bangladesh can be broadly divided into five categories: rightist, conservative, moderate, liberal, and left-of-center. Although Bengali is the primary as well as official language, there is a thriving English press in Bangladesh. Importantly, the English language newspapers have significant influence on donor agencies and policy-makers in Bangladesh. To make the sample representative, efforts were made to ensure that all these aspects are reflected in the sample.

These considerations resulted in selecting twelve daily newspapers. These are: *The Ittefaq*, *The Inquilab*, *The Janakantha*, *The Banglar Bani*, *The Sangbad*, *The Bhorer Kagoj*, *The Banglabazar Patrika*, *The Bangladesh Observer*, *The Daily Star*, *The Morning Sun*, *The New Nation*, and *The Bangladesh Times*. Of these, first seven are Bengali dailies and remaining five are English newspapers. While the *Bangladesh Times* represent the government-owned newspapers, the remainder are privately-owned. In terms of political orientation, the *Inquilab* represents the rightist end of the continuum, while the *Sangbad*, the oldest Bengali newspaper, can be placed on the other end. The *Ittefaq*, at the time of the study (i.e., October 1994) was not only the largest circulated daily of the country, but also considered as an institution by itself due to its clout over the state power. Since 1960s, it has played crucial role in influencing the course of Bangladesh politics. Although the newspaper is fraught with a number of management problems stemmed from the rivalry between its two owners, its influence has not declined. Timeliness of the reports published in the newspaper, and the owners' access to state power are attributed as reasons behind the *Ittefaq's* preeminence. Since 1975 either of the two owners have had close attachment with the ruling elites. One of them had been a minister in General Ershad's cabinet (1982-1990)¹⁰. The *Inquilab*, despite its rightist orientation also have had a large readership. But interestingly, *Janakantha*, a moderate newspaper, was on the rise at the time of study and was catching up at an unprecedented rate in terms of circulation. Simultaneously published from six different cities of the country — first in the history of Bangladesh press — the *Janakantha*, succeeded in drawing attention of the readers and media-observers within a short time. Perhaps it is due to the editorship of a veteran journalist Mr. Toab Khan. The *Bhorer*

Kagoj, published since 1990, is innovative in the presentation of content and make-up and has been described by media-observers in Bangladesh as a forerunner of a new kind of journalism. Beside its modern look, the *Bhorer Kagoj* is known for its op-ed articles contributed by leading intellectuals of the country. Among the English newspapers, *The Daily Star* deserves to be noted as the most prestigious newspaper, though its publication began only in 1990. As mentioned before, after a long break in the history of Bangladesh press the founder-editor of the newspaper S M Ali brought back the reputation of editorship as an institution. Thus his successor has succeeded in upholding his ideals. The *Bangladesh Observer* — the oldest English newspaper and once considered to be the epitome of English journalism in Bangladesh — has lost its charm and importance in recent days, perhaps due to its management crisis. Yet, it is widely read.

10. After the general elections of mid-1996 once again he has become a minister in the coalition government led by Sheikh Hasina.

11. 'The most basic type of probability sampling is the simple random sample, where each subject or unit in the population has an equal chance of being selected. If the subject or unit is drawn from the population and removed from subsequent selections, the procedure is known as random sample without replacement — the most widely used random sampling method.' (Roger D Wimmer and Joseph R Dominick, *ibid.* p. 73).

Data Collection: The month of October 1994 was randomly selected for the study¹¹. It was decided that the direct inquiry method will be employed for the content analysis. Although initial decision was to select one issue of each newspaper employing random 'sampling without replacement' method from the 31 issues published during the month, a closer reading revealed a problem with using first two weeks of newspapers. At the last week of September 1994, a plague epidemic broke out in India. This had an impact on the content of Bangladeshi newspapers, as some feared that the epidemic may strike Bangladesh. The newspapers tried to raise awareness and the preparedness of their readers. Hence, the content of first two weeks lacked the usual characteristics of newspapers. This forced us to restrict our sample between 14 and 31 of October, 1994. Twelve issues of the newspapers (i.e., one issue of each newspaper) were selected from this sample period¹².

Coding: Following the standard practice of newspaper content analysis, column-inch has been used as the unit analysis. To begin with, total printed area of the newspaper was determined¹³. The content of the printed area was then divided into five categories: magazine, advertisements, standing matters, opinionated writings, and news hole. These were then calculated in terms of absolute number and the percentage of the total printed area. News items were categorized according to their geographic origin: national and international. This was followed by the thematic categorization of news items. Both international and national news were divided into nine categories: politics; trade and commerce; diplomatic; military and defense; crime, police and legal; social services, health and population; environment; sports; and other¹⁴. Besides, the space utilized for picture was also ascertained. An investigation into the sources of news were then conducted. Clearly, three sources appeared to be the major provider of news: newspapers own sources (i.e., staff reporter, correspondents); news agencies; and press releases, handouts and press notes doled out by both government and private sources. Hence, in terms of sources news items were categorized into four. Finally we looked into the nature of opinionated writings. Editorial, op-ed, commentary, features, and letters have been considered as opinionated writings and these were then categorized into four: political, economic, social and other.

Results

News Hole: Analysis of the content of the twelve newspapers selected for the purpose reveals that the news hole varies remarkably - from 678 column inch to 1365 column inch (Table 2) and no distinct pattern could be discerned. Clearly, the largest circulated Bengali daily *Ittefaq* had the least printed area dedicated to news (33 percent). It is the advertisement that had the larger share of the *Ittefaq*. On the other hand, the *Morning Sun* had the largest news hole, followed by the *Bangladesh Observer* (Table 3). Among the Bengali newspapers *Sangbad* have had the most of its printed area filled with news. Interestingly, six out of twelve newspapers

12. These are: The *Ittefaq* - October 21; The *Inquilab* - October 26; The *Janakantha* - October 29; The *Bhorere Kagoj* - October 22; The *Sangbad* - October 17; The *Banglar Bani* - October 24; The *Banglabazar Patrika* - October 28; The *Daily Star* - October 27; The *New Nation* - October 20; The *Bangladesh Observer* - October 19; The *Bangladesh Times* - October 18; and The *Moring Sun* - October 16.

13. Coders faced a minor problem with regard to comparability between the *Janakantha* and the rest of the newspapers. While all other newspapers print their materials in eight columns, the *Janakantha* uses six columns in its first and last page. However, this was resolved by a computation that the *Janakantha's* one column inch is equivalent of 1.33 column inch of other newspapers.

14. To ensure the intercoder reliability, the categories were strictly defined, following the UNESCO study conducted by Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi ("The World of News Study". *Journal of Communication*. 34:1984).

Table 2
Content of Newspaper
(in Col inch)

| Newspapers | Total Area | Magazine | Advertisement | Standing Matter | Opinion | News Hole |
|---------------------|------------|----------|---------------|-----------------|---------|-----------|
| <i>Ittefaq</i> | 2045 | | 1145 | 118 | 103 | 679 |
| <i>Inquilab</i> | 2068 | 147 | 789 | 120 | 271 | 742 |
| <i>Janakantha</i> | 2058 | 512 | 181 | 115 | 427 | 823 |
| <i>Banglar Bani</i> | 1363 | 169 | 155 | 84 | 189 | 766 |
| <i>Sangbad</i> | 1343 | | 214 | 71 | 244 | 814 |
| <i>Bhorer Kagoj</i> | 1352 | | 210 | 167 | 270 | 695 |
| <i>Banglabazar</i> | 2018 | 840 | 215 | 114 | 172 | 678 |
| <i>Observer</i> | 1698 | | 313 | 84 | 165 | 1134 |
| <i>Daily Star</i> | 2027 | 169 | 230 | 132 | 290 | 1206 |
| <i>Morning Sun</i> | 2017 | 168 | 161 | 143 | 180 | 1365 |
| <i>New Nation</i> | 2033 | 509 | 328 | 131 | 169 | 904 |
| <i>Times</i> | 2032 | 218 | 570 | 73 | 163 | 1007 |

Total will not add up due to rounding

have had less than half of their printed area filled with non-news items including opinionated writing. However, opinionated writings are not something that is high on the agenda of Bangladeshi dailies. Except the *Janakantha* and the *Bhorer Kagoj*, the share of opinionated writing remained below twenty percent of total available space. A judicious balance between news, advertisement, opinionated writing and other items can be noted in the *Bhorer Kagoj*. Among the English dailies, it is the *Daily Star* which offers the most to its readers.

Geography of News: When it comes to news, national as opposed to international, is preferred by the newspapers. This is nothing unusual, but some newspapers, for example the *Ittefaq* and the *Banglabazar Patrika*, devoted a very small amount of space to news items from outside the boundary of Bangladesh (Table 4). The English newspapers' inclination for more international news is understandable as their readership include international agencies, foreign nationals etc. Should we consider an eighty-twenty mix of national and international news as reasonably good, among the Bengali dailies, three newspapers deserve appreciation.

Categories of News: As revealed in Table 5, political news has been the most favored category almost across the board. Five of the twelve newspapers devoted the largest amount of space to political items compared to any other category. These are: the *Ittefaq*, the *Inquilab*, the *Banglar Bani*, the *Banglabazar Patrika* and the *Bangladesh Observer*. News items pertaining to trade and commerce received highest attention in three newspapers: the *Daily Star*, the *Morning Sun*, and the *New Nation*. Sports news have been given more space compared to all other categories in the *Janakantha*, while in the *Bhorer Kagoj* news related to crime, police and legal affairs topped the list. With regard to picture, out of twelve newspapers, nine devoted more than fifteen percent of their printed area. About twenty-three percent of the printed area of *Banglabazar Patrika* had pictures, the *Daily Star* came close with about twenty-one percent. The *Bangladesh Times* seems prefer not to devote significant space to picture (eight percent).

Sources of News: The news items published in the newspapers came primarily from two sources: newspapers' staff reporters and correspondents, which we categorized as 'own sources', and news agencies. In Bangladesh, there are only news agencies: Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) — owned by the government, and privately-owned United News of Bangladesh (UNB). These agencies provide national news, but most importantly, serve as the outlet of foreign news agencies. The BSS, for example, distribute news copies received from Reuters, AFP, Xinhua and Itar-Tass; while the UNB provides services on behalf of AP. As the Bangladeshi newspapers do not have any international news network, they completely rely on these news agencies for their foreign news coverage. On the other hand, for national news, they depend their own network of correspondents. However, occasionally they use agency copies for national news.

The third source of information for the newspapers are the government handouts, press notes and a bulk of press releases coming from a wide variety of sources ranging from private individual to government agencies. Seven of the twelve newspapers under study had published more items from their own correspondents compared to any other sources (Table 6). The amount varies from seventy-eight percent (*The Banglabazar Patrika*) to fifty percent (*The Daily Star*). Four newspapers relied more on agency copies. Interesting to note that all of these four are English newspapers. They have made use of more agency copies than their Bengali counterpart. The reason can be understood by juxtaposing this findings with the results revealed in Table 4. The use of agency copies is directly proportional to the coverage of international news. As the English newspapers carry more international news items they rely more on agencies, while the amount of space devoted to coverage of international news in the *Ittefaq* is almost equal to the space provided for agency copies. Also noticeable, the *Ittefaq* made use of handouts, press releases etc. more than agency copies. This is equally true for the *Sangbad*.

Table 3
Content of Newspapers
 (as percentage of total printed area)

| Newspaper | News Hole | Opinion | Advertisement | Other |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|-------|
| <i>Ittefaq</i> | 33.17 | 5.05 | 56.00 | 5.00 |
| <i>Inquilab</i> | 35.83 | 13.10 | 39.00 | 6.00 |
| <i>Janakantha</i> | 40.00 | 20.75 | 9.00 | 30.00 |
| <i>Banglar Bani</i> | 56.15 | 13.90 | 11.35 | 13.00 |
| <i>Sangbad</i> | 60.56 | 18.18 | 16.00 | 5.00 |
| <i>Bhorer Kagoj</i> | 51.36 | 20.00 | 16.00 | 13.00 |
| <i>Banglabazar</i> | 33.58 | 8.50 | 11.00 | 46.00 |
| <i>Observer</i> | 66.82 | 9.75 | 18.00 | 6.00 |
| <i>Daily Star</i> | 59.49 | 14.30 | 11.00 | 13.00 |
| <i>Morning Sun</i> | 67.70 | 7.85 | 8.00 | 16.00 |
| <i>New Nation</i> | 44.50 | 7.85 | 16.00 | 31.00 |
| <i>Times</i> | 49.52 | 8.01 | 28.00 | 13.00 |

Table 4
Geographic Origin of News
National / International
 (percentage of news hole)

| Newspaper | National News | International News |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| <i>Ittefaq</i> | 93.00 | 7.00 |
| <i>Inquilab</i> | 81.00 | 18.00 |
| <i>Janakantha</i> | 66.00 | 22.00 |
| <i>Banglar Bani</i> | 75.00 | 25.00 |
| <i>Sangbad</i> | 85.00 | 14.00 |
| <i>Bhorer Kagoj</i> | 73.00 | 26.00 |
| <i>Banglabazar</i> | 90.00 | 9.00 |
| <i>Observer</i> | 51.00 | 48.00 |
| <i>Daily Star</i> | 62.00 | 37.00 |
| <i>Morning Sun</i> | 59.00 | 40.00 |
| <i>New Nation</i> | 67.00 | 32.00 |
| <i>Times</i> | 67.00 | 32.00 |

Table 5
Content of Newspapers
 (percentage of news hole)

| Newspapers | Politics | Trade & Commerce | Diplomatic | Military & Defense | Crime, Police & Legal | Social Services, Health & Population | Environment | Sports | Picture | Other |
|---------------------|----------|---------------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------|--------|---------|-------|
| <i>Ittefaq</i> | 27.88 | 5.47 | 0.44 | 0.44 | 15.34 | 5.70 | | 8.44 | 14.40 | 21.89 |
| <i>Inquilab</i> | 20.92 | 8.29 | 0.74 | 4.35 | 4.89 | 7.50 | 1.61 | 11.97 | 15.65 | 24.08 |
| <i>Janakantha</i> | 12.24 | 11.04 | 5.32 | 0.31 | 9.54 | 3.76 | | 16.75 | 15.25 | 25.79 |
| <i>Banglar Bani</i> | 25.46 | 6.78 | 2.34 | 2.23 | 13.54 | 1.92 | 0.26 | 13.30 | 17.11 | 17.06 |
| <i>Sangbad</i> | 12.89 | 10.43 | 4.06 | 0.18 | 5.30 | 21.53 | 0.27 | 12.21 | 13.37 | 19.76 |
| <i>Bhorer Kagoj</i> | 10.73 | 9.57 | 7.89 | 0.30 | 18.71 | 1.13 | | 16.50 | 15.69 | 19.48 |
| <i>Banglabazar</i> | 22.68 | 5.79 | | | 15.49 | 3.72 | | 9.51 | 22.90 | 19.91 |
| <i>Observer</i> | 13.84 | 12.20 | 6.06 | 6.20 | 7.22 | 3.21 | 0.94 | 9.86 | 15.68 | 24.79 |
| <i>Daily Star</i> | 14.80 | 20.13 | 4.37 | 6.90 | 1.99 | 1.38 | 0.62 | 19.49 | 20.68 | 9.64 |
| <i>Morning Sun</i> | 9.22 | 17.04 | 0.36 | 3.66 | 6.31 | 5.16 | 1.33 | 15.10 | 16.33 | 25.49 |
| <i>New Nation</i> | 10.85 | 12.42 | 11.72 | 8.04 | 7.73 | 3.56 | 3.05 | 6.54 | 20.18 | 15.91 |
| <i>Times</i> | 15.32 | 6.91 | 0.79 | 4.21 | 4.39 | 1.01 | 0.42 | 5.48 | 8.86 | 52.61 |

Table 6
Sources of News
 (Percentage of News Hole)

| Newspaper | Own sources | Press Release, Handout & Press Note | News Agencies | Other |
|---------------------|-------------|---|---------------|-------|
| <i>Ittefaq</i> | 75.22 | 15.56 | 7.90 | 0.22 |
| <i>Inquilab</i> | 60.05 | 6.64 | 30.89 | 1.48 |
| <i>Janakantha</i> | 59.71 | 3.98 | 30.05 | 5.50 |
| <i>Banglar Bani</i> | 56.81 | 13.13 | 23.76 | 6.30 |
| <i>Sangbad</i> | 52.07 | 31.41 | 11.34 | 4.47 |
| <i>Bhorer Kagoj</i> | 66.33 | 2.93 | 25.02 | 5.12 |
| <i>Observer</i> | 25.44 | 10.17 | 51.17 | 0.31 |
| <i>Banglabazar</i> | 78.36 | 5.82 | 15.41 | |
| <i>Daily Star</i> | 50.60 | 1.49 | 44.62 | 2.33 |
| <i>Morning Sun</i> | 35.00 | | 64.60 | |
| <i>New Nation</i> | 37.06 | 7.79 | 50.87 | 3.81 |
| <i>Times</i> | 61.93 | 2.21 | 35.55 | |

Conclusions

What emerges from this brief survey of the state of Bangladesh press and the content of daily newspapers is that, the scenario of print journalism in Bangladesh bears a coincidental resemblance with its nature. Most often the country has too much of water, but too little to drink. Despite a large number of newspapers, there are very few of them, if at all, upholding any professional standards both in terms of content and ethical practices. It is alleged that the dismal situation stems from the political allegiance of the newspapers and prioritizing business interests over journalistic ethics by the owners. It is also noted that, the Government seeks to influence the newspapers by the placement of advertising, and through setting quotas for sales and the distribution of newsprint. There is a perennial problem with the circulation. In the past few decades the total circulation of newspapers has not increased much. The press has a small readership, and this readership is concentrated in urban areas. The newspapers, observers insist, try to serve the city-centered political and administrative elites. The erosion of editorship as an undaunted institution has been noted as an unfortunate feature of the Bangladeshi press and absence of good newspaper is attributed to the absence of good editorship.

In terms of content, a survey of twelve dailies show that, barring one exception, there is a reasonable balance between news items and other published materials. The Bengali language press is highly skewed towards coverage of national news while a trend contrary to this is present in English language press. Evidently, politics is the most favored category of news. However, the newspapers are not overwhelmed with political items. News pertaining to crime, police and legal, and trade and commerce receive significant coverage. A notable amount of space is devoted to the news from the world of sports. The analysis of content also revealed that Bangladeshi newspapers rely on two sources for their copies: their correspondents/staff reporters, and the news agencies. The use of agency copies is directly proportional to the coverage of international news, as the newspapers do not have an international network of their correspondents to cover foreign news.

