

Baseline Study **Children** in Bangladesh News Media



Baseline Study: Children in Bangladesh News Media



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PROJECT GOAL

To assess the extent of adherence to ethics in reporting concerning children and address the gaps and limitations through capacity building and advocacy.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

1. To identify the gaps in compliance with an ethical standard of reporting on and for children in print and electronic media.
2. To educate and raise the awareness of journalists on the ethics of reporting concerning children.
3. To create an enabling environment in the country's media houses to practice a high standard of journalistic ethics when reporting on children.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This baseline study which is aimed at designing a training programme, tries to gauge the ethical standards of news coverage on and for the children in Bangladesh's media. The study began on the premise that journalists can play a strong role in ensuring the wellbeing of children and in minimising potential harm to them from news coverage.

The study is based on the following research: a review of the literature on ethics in journalism both broadly and with a specific focus on children; analyses of news and editorial contents concerning children in 12 national dailies and three TV channels between June and August, 2009; twin questionnaire surveys aimed at reporters and gatekeepers of national and regional news media across the country; and three Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with media gatekeepers and two groups of children.

Key Findings

The study finds that the media allotted very little space and time to children. During the three months surveyed, the newspapers analyzed here published 2644 child-related stories, and the TV bulletins aired 127 child-related items. This amounts to only three percent or less of total news coverage by these outlets. Furthermore, the little coverage that did focus on children was deficient in many ways.

On a positive note, the media did broadly cover the prominent daily events concerning children and children's issues. What was lacking was focused, planned, proactive, and in-depth reporting. This kind of reporting is essential for ensuring the welfare of children and securing support for the issues that affect them. Only 13 to 14 percent of the child-related news stories probed issues in an in-depth way. One of the main demands of the children participating in focus group discussions (FDGs) was that news should be covered in such a way as to help children themselves understand issues, for example by providing adequate background information and explanation on the subjects.

The media's neglect of children related issues is most apparent within the editorial of the newspapers sampled here. Less than one percent of all the editorials addressed children.

One of the cornerstones of ethics in journalism is to represent all sections of society. Fair coverage of all groups and the issues that are important to them is essential for raising public awareness, stimulating public debate, and addressing injustices. Ethical journalism should therefore prioritize children and pay special attention to their issues. Journalism in Bangladesh is not doing this service to children. Moreover, reports rarely sought the views of children even on issues or events directly concerning them.

Another shortcoming of the Bangladeshi media's coverage of children is the lopsided and narrow range of issues and topics being covered. In newspapers, most child-related stories involved the death of children. On TV, the most-covered topic was education, but the stories overwhelmingly covered seminars, meetings or other such programmes. A good number of children-related stories on TV focused on various announcements by state personnel and dignitaries.

Media content analysis shows that important issues relating to children, such as government policies or child-specific vulnerabilities are largely ignored by the media. This absence was more pronounced on TV than in Newspapers.

On a positive note, the media prioritised two important rights-based sectors; education and healthcare. However, the coverage of these issues was almost always in conjunction with an event or was given special coverage on a day of international focus on these issues.

Another area of concern is that a considerable proportion of news reports disclosed the identities of victims of sexual abuse and of children in conflict with the law. This not only violates journalistic ethics of protection to children in vulnerable situations, it also goes against legal provisions for children. The questionnaire surveys of journalists and editors indicated a lack of comprehensive knowledge on laws for the protection of children. Selected cases studies revealed great insensitivities as well.

An analysis of randomly selected newspaper items from a broad range of news exposes the tendency of media to sensationalize and highlight violence in their coverage. Case-studies exposed sensationalism in the tone and delivery of child-related stories and in the images that accompanied them when events or issues provide such scope. Images or photographs showing dead bodies and violence in a good number of reports are a real cause for concern. Such depictions can have seriously negative influences on children; it only takes one such story to do irreversible harm.

A considerable proportion of news reports portrayed children as passive victims or as secondary and irrelevant. Reports containing other stereotypical portrayals and discriminatory depictions were not uncommon.

Reports were found to be deficient in authenticity and clarity. TV reports seemed to be even weaker on these counts.

Gatekeepers and reporters responding to the questionnaire survey demonstrated that they generally understood the ethical parameters in the context of children. However, as responses to questions about practices, and the findings of the content analyses indicate, there are some significant gaps in translating perceptions into practice.

The questionnaire surveys highlighted some areas of confusion. A section of the participating reporters and gatekeepers did not perceive clearly the concept of a code of conduct or ethics. The study finds that a code of ethics is nearly non-existent in Bangladesh. The code of conduct for journalists prescribed by the Press Council of Bangladesh does not seem to be comprehensive and is ineffectual. A lack of ethical codes makes ensuring ethical practices all the more difficult.

The study finds that sub-editors, copy-editors, and gatekeepers would benefit from training on ethics. The questionnaire survey of reporters also suggested this.

The media gatekeepers who partook in the FGD highlighted constraints faced by journalists, such as inadequate resources for in-depth reporting and deadline pressure. Some of them also mentioned competition with other media as a reason for making inappropriate decisions.

For Ethical Journalism

To improve the ethics of reporting on children and child-related issues, Bangladeshi media should:

- Create space for children's voices to be heard and uphold their right to information
- Increase the volume of coverage and ensure fair coverage of issues involving children as well as issues that are important or of interest to children; ensure fair representation of the diverse realities of children.
- Increase innovative and in-depth coverage and improve the continuity of coverage as opposed to the present focus on event-based or one-off coverage. The coverage needs to be proactive rather than reactive.
- Broaden the agenda of news.
- Take care to avoid showing images of dead bodies or gruesome images, avoid detailed description or depiction of violence and antisocial activities, and sensationalised presentation of events.
- Take care to protect the identity, safety, security and wellbeing of children covered in the news. Pay special care to those in grief or who are suffering, and to those in difficult situations, including children in conflict with the law.
- Be more sensitive towards children involved in news events; choose language carefully when writing about children, and avoid adjectives.
- Take care to avoid creating or provoking discrimination, stereotyping and making generalisations.
- Understand the laws concerning children and refer to these in reports where relevant.
- Devise and follow codes of conduct or ethics, and guidelines.

Defining a Child

- Journalists need to have a clear idea of who a child is. While the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines anyone under the age of 18 as a child, national laws of Bangladesh specify different age limits for childhood depending on the context.
- The study team followed the guideline of the UNCRC and the national law Majority Act 1875, which states that 18 is the age of adulthood, while identifying child-related contents. Children, below the age of eighteen, are the focus of this study and this is the age group for which child-related media content is appropriate and to which rights-based approaches to media coverage should be applied.
- Journalists need to consider the varying legal definitions of childhood and concurrent legal provisions while reporting on certain issues. If the situation requires it, journalists should debate and discuss the relevant legal provisions and age-definitions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Convey findings to media editors and gatekeepers and make sure that the above points get appropriate attention.
- Initiate a system of recognising and rewarding journalists and news rooms that demonstrate sound ethical practices.
- Sensitise editors and gatekeepers to establish an enabling environment in media institutions that will facilitate the desired kind of reporting. This kind of reporting would require media institutions to make time and resources available to the reporters. This will require a policy thrust that is directed from the decision-making level.
- Impart training to reporters and copy-editors or sub-editors, and gatekeepers on basic journalism ethics, both broadly and in the context of children. Ethics is one of those areas where fragmented approaches do not work.
- The training on ethics needs to highlight issues of sensitivity, privacy, good taste, obscenity, and sensationalism. The safety, security, responsibility, and identity protection of children involved in sensitive events require special attention. Handling positive stories and human interest stories the right way should also be a focus.
- Impart training on the basic essential components of news, including accuracy, impartiality, fairness, balance, truth-seeking and clarity.
- Impart training and exercise brainstorming for generating story ideas that are aimed at raising the coverage volume and quality. Suggest ways of developing story ideas, and focus especially on planning in-depth stories and ways of incorporating children's perspective in all relevant stories. While developing a beat, i.e. assigning one or more reporters for regular coverage, is needed to focus on children's affairs, the inclusion of children in the general news agenda is essential. Children should not just be relegated to a compartment of stories marked out as 'child'-issues. The perspective of children should be considered in general stories including those on relevant policy matters.
- Impart training on UNCRC and relevant state laws.
- Impart training on interviewing children.
- Impart training and exercise brainstorming on handling ethical dilemmas.
- The training programme should include an exercise of devising a personal code of ethics, giving trainees a sense of ownership.

Ethics is a matter of self-regulation and ethical standards are best ensured when there is a voluntary system of media accountability. The journalist community and media institutions must establish self-criticism and peer-review systems. To be truly successful and sustainable, journalism ethics has to grow from within the community.

Furthermore, it is important to note that codes of conducts and guidelines are important for clarifying goals, responsibilities and commitments. A code of conduct alone will not produce ethical journalists. Rather, it is each journalist's conscience and sense of morality that does this.

INTRODUCTION

This study explores to what extent journalism in Bangladesh is ethical in its coverage of children.

Ethical conduct is crucial to the very existence of journalism, to its purpose of seeking and revealing truth. Ethics also justifies journalism because it rests on the professional integrity of journalists. Ethics is about caring for the lives that journalists expose and make public in their work. Responsibility towards individuals and to the community at large is an essential part of ethical journalism.

Ethics in journalism is about the responsibilities that news-workers have towards the public; a community, the different groups within this community, and also to individuals. Only by committing to and upholding an ethical code, which the public also understands and trusts, can the media justify and uphold its freedom.

As a text book on reporting explains it, “Communal life is an unfolding process in which the experienced past and the desired and anticipated future are considered in making the present. The journalist plays a key role in this process. Every day, the reporter describes the immediate and the past while showing the possible future in his or her work.” (Mencher, 2008)

This vision directly relates journalism to children, both literally and in spirit. Journalism for children is journalism for the welfare of the future. And yet journalism often forgets children. Unfortunately, news is mostly regarded as the business of adults.

Children constitute a very special segment of society and as such, should rightfully claim a fair share of the news agenda. Although children are often overlooked, journalism can and does directly and indirectly affect children of all ages.

The interrelationship between children and the news media has three broad dimensions:

1. Events often involve children and they become a part of the picture being reported on. News events involving children have direct implications for them with regard to their image, representation and wellbeing. Just as media coverage can affect children, so does a lack of coverage. Negligence of issues that are important to children has important ramifications because it is through media that adults, the decision makers, become more aware of children's issues.
2. Children regularly access news media, whether in print, television or online form. Children have the right to receive information, but since news is packaged for an adult audience, the content is often inappropriate for a child viewer. Consequently, events and issues depicted by the media may have serious impacts on child-consumers even if they do not directly involve children. News media, especially on the radio, television and internet, package entertainment along with information. A large amount of advertising is run alongside news

contents. These may seriously influence children. An analysis of this is not within the scope of this research, but is nonetheless important to bear in mind.

3. Lastly, there is the issue of children's access to media and their participation in the news. Research on children and the media show that children's views are neglected even in issues directly involving or affecting them. Moreover, children's voices are almost never heard in general policy matters or in the policy-setting processes that are often set in motion by journalism.

All of these dimensions are matters of ethical concern for journalists. The present study finds that to be ethical and fair to children, journalism in Bangladesh needs to do better in all three of the above dimensions.

The core ethics of the profession lies in its role as a watchdog for the public interest. The media should inform the public and help them understand the changing world so that they can make informed decisions. The media raises issues for public attention, democratic debate and accountability. In this role, the media should endeavour to seek the truth and expose it for the good of the public while taking care not to hurt anybody unjustly in the process.

Children, and their interests and issues, deserve special attention. They deserve special care because they are especially vulnerable, and impressionable.

To put it simply, ethical journalism in the context of children should serve the best interest of the child through the power of the media. It evolves in two main directions:

- **Reporting issues that involve children and their wellbeing** — keeping watch on the rights of children, including their rights to information, freedom of expression and participation.
- **Ensuring their protection from any harm caused by the media** — keeping watch on matters that may adversely affect children and their wellbeing.

This study looks at these ethical responsibilities through the lens of reporting.

OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

Objective

The baseline study was undertaken to:

- Gauge the ethical standards maintained in the news contents of the mainstream media in Bangladesh on issues involving children.
- Gauge the awareness, perceptions and knowledge of journalists on ethical concerns in the context of children.

The specific objectives were to:

- Identify the gaps and lapses therein and locate key areas for developing the capacities of journalists to facilitate ethical reporting about and for children.
- Design a training module, based on the findings.

The broad concept behind this study is:

- Journalists can play a strong role in ensuring the wellbeing of children and minimising potential harm to them from news media. To do this successfully, ethical standards and practices must be upheld.

Methodology

1. **Literature Survey:** *Surveyed literature on journalism ethics and its concerns for children and child-rights.* Key international and national codes of ethics and conduct were checked. Excerpts of studies on children and the media in different countries were reviewed (UNICEF CEE/CIS 2007). Relevant national laws were briefly reviewed. This facilitated developing the indicators and questions for the content analyses and questionnaire surveys.
2. **Content Analyses:** *Monitored and analysed the contents of selected newspapers and television channels over the three months prior to the commencement of the study.* To get an idea of the prevailing trends and practices, quantitative and qualitative analyses of the child-related items were done. The volume, type, quality and possible impact of news-coverage on issues involving children were probed and analysed.
 - **The period monitored:** June, July and August, 2009.
 - **Content Analysis — newspapers:** Monitored 12 national dailies — 10 Bengali and two English. At present the country has 254 daily newspapers; 74 of which are national (*Prothom*

Alo 9 Oct, 2009). The sample represents 5 percent of all dailies and 16 percent of the national dailies.

- **The newspapers under study are:** *The Daily Prothom Alo, Jugantor, Samakal, The Daily Ittefaq, The Daily Inqilab, The Daily Naya Diganta, The Daily Janakantha, AmarDesh, Manabzamin, The Daily Amader Shomoy, The Daily Star* and *New Age*.
- **Pages and items scanned:** Researchers scanned all general pages except the sports, business and international pages. Special pages on women, health and culture were also monitored. News and feature items, as well as photographs that concerned children were taken for analysis.

The editorial policy of a newspaper plays an important role in deciding its coverage priorities and the creation of its agenda for public debate and discussion. Editorials reflect the policy priorities of a newspaper. Editorial policies are crucial to creating enabling environments in media institutions for ethical reporting on and for children. The editorials of the sample newspapers were scanned to gauge to what extent children's issues were prioritized.

A number of general news items, which could potentially affect children negatively, were randomly selected and analyzed to probe the issue of news having harmful impacts on children.

- **Content Analysis — TV Channels:** Monitored the evening news bulletin on three television channels. Eleven television channels are currently in operation in the country. Ten of these are privately run satellite channels, while one is a terrestrial channel owned by the state. The sample thus covers 27 percent of the national television channels.
- **The TV channels are:** The state-run *BTV* and the private satellite channels *ATN Bangla* and *Channel-I*.
- **Bulletins and Items scanned:** The prime time bulletins of *BTV* and *ATN Bangla*, and the late evening bulleting of *Channel-I*, were monitored. The entire duration of the bulletins were scanned and the news/packages/images that concerned children were taken for analyses.
- **Samples beyond the Study Period:** In order to complement the qualitative analysis, a few reports were randomly studied as test cases on pertinent sensitive issues beyond the monitoring period.
- **Criteria for selection of the media:** The newspapers and TV channels were selected on the basis of their circulation, audience reach, and coverage patterns. The goal was to cover the more widely circulated ones as well as get an idea of the spectrum.

3. **Questionnaire Survey:** *Conducted twin questionnaire surveys among reporters and gatekeepers of selected news media.* Gatekeepers refers to news editors, chief reporters, shifts-in-charge and heads of national desks – those who make everyday decisions on the output and who regulate the news flow.

- **The surveys covered:**

- In total 80 reporters - 30 working at the national level and based in Dhaka; 50 in five regional divisions (10 per division), comprising local correspondents of national media and reporters of local newspapers. The respondents represented 40 news institutions.
- In total 15 gatekeepers - 10 working for national media; 5 from district or local dailies (one per division).

- **The surveys probed:**

- Whether any ethical code in general existed and whether a special code or guidelines were provided for covering children.
- Whether children's affairs were given priority at all.
- The perceptions and understanding of journalists about ethical concerns with regard to children.
- Their knowledge of the issues involved.
- Their own practices and their perceptions of prevailing practices.
- Their self-identified gaps and training needs in the arena of ethical reporting on and for children.

Note on Data Management and Analyses: A data-entry sheet was developed for each content item on which the data was coded as per the code-sheets (see Annexure-6). A random crosscheck for coding consistency was done while going through the items for qualitative assessments. Separate databases were then developed for the print and electronic media contents and for the responses from the two questionnaire surveys. Inconsistencies and typing errors were checked and corrected before analysing the data. The databases were developed and all data analyses were done using SPSS PC version 13.0 statistical software.

Focus Group Discussions: *Conducted three focus group discussions (FGDs) with news media gatekeepers and with representative groups of children.*

- **FGD with gatekeepers:** Conducted one FGD with gatekeepers of selected national and local media in October 2009.
 - Nine gatekeepers joined the discussion - three were from national dailies, one was from a television channel and five were from different regional dailies. They partially

represented the media covered by the content monitoring and questionnaire surveys.

- The gatekeepers identified some key areas of ethical concerns in reporting on and for the child. They also specified some areas for capacity development.
- **FGDs with children:** Conducted two FGDs with two groups of children in December 2009. Their ages ranged between 12 and 17 years.
 - √ One FGD brought together seven boys and three girls from middle-income families.
 - √ One FGD brought together five boys and five girls residing in an NGO shelter home for children living on the street.
 - √ The children discussed their feelings and perceptions about media contents and coverage of issues on and for children. They also specified their expectations from the news media.

The draft report was shared with 40 stakeholders representing leading newspapers and TV channels, NGOs and UN bodies working with children, as well as relevant government ministries/departments. The report was finalised after incorporating their suggestions and advices.

Who is a Child?

One important methodological question for the study was how to define a child. The study considered the following guidelines and legal provisions:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - UNCRC defines anyone under the age of 18 as a child. Bangladesh was one of the pioneer states to ratify the UNCRC.
- However, the laws in Bangladesh, as in many other countries, specify different age-bars to define childhood for different purposes.

The Laws in Bangladesh

- The Majority Act, 1875, sets the age of maturity at 18. Generally speaking, anyone under 18 is a minor and cannot enter into any contract. But a few other laws including The Penal Code limit childhood to younger ages in different contexts.
- The Children Act, 1974, and The Suppression of Repression of Women and Children Act, 2000 (amended in 2003) define a child as anyone under the age of 16.
 - The Children Act, 1974, is the law stressing the state's responsibility to a child's protection needs. This law is often interpreted as the social welfare law for children. It deals with matters of institutional custody and care, protection and safety of children, and stipulates special measures for destitute children and child offenders. The Act

applies special and exclusive trial provisions for child offenders. It stipulates that irrespective of any offence, no child can be dealt with by punishment. Nor can s/he be called a criminal or a convict. A child offender, or a child who comes into conflict with the law, can only be dealt with by measures for protection, care and correction. According to this law, detention by the state should be the last resort. The spirit is to reintegrate such children into society as responsible members.

- The Suppression of Repression of Women and Children Act, 2000 concerns specific criminal offences including rape and other sexual crimes, trafficking, abduction, dowry, murder, incitement to suicide, and maiming a child with the intention to employ him or her in begging.
- These two laws require the news media to protect the identities of child victims. The Children Act extends identity protection to juvenile offenders while reporting the legal proceedings.
- Section 82 of The Penal Code, 1860 sets the age of criminal responsibility at 9. Up to the age of 12, this responsibility is conditional. This means that it is up to the court to decide if a child aged 9-11 years that was involved in an offence had any understanding of the consequences of her/his acts. From the age of twelve a child could be charged with criminal responsibility unconditionally, but in all cases the law must follow the Children Act, 1974 while dealing with him or her.
- The law of 1872 regarding witnesses states that even a very young child could be eligible if the court is satisfied with her/his competence as a witness.
- The Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, states that no child under the age of 12 can be put to any work. From 12 to 14 years of age, a child may do light work provided it does not affect her/his health, development and education. This Act describes a child between 14 and 17 years of age as an adolescent. Adolescents can be engaged in non-hazardous work for up to 42 hours in a six-day week, if a registered physician certifies her/his ability for it. The Act also outlines hazardous work. One cannot be employed legally in full time work until the age of 18.
- The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, sets the minimum age for marriage at 18 for girls and 21 for boys. In cases of marriage at a younger age, the legal guardians of the child may be held accountable by the law.
- Age limits of childhood are also relevant in matters of ward-ship, parental custody and inheritance. The Guardian and Wards Act, 1890, sets this age as under 18 for girls and under 21 for boys. The provisions of the family laws, which vary by different religions, may also be important and decisive.

The Study Team Concludes:

- Following the UNCRC and the Majority Act of Bangladesh, 18 should be the cut-off age

for consideration of general issues such as rights-based approaches to media coverage and the effect of media on children.

- For identifying child-related media contents this study regarded 18 as the cut off age.
- However, when reporting on any issues covered by the state laws mentioned above, journalists in Bangladesh should acknowledge the relevant legal provisions and age definitions. For example, different legal dictates are important to consider when writing about child victims and children in conflict with the law. It should be noted that even the UNCRC does not set any age for criminal responsibility. The Committee on the Rights of the Child, which monitors implementation of the CRC recommends that this age should be guided by the best interests of the child. (UNICEF CEE/CIS, 2007). In addition, certain legal provisions (such as those of the Labour Act) may reflect realities that a journalist would need to take into account.

The study suggests that while agreeing with the spirit of the UNCRC age bar of 18 years, news coverage purposes may require stratified considerations. The editorial guidelines of the British Broadcasting Corporation - BBC for example regard someone under the age of 15 years as a child and those aged 15, 16 or 17 as young people.

Significance of the Laws for this study:

The brief review of the UNCRC and the relevant state laws helped the study assess whether news coverage was fulfilling the standards required by these legal frameworks. It exposed the areas where reporters need to be especially considerate of the ages of the children involved. The review also highlighted the significance of The Birth and Death Registration Act, 2004. Journalists must know where and how to find and verify birth registration information. Knowledge of certain national policies would be important here as well.

PARAMETERS OF JOURNALISM ETHICS

Ethical journalism should endeavour to bring about positive changes, and have a beneficial impact on the lives it touches. It should be vigilant against causing unjust harm to people or perpetuating injustices. This is as much about professionalism as it is about morality, conscience and good taste. A code of ethics demands of each journalist a certain responsibility to upholding professionalism, humanism and accountability.

As such, the ethics of a journalist rests on her or his professional and moral integrity. Without ethics, journalists would at best be the mechanical scribes of day to day events and at worst, they may pose a threat to people and public life.

Ethical standards are essential for the credibility of journalism and the media. They facilitate public trust in a news organisation and help to ensure its acceptance by the people. Ethical conduct is the key to safeguarding journalists' professional independence. It provides the moral and logical basis for defending the work of journalists and the media.

Upholding strict ethical standards requires of each journalist a measure of self-regulation. It is also essential for preventing government regulations or censorship that may curb journalists' freedom of expression and the right to free speech. This does not mean that ethics can or should be codified in law. Ethical pledges have to be voluntary and based on the conscience of each journalist. Regimented or statutory regulations do not work well with journalism nor are they congruent with a spirit of democracy.

Codification and Journalism Ethics: Codes of ethics and conduct are formed by journalists' unions or associations, editors' bodies, owners and institutions, and by independent press councils that bring together media workers and citizens. A Press council deals with the complaints of citizens against the media and could also be a statutory body.

Some of the world's earliest or major formal codes of journalism ethics were drafted by organisations such as the International Federation of Journalists - IFJ, which represents journalists from over 100 countries; the National Union of Journalists for the UK and Ireland (NUJ); the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ, USA); and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC, UK). The newspaper and periodical industry of the UK provides another prominent ethical code. Known as the Editor's Code of Practice, it was framed by editors themselves and is enforced by the UK's independent self-regulatory body, The Press Complaints Commission (PCC). The PCC deals with people's complaints about the editorial contents and practices of UK newspapers and magazines.

The guidelines set by these bodies incorporate special concerns regarding children, and some even include separate sections for this. The IFJ has a complete set of guidelines for reporting on children and their affairs. The UNICEF and the Children's Rights Information Network (CRIN), an international NGO coalition, provide similar guidelines.

Now is the Time:

While Bangladesh has a strong tradition of journalism backed by a strong sense of moral duty, and while the concept of ethical journalism is not new to Bangladeshi journalists, codified ethics are very rare here.

It is now more than ever before that the ethical roots of journalism must be strong and deep. With the advent of news on the internet, the media is broader than ever. The proliferation of broadcast and print media on the TV, radio, print and internet means that the media permeates our lives now more than ever before.

The enormous power of the media is increasingly becoming concentrated in fewer hands worldwide and Bangladesh is following this trend. The media is a commercial venture and news has become a commodity. A sense of professional self-regulation and adherence to professional guidelines is essential to preserving the media's original function: providing a service to and being accountable to the public.

Need Holistic Approach:

Ethics cannot be approached with a compartmentalised and fragmented vision. We must first understand the broad ethical parameters of journalism and then examine how these lend themselves best to the special case of children.

Core Journalism Ethics

The sustainability of democratic culture, governance and practice depends on:

- Public awareness; people's right and access to information,
- Public debate and dialogue on issues that are crucial to people's wellbeing,
- Freedom of expression,
- Social justice to ensure equal opportunity to all.

Journalists play a crucial role in facilitating these processes. To be ethical, journalism needs to live up to its role as a watchdog for public interest, to seeking justice and to demonstrating fairness and impartiality to all sections and members of the community. Journalists also need to be fair to the people who are sources or subjects of news.

The work of journalists touches the lives of people everyday. Journalists must themselves choose what their work should focus on and in what manner their work comes across. Their assessment and selection form an integral component of their work. When guided by a commitment to a set of values or morals, as well as a sense of responsibility to the public, journalists make better decisions and choices in their work (See Box-1).

Box-1 : Journalism Ethics: Core Values and Concepts

All time-tested and accepted codes of ethics or conduct share some basic values, concepts and principles.

- **Core moral values:**

- Respect for and commitment to life and to people's rights, dignity and possibilities.
- Seeking and disseminating truth in a spirit of service to the community, its constituent segments and individuals.

- **Two dimensions of responsibility:**

- To work for the betterment of community life through the means of journalism; to work actively and independently as a watchdog, and be guided by a clear conscience.
- Not to cause harm unjustly or needlessly.

- **A few key concepts:**

- 'Think people'. This could be a key concept and guideline.
- Public service or public interest could be defined as: the common wellbeing of the community wherein individual interests are recognised as long as they do not unjustly harm others or the group at large. Community interests may also be considered unjust if they cause harm to individuals unjustly.
- Justice and equality are two other guiding concepts.

Ethical Journalism is guided by principles of professional integrity and honesty. The key parameters are:

- **Truth seeking and reporting** - accuracy of information; diligent verification, locating sources of information; getting the complete picture; being courageous in seeking and telling the truth; maintaining editorial integrity and independence; honesty; not manipulating or distorting facts; seeking and providing evidence.
- **Proper coverage of issues** - reporting on issues that are important to the community and not only news that is apparent, sensational or superficial; avoiding one-off stories, and following matters up; digging deep, exploring causes and consequences providing adequate explanations on the basis of facts and evidence, pinpointing responsibility and accountability; presenting events and issues in context; getting all relevant aspects and views.

- **Impartiality and fairness in coverage** - getting the perspective of all those involved including the responses of any accused parties; being fair and just while maintaining impartiality; presenting news in balance way in controversial matters, informing the public of the range of opinions without neglecting any pertinent dissenting views even if they are unpopular or marginal.
- **Comments is free, but facts are sacred** - separating facts from opinion, advocacy or advertisement. As the PCC code explains, “The press, whilst free to be partisan, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact.” Any advertisement must be clearly distinguished as such.
- **Honesty** - pursuing honest and open methods in information gathering; being honest and straightforward with those involved in an event and to sources of information; no deception to a source, except for in special cases when doing investigative journalism with certain knowledge of a subject’s illegal activity; not paying for information unless there is a strong and unavoidable reason to do so; honesty to the readers/audience, except for in cases when confidentiality or legal bindings must be upheld; not to plagiarise.
- **Protecting the confidentiality of sources who have been granted anonymity** - while journalists need to provide sources of information in their reports, there are situations involving safety, security and confidentiality which may demand identity protection.
- **Fairness of coverage** - giving attention to all constituent groups in a society, ensuring their fair representation in news; providing opportunities for all to make their voices heard,. The 1947 report of the Commission on the Freedom of the Press in the USA showed that vast segments of society were being ignored by the press. Particularly the young and the aged, racial minorities, the poor, and women were excluded in the media (Mencher, 2008). Journalists in today’s Bangladesh need to ask themselves if these ‘sins of omission’ pervade their work as well.
- **Fairness to the downtrodden** - special attention to and compassion for the poor, the weak, the deprived, the wronged, the voiceless, the neglected, the different, and the marginalised; giving voice to the voiceless.
- **Upholding rights, exposing misdeeds, serving public interest** - the watchdog function requires journalists to safeguard public interest and expose crime, serious antisocial behaviour, financial or other corruption, injustices, and significant failures or negligence. These could be individual, institutional, systemic, state, corporate or social. A special responsibility lies with journalists to hold those in power accountable to the public they should be serving. Responsibilities include protecting the public from being misled; protecting public health and safety; keeping people informed about their rights and equipping the public with the information they need to make informed decisions on matters of public importance.
- **Public and individual rights, privacy** - the public has a right to information but not at the cost of causing unjust harm or defamation to somebody or putting them at risk; journalists should weigh individual interests against collective interests on sensitive issues, weigh the

good and the bad that any disclosure may achieve; and respect people's rights to privacy.

- **Sensitivity, privacy and responsibility** - remaining sensitive to the people involved in news, especially to those in grief or shock; to not be unwarrantedly intrusive; to show respect for human dignity, privacy, and safeguarding the wellbeing of the people involved; being sensitive when presenting them in news stories. Not to harm someone's reputation unjustly; ensuring the safety and security of people involved in news events or encountered during news gathering; protecting them from uncalled for negative effects, including stigma; and where necessary, ensuring identity protection, especially to victims. Victims, ordinary people, innocent bystanders or 'scapegoats' deserve special consideration.
- **No discrimination or stereotyping** - not to discriminate, generalise or stereotype, as the SPJ code lists, "by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance or social status."
- **Respecting people's values, faiths** - question and challenge social values or norms that are unjust, discriminatory or prejudicial, while maintaining respect for different faiths.
- **Good taste** - not to hurt the sensibility of people; shunning obscenity, sensationalism, gruesomeness, vulgarity and indecency in language, depiction and images. Some major concerns include issues involving violence, death and dead bodies, and sexual provocation.
- **Not to glorify or give unnecessary details of violence or antisocial activities** - some argue that certain imagery or coverage can stimulate more such actions or desensitise people to them; taking care not to provide details that might teach methods of criminal or antisocial acts.
- **Maintaining independence** - independence from all sources of power including commercial ones and from personal interests. Avoiding conflicts of interest.
- **Avoiding self-censorship** - staying alert to self-censorship - either from fear, conflicts of interest, or from over-cautiousness.
- **Accountability** - Journalists are accountable to their audience, the community at large and to truth itself. Journalists must take responsibility for their actions. They must admit to mistakes committed and make amends; there must be a system of receiving, acknowledging and resolving complaints from the public and there should be a system of honest self-criticism and constructive peer-to-peer criticism within the profession.

Box-2 : Public interest clause: Code of Conduct, the National Union of Journalists, UK

Problems over media coverage often hinge on the “public interest”. The Code of conduct uses the concept as a yardstick to justify publication of sensitive material. This is the NUJ’s definition, drawn up by the Ethics Council.

1. The public interest includes:
 - Detecting or exposing crime or a serious misdemeanours
 - Protecting public health and safety
 - Preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of an individual or organisation
 - Exposing misuse of public funds or other forms of corruption by public bodies
 - Revealing potential conflicts of interest by those in positions of power and influence
 - Exposing corporate greed
 - Exposing hypocritical behaviour by those holding high office
 - There is a public interest in the freedom of expression itself.
2. In cases involving children, journalists must demonstrate an exceptional public interest to over-ride the normally paramount interests of the child.

The core values and principles guide ethical norms with regard to children as well. What is ethically right for all, applies all the more in relation to children. Some codes additionally provide specific guidelines for dealing with issues involving children.

Ethics in the Context of Children

The BBC Editorial Guidelines (2005-2010), previously called the Producers’ Guidelines, has a special section on children. It begins by stating that children and young people are very important to the BBC. The opening paragraph goes on to say:

“We aim to provide them with challenging, educative, enjoyable and interesting content to help them make sense of the world in which they live. They also interact with us in many different ways - as contributors, actors, presenters and via our online and interactive services.”

As previously noted, The BBC guidelines define someone under the age of 15 years as a child and those aged 15, 16 or 17 as young people. The guidelines stress safeguarding the welfare of the children and young people who contribute to BBC contents. The intention is to incorporate their right to “speak out and to participate”.

The first of the BBC editorial principles referring to children explains that as journalists,

“We must ensure that the physical and emotional welfare and the dignity of people under the age of eighteen, and in particular children under fifteen, are protected during the making and broadcast of programmes and online content, irrespective of any consent given by them or by a parent, guardian or other person in loco parentis.”

The editorial principles conclude by stating that,

“We must balance our responsibility to protect children and young people from unsuitable content with their rights to freedom of expression and freedom to receive information.”

When the general ethical requirements of fair and proper coverage and representation are stressed in addition to these concepts, one gets an outline of journalism ethics in the context of children.

‘Omission’ and ‘Commission’

As in general ethics, the ‘do’s are just as important as the ‘don’ts’. As some put it, the ‘sins’ can be of ‘commission’ and also of ‘omission’. There are issues and events journalists must cover for the best interests and welfare of children and there are things it must not do in order to protect a child’s wellbeing and limit potential harm from news coverage. Journalists need to bear in mind that children have special rights, special interests, special needs, and special vulnerabilities.

Key Areas: Key areas of ethical concerns could be described as:

- Coverage of issues that are important for children and for their rights including issues that interest them and help them to understand reality. Ensuring their right to get attention as well as be informed.
- Children’s access to and participation in news, ensuring their right to expression.
- Children’s portrayal and representation in the news; their safety, security and dignity; issues of stereotyping and exploitation of children by the media.
- Effects of news coverage and impacts of news contents on children; their protection from harms.

In General

Concerns for children, especially with regard to how they are impacted, extend to the general area of news. All general norms of journalism ethics gain special significance when applied to children. General issues to prioritize are:

- **Truth seeking:** Inaccurate information or the distortion of truth and discriminatory accounts become especially important when one considers that children are impressionable and they learn about reality from the news. Facts need to be separated distinctly from opinions. Language must be accurate and sensitively handled to unnecessary confusion.
- **Good taste:** Respecting the sensibility of children is a major area of concern. Obscenity,

vulgarity, indecency, sensationalism, cruelty and mindless violence - all have an impact on children.

- **Death and the dead** - Respect for the dead, and not showing vivid images of dead bodies, is a general norm that becomes especially important considering the impact that such images have on children.
- **Sex and violence** - Sex and violence are of particular concern. Provocative materials could encourage premature sexual activity. Detailed depictions of sex and violence can teach children that such behaviour is acceptable, may promote imitative behaviour, aggressive behaviour or lead to desensitisation.
- **Antisocial activities and self-harm:** Detailed depictions of antisocial activities and self-harm or suicide can similarly lead to imitative behaviour in children who are exposed to it.
- **Respect to different values and faiths:** Learning to be sensitive and respectful of the diverse values and faiths existing within one community is crucial for children's education. At the same time they need to recognise social values or norms that are unjust, discriminatory or prejudicial.
- **No harmful content:** One major goal is not to invade media spaces that are accessible to children with harmful content.

Balancing Protection and Rights: As different codes and guidelines remind us - the responsibility to protect children from harmful content needs to be balanced with respect for their rights to information and freedom of expression in accordance with their age.

For and about Children

Here are some specific concerns and considerations of ethical journalism for and about children. Journalists need to take decisions according to the nature of the media and the particular news piece. Television and online journalists need to be extra careful.

- **'Omission' from the News Agenda:** The findings of this study support the observation that 'omission' or exclusion from the news agenda is a key ethical concern.
- **Adequate and proper coverage:** Children and the issues that are important and interesting to them should be covered adequately. These should be covered properly, by providing proper context, going in-depth to explore causes and consequences, and explaining processes in a clear way. Extra care is needed when dealing with issues of abuse and exploitation. When considering children's information needs, the power of the media to educate should be a driving force.
- **Reflecting diversity:** The diversity of children and children's issues should be properly addressed. There should be vigilance against any discrimination in coverage to ensure that all groups of children are represented. Moreover, special vulnerabilities and deprivations should get special attention.
- **Monitoring child rights:** As the UNCRC makes clear, children have the right to life,

survival and to the development of their full potential. Journalism is ethically bound to facilitate these rights. The IFJ guidelines for reporting on issues involving children summarise the responsibility like this, “Media organisations should regard violation of the rights of children and issues related to children’s safety, privacy, security, education, health and social welfare and all forms of exploitation as important questions for investigations and public debates.” (IFJ, 2002)¹ Journalists have the responsibility to highlight, sensitise and raise awareness on important issues. Reports need to show who and what are responsible for any violation and how these situations can be improved. A crusading kind of journalism is needed in which the impacts of the government’s action or inaction should get special attention.

- **Broadening the vision:** Journalists should bear in mind that many changes in society affect children more than adults and should aim to broaden children’s perspective accordingly.
- **‘Omission’—Not Heard Enough:** Giving space to children’s voices and including their views in the news is an ethical responsibility that journalists often ignore.
- **When children are directly involved:** Children need to be heard in news events and reports that involve them directly.
- **In relevant general matters:** What adults decide and do have direct and indirect effects on children. Children therefore need to be heard not just on matters or events directly concerning or featuring them, but in all relevant news. *Guidelines suggest giving due weight to such views in accordance with the child’s age and maturity.*
- **No discrimination:** As the International NGO coalition CRIN’s guidelines say, journalists should not “discriminate in choosing children to interview because of sex, race, age, religion, status, educational background or physical abilities.” (UNICEF CEE/CIS, 2007)
- **Portrayal of Children:** How the media portrays children is very important for a number of reasons. A UNICEF document summarises the issues as: “Media portrayal of children has a profound impact on attitudes to children and childhood, and is an important influence on adult’s behaviour towards children. Media depictions provide role models for young people, influencing their attitudes and expectations. The way in which media represent, or even ignore, children can influence decisions taken on their behalf, and how the rest of society regards them. The media often depict children merely as passive, silent ‘victims’.... Media professionals can remind the public that children deserve to be respected as individual human beings.” (UNICEF CEE/CIS, 2007)
- **Avoid stereotyping:** Journalists must guard against making stereotypical portrayals of children. Studies from other countries demonstrate how common it is across the world to stereotype children as for example, the ‘victim’ or the ‘troublemaker’. There is also

¹ The IFJ guidelines - Guidelines and Principles for Reporting on Issues Involving Children - was first adopted in draft by journalists organisations from 70 countries at a UN-sponsored conference in Recife, Brazil. They were finally adopted in Seoul in 2001.

a gender bias in reporting; stereotyping boys as ‘perpetrators’ and girls as ‘victims’ of abuses and crimes. The present study finds some similar stereotyping in the news content of Bangladeshi media.

- **Avoid generalising:** Journalists need to guard against making generalisations when reporting on children and their affairs.
- **Avoid discriminatory depictions:** Journalists should guard against any discriminatory portrayal of a child.
- **Protection Needs:** Protecting children from harm, risk and stigma is a multidimensional issue. In Bangladesh, the law has certain provisions to make sure that children are protected.
 - **Vulnerability:** The IFJ guidelines for reporting on issues involving children suggest that journalists should always keep in mind the vulnerable situation of children.
 - **Security, safety:** While gathering information and writing a story on any event that involves a child, his or her security and safety should be a primary concern.
 - **Privacy, dignity:** The privacy and dignity of children needs special attention. Children require more privacy protection than adults and journalists should think carefully about how much personal information to use in a story. The PCC code adds, “Editors must not use the fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian as sole justification for publishing details of a child’s private life.”
 - **Stigma:** In the context of Bangladesh, social stigma requires special consideration. The participants of the FGDs highlighted this need. Many child groups, such as children living on the street, sexually abused children or commercial sex-workers and children from broken homes suffer from the effects of stigma. These groups and others like them should be treated with the utmost care by the media so as to not inflate the problems of stigma further.
 - **Offending, discriminating:** Journalists need to be careful not to cause offence to children, and should do their utmost to ensure that a child will not suffer from discrimination because of news coverage.
 - **Proper context:** Pictures and accounts need to be accurately contextualized.
 - **Identification:** Identification can be in the best interest of the child in some cases. If the issue being reported on does not involve harm or risk. The child in question may want to speak out, and publicity may help them in their pursuits. The news topic may be a positive one, and naming the child could lead to positive results. As a general rule however, choosing to identify a child is not a decision to be taken lightly. The IFJ guidelines go so far as to say: “Guard against visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is demonstrably in the public interest.” (IFJ, 2002)

- **On sensitive issues**, wherever relevant, journalists should change the name, obscure the visual image or voice of the child in question and carefully omit any identifying information. Identifying information to omit could be an address, the names of parents, the name of school or anything that could be used to trace the child.
- **Identification of Victims** requires especially careful judgment.
- **In cases of sexual abuse**, most codes stress extreme caution and advise against identification. The PCC code says: “The press must not, even if legally free to do so, identify children under 16 who are victims or witnesses in cases involving sex offences.” This and a few other codes advise extreme caution in cases of ‘incest’ and forbid even the use of this word or disclosure of the relationship with the abuser, in case a child victim might be identified.
- **Child-offenders** also deserve protection. The BBC guidelines note, “Difficult ethical issues arise when we consider whether identification or anonymity of children involved in antisocial or criminal behaviour is in their best long-term interest. We should not normally identify children when featuring such behaviour to illustrate a practice, unless there is a clear editorial justification.” Equal caution should be practiced when identifying a child whose parent has antisocial or criminal behaviour, or when a child has been used in unlawful activities. In such an instance, identification may pose direct risks to the child or cause stigma.
- **The laws in Bangladesh** forbid identification of child victims and child offenders (under the age of 16) in situations of abuse and crime.
- **The guidelines put together by** the NGO coalition Children’s Rights Information **CRIN** specifies that non-identification should always apply to the following: victims of sexual abuse or exploitation; perpetrators of physical or sexual abuse; a child who is HIV-positive or living with AIDS unless informed consent is given by a guardian; children charged or convicted of a crime. (UNICEF CEE/CIS, 2007). UNICEF and CRIN guidelines also suggest not using photos of child soldiers, asylum seekers, or children in refugee situations.
- **The CRIN** guidelines recommend that journalists should not publish stories or images that may harm a child, her or his siblings or peers even when identities are changed, obscured or not used.
- **Applying one’s own judgement** according to the social and cultural context is important. In Bangladesh for example, even the identification of an HIV positive parent who has passed away may create grave problems for the orphaned child. The same applies to the identification of child sex-workers, children living in brothels and children whose mothers are in sex-work.
- **Sensitivity, Responsibility:** Sensitivity, compassion and responsibility to the people featured in news is especially crucial if they are children.

- **With care:** One needs to take care not to cause unnecessary trauma or anxiety to a child. As a BBC editorial principle states, “We must ensure that the children and young people are not caused unnecessary anxiety or distress by their involvement in programmes or by their broadcast. Their involvement must be clearly editorially justified and support should be given to them where necessary.”
- **With compassion:** To quote from the SPG guidelines, journalists should show “compassion for those who may be affected adversely by news coverage. Use special sensitivity when dealing with children and inexperienced sources or subjects.”
- **Weighing consequences:** Reporters should weigh any possible impact or adverse consequences for a child involved in the reporting, so that they may take all necessary precautions to avoid causing any harm.
- **After a report is published:** Responsibility requires journalists to monitor the impact of a report on the child involved and provide support if necessary.
- **Giving information to a third party:** As the BBC guidelines suggest, one needs to be cautious about sharing the personal information of a child with a third party, for example the police, without appropriate consent.
- **Interviewing and verifying:** Interviewing or talking to children requires special care and caution, especially in breaking news situations and when broadcasting live. It requires skills, consideration and the right attitude.
- **Whose interest:** The decision to talk to a child must not be guided by news considerations only. The child’s best interests should be a priority.
- **Informed consent:** Informed consent from the child and/or the guardian or other responsible adult must be obtained before interviewing or photographing a child. After a straightforward introduction, journalists should clearly explain their purposes and must ensure that all those involved understand the nature of the report along with its probable consequences. One should apply one’s own judgement because a child or an inexperienced guardian may not realise the long-term impact of media exposure on the child’s life. If it feels risky, one should not use the information irrespective of consent. Any refusal to talk should be respected.

Ethical codes stress parental or guardian’s consent, especially if the child is young or vulnerable or if the issue is sensitive. If needed, consent should be formalized in writing.

Some codes caution against getting information from children concerning their own or other children’s welfare. The PCC code recommends not proceeding on such occasions without the consent of a responsible custodian adult if the child is under 16.

- **No coercion, pressure or incentive:** Children should not be bullied or enticed into talking. Payments must not be made to secure consent. Journalists should not be overbearing or intimidating. They should remain alert to the emotional vulnerability of children and make sure that a child feels no pressure in any way.

- **With respect, without patronising:** A child should be approached as an individual. Journalists should never harass, humiliate, judge or undermine a child. Journalists should give importance to what children say and give them enough time to answer and speak. The questioning must not be insensitive. While protecting a child, one needs to be respectful of their sense of dignity and not be patronising or over-protective.
- **Confidentiality and trust:** Journalists should show respect to a child's privacy and confidentiality. They should try to build trust and keep it. They should not promise anything or raise hopes that cannot be met.
- **Being sensitive:** As noted above, journalists should take care not to cause or add to the anxiety and distress of a child. Interviewing children in a group setting can sometimes relax and reassure a child.

Sensitive issues require additional care. On sensitive issues it may be better to have someone close to the child be present during the interview. One must carefully think about how to speak with and interview victims and children in conflict with the law. Professional advice should be sought on how best to approach a child in a stressful situation and if it is not appropriate, forgo talking at all.

Being sensitive also means not crowding a child in a breaking news situation. News people should try concerted to limit the number of interviewers and photographers probing a single child.

- **Within their capacity:** Children should not be asked to talk on matters they cannot possibly deal with. Some subjects may be improper or risky for children to comment on.
- **Weighing and verifying what children say:** Journalists should be aware that sometimes a child can be eager to please, may exaggerate or pass on hearsay and may be carried away by their imagination. The BBC guidelines add, "Criminal or anti-social behaviour should not go unchallenged." A number of codes remind journalists of the need to verify any information provided by children and, while doing so, take care not to put them at any risk.
- **Payment:** Another general guideline is not to pay a child or guardian for information concerning the child's wellbeing. Paying any reasonable and legitimate expenses that seem to be in the best interest of the child has to be justified.
- **School time:** Codes in western countries have specific instructions about interviewing children in schools. Permission has to be sought from the head teacher. This helps to ensure that a child's school time is not disrupted and that the disciplinary system is respected.
- **Who speaks for children:** The IFJ guidelines urge reporters to, "verify the credentials of any organisation purporting to speak for or to represent the interests of the children."
- **Online, telephone:** Any online communication or phone conversations with children would require extra care.

- **Especially vulnerable:** Protection, portrayal concerns and issues of sensitivity and responsibility are particularly crucial when dealing with children in vulnerable situations. Equally important are the ethical guidelines for proper coverage.
- **Children in conflict with the law:** Reporting on children in conflict with the law requires special care and caution. Their situations may present quite a number of difficulties. For example, when a child is accused of killing another child, there may be a public demand for punishment. A journalist may be influenced by her/his own feelings of reproach. Journalists must endeavour to be fair in their coverage because the media is a powerful tool that can influence public opinion and even the court of law. Above all, the victim's family deserves the utmost sensitivity.
- **A few other vulnerabilities:** Children in conflict, ethnic tension, disaster or refugees who are asylum-seekers require special care and consideration. The same care should be taken with street children, children involved in crime, child-soldiers, child sex-workers, trafficked children, HIV/AIDS affected children, children orphaned by HIV/AIDS, child domestic workers, children in hazardous labour, children from marginalised communities or children living in extreme poverty. Special care should be taken when reporting on victims of abuse and exploitation.
- **Media exploitation of children:** Journalism ethics cautions against the exploitation of children by the media itself. Exploitation may occur when reports become sensationalized, and when reports publish or depict sexual images of children or use them solely to evoke an emotional response from the audience, without any regard for the child's dignity, safety, or interests. Often such sensationalism and exploitation is cloaked in the guise of compassion and sympathy.

Dilemmas and Decisions

As should be apparent by now, much of ethics is about handling dilemmas - weighing the consequences of news decisions and minimising harm to the people involved. Thinking through the real needs of the community helps to resolve ethical dilemmas. Issues involving children may present dilemmas that require very careful considerations.

- **Public's right to know:** Tough dilemmas often concern public interest or the public's right to information. Journalism ethics towards children stresses that if there is a choice involved, minimising harm to children should be prioritized. As the NUJ Code notes: "In cases involving children, journalists must demonstrate an exceptional public interest to over-ride the normally paramount interests of the child."

Journalists must carefully consider the consequences of disclosing material concerning children. The goal is to tell the truth while at the same time protecting the child. A UNICEF document describes this as "serving the public interest without compromising the rights of children." (UNICEF CEE/CIS, 2007)

- **Best interest of the child:** Ethical guidelines suggest that in any situation involving children the best interest of the child/children should be considered and upheld.² The child's views on their best interest should be heard, honoured and privileged in accordance with their age, maturity and responsibility. People closest to the child should be consulted while thinking through the consequences of disclosure.
- **Sensitive Areas:** Privacy and other protection needs; handling incidents of death, sexual offences, violence and crime; issues that may offend a child and lead to discrimination. All are difficult situations which can lead to ethical dilemmas.
- **Seek advice:** When facing a dilemma, one should always seek advice from an editorial authority and discuss with colleagues and mentors in the given news organisation.
- **Competition and commercial interest:** Sometimes a news media may be tempted by short-term gains to sensationalize coverage. Pressures to do so may be especially strong if competitors are already taking this approach. Sticking to ethical decisions pays off in the long run by building an image that wins lasting public trust.

Code of Ethics: Bangladesh

Codification of journalism ethics or of upholding ethical codes is a rare practice in Bangladesh. The issue does not get much attention either.

No effective code from the Community

The Dhaka Union of Journalists has a set of guidelines or a code of ethics (*Neetimala*) appended to its Constitution. Its 13 clauses stress safeguarding the interests of the union members. They also cover basic issues of professional and ethical practices which include: pursuing honest means of information gathering, upholding freedom of expression, not taking bribes, not to plagiarise; avoiding conflicts of interest, and being sensitive to the people involved in news, especially to those who are in grief or sufferings.

But these norms are not adequately detailed or explained and none of the clauses says anything about children. Besides, journalists - members and non-members alike - are generally not aware of this code. No attempt to publicise or prioritize the code can be observed.

Preliminary inquiries suggest that some of the local unions across the country may have similar guidelines appended to their constitutions, a lack of awareness of these appendices seems to be universal. When asked informally, journalists could not clarify if their unions or press clubs required them to uphold a code of conduct. The study team could not locate any other code from the community at large.

The ineffectual Press Council Code

A code of conduct for the newspapers, news agencies and journalists was issued by the Bangladesh Press Council, a statutory body, in 1993 and amended in 2002.

² The UNICEF guidelines say protecting the best interests of the child is to be held over any other consideration including over advocacy for children's issues and the promotion of child rights. (UNICEF CEE/CIS, 2007)

- **Nothing on children:** This code authoritatively prescribes 25 clauses for journalists, none of which refer to children. A few could have relevance for children but are not directed at them explicitly. The quote verbatim:
 - “13. For the increase of circulation of newspaper no vulgar, derogatory, ghastly news and picture, though attractive to the people, be published.
 - “23. It is a responsibility of a journalist to highlight any news which projects degeneration of moral values in the society but it is also the moral responsibility of a journalist to maintain strict precaution in publishing news/photo involving man-woman relationship or any report relating to woman.”

No one owns it: Journalists don’t have a sense of ownership over this code. In fact the Council itself is largely a mute entity whose presence is not at all apparent in the discourse on media. The Council’s annual report for 2007 was published in November 2008. A copy of this was provided to the study team in November 2009. The commission had heard 15 cases and received only 10 cases of complaints from the public in 2007.

State-run Media: Regulatory Guidelines

The state-run *Bangladesh Television - BTV* and *Bangladesh Betar* follow the guidelines provided by the respective state authority. These are not ethical guidelines and concentrate more on securing the government’s priorities, particularly political priorities. A few clauses on literacy programmes, providing ‘proper guidance’ to the youth community or on ‘indecent’ could be considered remotely relevant.³

House Codes: Effectively only One

Three of the independent media institutions covered by the study confirmed having their own codes of ethics - *Prothom Alo*, *Naya Diganta* and *New Age*.

- **New Age:** The team could not obtain any copy of the *New Age* guidelines.
- **NayaDiganta:** The *Naya Diganta* code consisted of four summary lines under the title ‘Editorial Policy’. These covered basic ethical norms on objectivity, obscenity, good taste, truth, slander and respect to all citizens and faiths.
- **Prothom Alo:** Only *Prothom Alo* provided a more substantial code of ethics. The thin booklet covers basic ethical issues, mainly the ‘don’ts’, fairly well. It also contains a separate section specifying guidelines for covering women, mainly addressing gender stereotyping, discrimination, and protection of victims of sexual and other crimes. The clauses on victim protection mention children in a number of contexts but issues involving children are not dealt with separately.

In addition, it should be noted that codes are important for clarifying goals, responsibilities and commitments but that no code, no matter how extensive, can make someone an ethical journalist. Only one’s conscience and morality can do this.

³ The study team could not obtain a copy from the government authority or find it on any of the websites of the relevant entities. The team could only check an undated version on the website <http://www.media-accountability.org/library/>, which is a programme of the Donald W. Reynolds Journalism Institute at the Missouri School of Journalism.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The questionnaire survey shows that the perceptions of reporters and gatekeepers on the key ethical issues of reporting on children are generally clear. However, responses to questions about practices show that there is a considerable gap between perceived standards and the extent to which these are implemented in practice. Analyses of the surveyed newspaper and television content, monitored over the three months from June to August 2009 indicate discrepancies and lapses in ethical standards. There are, however, some grounds for hope.

The focus group discussion with gatekeepers validate findings by substantiating the key areas of concern and training needs. The concerns indicated by the gatekeepers' FGD generally match the findings of the content analyses and questionnaire surveys, and their suggestions are incorporated in the recommendations of the study. The twin FGDs with children confirm the basic requirements for upholding ethical standards. Their perceptions and expectations are provided in some detail in this section. These are also reflected in the recommendations of the study.

Major Concerns:

The areas of major concern that emerge from this study include lapses both of omission and of commission. These include:

- ***Very little coverage of events or issues involving children both in the print and television media; not proper and fair coverage.*** Children and their affairs make up a very small share of the news in leading Bangladeshi newspapers and TV channels. The predominant nature of media is that they chronicle the daily events in a routine manner. This is especially pronounced in TV news.
- **Children made news the highest number of times when they died;** in most cases, the deaths that made the news were caused by accidents; the second most common cause of death was murder; it was followed by deaths due to health-related reasons; and lastly, there were stories on child death as a result of suicide. It is extremely important that journalists report on child death. Survival is the fundamental right of any child. Any violation or denial of that right should rightfully claim the news media's attention. Indeed, the large number of reports on child death denotes the sad reality in Bangladesh. If child mortality is high, the number of reports on child death will have to correspond to that. What is worrying though, is the predominant nature of the child-death stories. Child mortality is related to a lack of other rights and structural problems. Reports explaining those contexts were very few in number. The trend of the child death stories also reflects the overall trend of coverage on children and their affairs. Coupled with a narrowness of the news agenda, this trend contributes to the dearth of child-related stories.

- **The coverage is event-based, often cursory.** Newspaper items made up the overwhelming bulk of the data monitored, and children death featured mainly in newspapers. The trend of coverage that makes death the most-covered subject in newspapers is even more pronounced in television. Most of this coverage takes form of tiny spot news stories on the day's happenings.
 - √ The bulk of this event-based coverage provided just the basic information, sometimes incomplete and often very short. This kind of coverage alone may not make any effective contribution to children's welfare or raise awareness about children's issues. Overdependence on surface coverage of daily events will neither ensure broadening of the news agenda nor increase the volume of child-related coverage.
 - √ **Very little follow up or continuity of coverage.** The coverage was mostly one-off. Even the relevant day's events were not properly followed up to make trends visible or highlight issues or concerns.
 - √ **In-depth coverage is inadequate.** While news is primarily about current events or new developments, these require in-depth and issue-discerning coverage to make reality understandable and meaningful. *Spot news*⁴ or hard news can and should lead to in-depth coverage. In-depth reports, provide context and background information investigate and delve deeper into the causes and consequences of events. They highlight processes and help readers or viewers to understand the issues at hand while focusing on real stories. Such reporting made up only 13 percent of the child-related coverage. This indicates a lack of reportorial enterprise, which is essential for ensuring and prioritizing quality coverage on any issue. Even those reports that were in-depth suffered from a number of shortcomings.
 - √ **Most coverage is reactive, not proactive.** The prevailing trend in coverage demonstrates the tendency of news media to wait for an event to occur rather than to actively seek out stories or pursue certain issues or trends. For example, education receives media attention when results of public exams are announced or when dignitaries attend an education related programme. Similarly, health issues get attention when a health crisis breaks out. Enterprising and in-depth reporting would help to make coverage more proactive.
- A lack of editorials in newspapers.** This demonstrates further the lack of policy priority given to children's issues. Good treatment apparently, but not good enough. Events and issues involving children have been allotted relatively good treatment in both newspaper and TV news. However, the nature of the coverage limits the scope of better or more effective news treatment. Consequently, it limits the scope of granting importance to children and their issues, as well as the impact that a story could have made if done properly.
- **A narrow child-related news agenda that neglects many important issues/topics.** The issues that are left out or ignored are many. These include government policies or

⁴ The latest news, reported immediately; including breaking news or live stories for TV.

allocations, the many vulnerabilities that children are prone to, disabled children, juvenile justice, birth registration, HIV/AIDS, corporal punishment in schools and the work of children's associations. The agenda of television news is even more narrower than that of newspapers.

- ✓ **One result of this limited range of issues is that the news coverage is lopsided.** Over-dependency on event-based *spot* news also contributes to this. Death, healthcare, education and stories on exceptional students made up the bulk of the child-related coverage in newspapers. The TV news agenda was more lopsided. In TV coverage on children, education topped the agenda followed by healthcare issues and recreation/sports or cultural events. These three subject-areas claimed the overwhelming airtime of coverage on children, and many of these were reports on related seminars or programmes.
- ✓ **The angle of stories is not balanced.** A comparison between print and television media shows opposite thrusts, both of which are lopsided. Negative news of the day dominated newspapers, while television aired mostly positive stories. The share of positive stories rose in TV in part because much time was devoted to coverage of seminars and programmes.

Stories covering education and individual cases of academic excellence or other talents were mostly positive in angle in both print and TV media. The same is true for items covering recreation, sports or cultural events.

Death, healthcare problems, accidents, sexual abuse, kidnapping and overlapping legal issues were the sorts of topics that featured as negative news in the papers. Such 'negative' events or issues were largely absent on TV.

- ✓ **On a positive note, education and healthcare were prioritized within the tiny volume of total coverage on children.** These issues dominated the in-depth reports as well, especially in newspapers. It will be discussed below their coverage too indicates an over-dependence on daily events.

A tendency to sensationalize stories and include gruesome depictions of violence where there is scope to do so. This issue is not statistically very prominent but what is worrying is the tendency of the majority of newspapers and TV stations to play up such events when they occur. This is the case not only for stories involving children, but also in general news. Findings from the main dataset, a randomly selected secondary set of newspaper data as well as the cases studied more closely all confirm this trend. This kind of coverage may have profound and harmful impacts on children. (See Annexure-1: 'Gruesome, Violent, Irresponsible').

- ✓ **The percentage of reports containing such depictions within the study period was not high but they are prevalent enough to be a cause of considerable concern.** Even one such story is enough to cause lasting damage.
- ✓ **Pictures and footage of dead bodies are a serious concern.** Inclusion of such imagery

in the media is disrespectful to the deceased, whether of a child or adult, and to their families. (See Annexure-1: ‘Can’t Show These Pictures’)

- ✓ **Accounts that could teach or induce violent, antisocial or harmful behaviour is also concerning.** Some elements are present in significant numbers of newspaper reports, while even one account can have considerable negative influence on children.
- **Portrayal of children as passive victims and as unimportant.** Both the print and the television media demonstrated the tendency to portray children as victims, or to generally ignore them in a good proportion of stories. (See Annexure-1: ‘No Need to Seek a Child’s Opinion?’) The researchers conducting this study perceived that this was the overall impression given by the trend of stories. On occasion this was a case in choice of words and depictions. More generally the ‘tone’ of reports that marginalised children and perpetuated such stereotypes.

This issues covered also contributed to this tendency. In most cases, the topic or focus of a story involving children made their portrayal as passive victims almost inevitable. For example, in print media children generally made the news when something bad happened to them. On television, children often featured in seminars or programmes that were organized and attended by adults, who then became the focus of the report. (See Annexure-1: ‘Insensitive, Sensational, Irresponsible, Stereotypical’)

- **Discriminatory; ‘troublemakers’ and ‘criminals’.** In a few of the cases studied for qualitative analyses, negative stereotyping was linked to discrimination against children living in poverty or in vulnerable situations. Portrayals of ‘street children’ exemplify this problem. Case studies often demonstrated a real lack of sensitivity as well. (See Annexure-1: ‘Tokai, Criminals, Killers’)

The qualitative analyses of news contents also exposed considerable discriminatory or negative stereotyping. The coverage of children in conflict with the law portrays them as troublemakers or criminals. This raise broader concerns of prejudice and the tendency to prioritize sensationalism over welfare.

- **Sensationalism rather than safety and security; a tendency towards prejudice and carelessness.** On issues that lent themselves to it, the media prioritised sensationalism over the security or safety of the children involved. Violation of privacy was also common and in some instances stories showed a general carelessness.
- **A significant share of the relevant reports identified child offenders.** This implies a lack of awareness about ethical as well as legal requirements for identity protection. The questionnaire surveys among reporters and gatekeepers revealed similar inclinations. (See Annexure-1: ‘Tokai, Criminals, Killers’)
- **Porous identity protection to victims of abuses.** News reports generally have not published the names or photographs of child victims of sexual abuse or exploitation, but some stories did do this. (See Annexure-1: ‘Protection?’) A significant number of the relevant reports contained information such as addresses, parents’ names or school

details that would make identifying a child very easy. (See Annexure-1: ‘In the Guise of Sympathy’)

- **No identity protection when victims die.** Closer scrutiny of some reports suggests a general disregard for identity protection once a victim of sexual abuse dies. Identification details including photographs have been used in these cases.
- **A case study selected from a recent publication shows a lack of thought** about the harms that could come to a child identifying in news stories. (See Annexure-1: ‘Children of a Serial Killer’)
- **Considerable shortcomings in basic journalistic requirements such as authenticity, comprehensive truth-seeking; weak sourcing and lack of clarity.** TV stories appeared to be substantially lacking in these ways. Often in routine newspaper reports on events such as death by accidents or murder, the families of the children were not contacted for instead information. The reports were based on secondary sources.
- **Television news is doing worse.** By a number of measures, television news is faring worse than newspapers with regard to ethical handling of children. However, within the study period, the child-related content on television avoided discrimination, negative stereotyping or identity disclosure in their reports. This is largely due to the fact that TV coverage generally avoids some sensitive areas altogether. As such, these sorts of challenges seem to be exclusive to the printed media.
- **Inadequacies of knowledge and understanding about child-rights and protection issues including relevant laws.** This has been indicated by the questionnaire surveys, content analyses and the FGD with gatekeepers.
- **Responsibilities, constraints, and pressures.** The questionnaire survey of reporters suggested that the gatekeepers needed to perform better on journalism ethics. The gatekeepers at the FGD highlighted constraints such as deadline pressures and inadequate resources, especially for in-depth reporting. Some of them also mentioned competition with other media houses as a reason for poor decision making in some cases.
- **Lack of any code of conduct or guidelines.** As discussed in the previous chapter, the study team found a code of conduct in place at only one media house. This dearth of a professional code of ethics extends to the media community and industry as a whole. The Press Council does provide a code of conduct for newspapers and news agencies, but in practice it is largely ineffectual. Moreover, the questionnaire surveys of reporters and gatekeepers indicate considerable misunderstanding about what a code of conduct or ethics is.

Cautious Hopes:

The situation is not entirely bleak. There are some positive trends, even if they demonstrate traits one needs to be watchful about.

- **Of Perceptions and Practice:** As mentioned above, the reporters and gatekeepers surveyed demonstrated a reasonably good understanding of ethical do's and don'ts with regard to children but this is often not reflected in practice. The near-absence of any code of conduct contributes to the problem.
- **A focus on education and school exam results:** During the monitoring period, a good number of child-centred stories covered the issue of education. In newspapers, a high proportion of these stories were in-depth. The results of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exams had been announced a week prior to the monitoring period and a great share of education stories in newspapers covered this. Many focused on the achievements of individual students. Newspapers were particularly keen on success-stories featuring students from poverty-stricken families. This kind of coverage has its benefits since they draw public attention to a reality of hope and publicise good role models. They also inspire people to come forward with assistance to the children involved. The downside of these stories is that they run the risk of stereotyping the image of a 'poor kid excelling against all odds'. A perhaps unintentional but nonetheless patronising attitude could seep into the coverage. The dignity of those being reported should be prioritized above all else.
- **The proportion of education stories was much greater on TV than in newspapers.** But for TV, the SSC results had lost their attraction within a week or so. This highlights the short life of events in electronic media. The TV share of education stories related more to daily news events, if and as they happened.

The reports on education remind us that the news media make reporting decisions based on the 'newsworthiness' of events and issues. This is understandable but should be balanced with consideration for the needs of the community and a holistic approach to news values. Without that the media risks promoting a fragmented picture of reality. This could also reinforce stereotypical representations of certain groups or issues.

- **Heath Issues - Three Crises:** In the first week of June newspapers and television channels began reporting that children were falling ill in several regional districts from taking vitamin-A capsules and de-worming tablets that were given as part of a countrywide government campaign. Reports, quoted the affected people directly, and mentioned a few deaths. The government, UNICEF and WHO, however, maintained that the drugs used were known to be safe and that deaths could not be linked to them. The controversy lasted for days and generated many reports in the media. Around the same time, a similar crisis was reported related to the biscuits given to children in a WFP-assisted school nutrition project. This also led to quite a few reports.

Soon after, a controversy arose over a brand of Paracetamol drugs, which had reportedly caused a good number of deaths. This led to a public demand for action by the authorities. Reports on this peaked in July, and continued through August.

The stories generated by these events, especially the first and the last one, contributed significantly to healthcare being the second most-covered issue in both print and television media. The three crises aside, reports on healthcare issues in newspapers also included stories which actually conveyed individual appeals seeking financial help for various

treatment costs.

- **Stories featuring education and health:** Compared to other issues, education and healthcare have had a considerable presence in the news media. Both are important sectors for children and their rights. The trio of health crises and especially the SSC results contributed significantly to the small pool of in-depth stories amidst a sea of daily events-based coverage.
- **Covering current events:** The health crises and the SSC coverage indicate that although there are shortcomings with regard to proactive reporting, journalism is fulfilling its responsibility to covering the routine as well as the major current events. One also notices that even though media outlets do not always go in-depth or provide consistent coverage, reporters have revealed important realities concerning child rights violations and brought new issues to the fore. However, this kind of coverage is sporadic and far from being adequate.

Indicators for Content Analyses

The indicators for analysing child related news contents were developed after careful consideration of the relevant ethical concerns. A few need some clarification.

- **Issues and topics that are important for children:** A range of 48 issues or topics, covering a comprehensive realm of child-concerns in six clusters was predetermined. The clusters were as follows: 1. Abuse and Exploitation; 2. Vulnerability; 3. Children in Conflict with the Law; 4. Rights; 5. Children and Governance; 6. Success/Achievements. As we will see, the coverage or neglect of children in the media was more easily measured with the help of this list.

A single news item may cover more than one topic or issue and this overlapping was monitored during the data gathering. Two points require clarification:

- **Child death is divided up according to mutually exclusive causes** - The heading 'Death by Accident' refers to deaths caused by any accident, and those labelled 'Death from Health Related Reasons' was due to illness and disease. Two other issues were common in this category; Murder and Suicide. All four categories are mutually exclusive. Therefore items featuring these categories could be added up for a total count of items featuring child death.
- **Overlapping topics** - Single issues could overlap with a generic issue. For example, the mutually exclusive topics of Sex work, Domestic work and Other Hazardous Labour were also marked as Child Labour. No total count is possible between overlapping issues. In such cases, the broader category could give an idea of a total number of news items on the related topic. Other such broad issues include Education and Healthcare.
- **Qualitative Assessment:** Qualitative assessment of the data was carried out using the

following criteria and indicators⁵:

- **Authenticity of items** - The authenticity of reports, features and editorials was measured against five indicators: information gaps or inaccuracies; sweeping statements; lack of citation of evidence such as documents or direct observation; weak or vague sourcing and lastly, neglecting to consult parties that were pivotal to the story. Two other categories were used to sort news items: those with no problems with authenticity and those which were too short for a proper assessment.
- **Clarity** - The clarity of reports, features and editorials was measured against the following four indicators: inconsistency or a lack of authenticity; unanswered questions or incomplete information; unclear focus or lack of focus; and disruptions in the logical sequence of the story. Two other categories were used to indicate items that had no clarity problems and those which were too short for a proper assessment to be made.
- **Readability** - The readability of newspaper reports, features and editorials was measured against the following five indicators: use of jargon or difficult words; long and complex sentences; lack of flow; irrelevant information or repetition that made items unnecessarily lengthy; and lastly, the presence of human interest elements. Two other categories were indicated: those which had no readability problems and those which were too short for proper assessment to be made.

Human Interest - This indicator was applied to judge the readability of stories as well as to analyse qualities of pictures or images in print and broadcast news. Stories with a human interest slant portray life and human experience in a way that appeals to the reader or viewer's interest, and which creates a sense of connection and feeling of compassion. Focusing on the human interest of a story can make it much more powerful, but if not exercised carefully, this style could lend itself to making stories sappy, melodramatic, patronising or sensational. Instances of using children solely for creating sympathy could be an example of abusing human interest in stories.

- **Angle of the report** - News items were measured on a scale of negative to positive angles. Stories that dealt with negative events or issues involving children or that had negative implications for children were marked as 'negative' in angle. A positive angle denoted the opposite characteristics.
- **Tone and implication of content-matter** - A total of 24 indicators arranged in five clusters were used to assess the tone and implication of news items. The clusters were as follows: 1. Representation - this included stereotypical or negative portrayals of children; 2. Safety and Security - this included issues of protection to the child involved; 3. Impacts and Consequences - this looked into the effects of news on children, including stigma or discriminations; 4. Presentation and Style - this covered issues including violence in depiction, sexual provocation, use of stereotypical words, violation of privacy, or using children to elicit sympathy only.

⁵ In the case of newspapers, only the text items were judged for authenticity, readability and clarity. It was not possible to judge standalone pictures, i.e. pictures without any accompanying story, by these criteria.

Nearly all the indicators in clusters 1-4 are negative in both tone and implication. A single news item could have more than one characteristic. The fifth cluster contained two indicators - one marked items which had no problems, and the other marked items which were too short for a proper assessment to be made⁶.

- **The Visuals:** Photographs or images are particularly important in the context of media impacts on children. Indicators applied to judge negative graphical content included violence or gruesomeness, dead bodies, indecency, sexual provocation, and images of antisocial activities. If an item showed multiple negative features, it was marked as such, and another indicator marked the pictures which were not damaging.

One category was used to mark human interest, i.e. the portrayal of life and people in a way that appeals to human interest and compassion and that evokes a sense of personal connection. Another category singled out images that used children by creating a feeling of sympathy from the viewer - a phenomenon that could be seen as a form of exploiting the child and abusing the human interest element in reports.

Limitations of the Study

- The content monitoring component of this study focused on items featuring children or on items dealing with affairs directly involving children. Other news items were not reviewed. As such the monitoring did not take into account whether or not children's views were incorporated in stories dealing with general but pertinent policy matters.
- The study only made some very basic probes into the gender perspective of news coverage. To properly assess how gender is treated in the news and what its implications are would require a thorough and detailed qualitative study. This was not possible within the scope of the present study, which had to cover wide areas of overall ethical concerns.
- The study did not explore the contents of children's pages or of special programmes on children, as not all media have them. Besides, these pages or programmes may not include news in their content for children. The objectives of the study required it to focus exclusively on mainstream news coverage.
- The study could not monitor the primetime bulletin of *Channel-I*. Ideally, as was done for the other two channels, content analyses should monitor the primetime bulletin of the day. The assessment of Channel-I coverage of children and any comparison between the three channels may need to keep in mind this monitoring limitation.

With this overview, we can move on to the key findings from the newspaper content analysis, the TV content analysis, the twin questionnaire surveys with reporters and gatekeepers, and the children's FGDs.

⁶ These indicators for tone and implications were used to judge only the text/narration of items. Content-matter of photographs or images were assessed separately.

Key Findings: Newspapers

The main contents for analysis were the children-related news and we will deal with this first. Secondly we will analyze the news pieces that were randomly selected from the general arena of news for their capacity to have harmful impacts on children.

We will first list the basic characteristics of the child-related data and then present the key points of our analysis.

The Basics

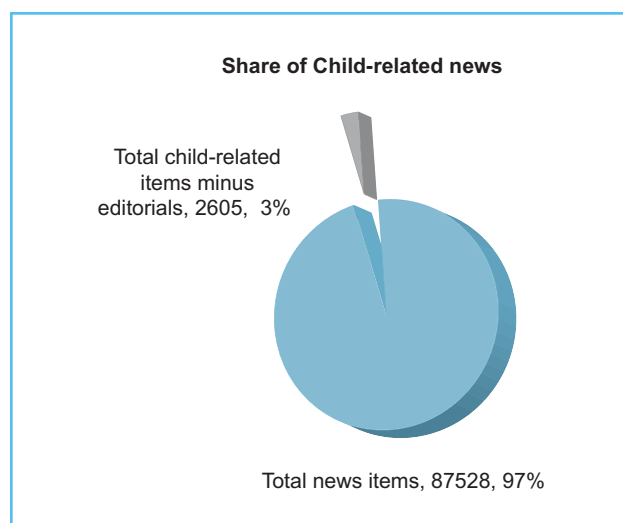
- The sampled pages of 12 national dailies over the three months⁷ yielded 2,644 items directly related to children or children's interests and affairs.
- A breakdown of the items by category is as follows: a.) *Spot* news or straight news reports on daily events (1,836); b.) Follow-up reports on the previous days' events (205); c.) In-depth or issue-discerning reports or stories, usually more lengthy, that give background and context, investigate and delve deep into the causes and consequences of events (338); d.) Features (84); e.) Standalone photographs or photographs without any accompanying report (141); and f.) Editorials (39).
- The first five of these six categories can be classified as 'news'. The sixth one, editorials, is taken as a representation of the 'views' of the newspapers. The newspapers had published 2,605 news items and 39 editorials or policy views on child-related matters during the period monitored. The total number of news stories including features was 2,464. Photographs that either accompanied stories or were standalone totalled 971.
- In all, the 12 newspapers published nearly 88,000 news items and roughly 7000 editorials over the three months monitored.⁸

⁷ June to August, 2009.

⁸ To get an idea of the proportion of children-related coverage, all items on the pages monitored were counted for the first month. This count (29,176 news items and 2,363 editorials) was then multiplied by three (months) to get an approximate number of total items on the sampled pages over the study period. Ideally, contents are measured by the spaces they occupy but for the purpose of this study a rough estimation by number was adequate. The categorisation of news indicates sufficient characteristics to assess the effective coverage volume.

Analysis

- 1. Insignificant Coverage:** Only 3 percent of all news items dealt with children, indicating a very insignificant coverage of children and issues relating to them in the leading newspapers of Bangladesh.
- 2. Editorial Neglect:** Editorials highlight the issues or events that a newspaper regards as worthy. They are normally issues that the paper seeks to put on the public agenda for debate and discussion. Children were clearly not prioritized.



In the period monitored, less than 1 percent of all editorials in the sampled newspapers addressed children.

The issues or topics these editorials highlighted were those relevant to the daily news. This suggests a general lack of planning or priority given to news stories on children and their issues. The dependency of editorial attention on daily events becomes clear when one looks at the monthly breakdown as well as the topics covered. The two most covered issues in editorials were healthcare/nutrition and education.

Share of editorials on children	
Total editorials over 3 months	7089
Editorials on Children over 3 months	39
Percentage of Editorials on children	0.55%

- 3. Monthly Coverage, SSC Results and Health-crises Biases:** Roughly 40 percent of the child-related items appeared in June. The flow dwindled to its lowest point in August, the last month for monitoring.

June followed shortly after the announcement of the SSC results. This was also the month when the controversy over Vitamin-A and WFP biscuits broke out. The SSC results and the Vitamin-A controversy generated a large number of stories and photographs. The largest number of in-depth reports, features and editorials were published in June including the stories featuring gifted students.

Major issues in healthcare items	Health care (547)	% of healthcare stories
2 paragraphs	33	6
Seminar/Roundtable/Workshop/Programme	20	4
Vitamin-A	103	19
Paracetamol Syrup	69	13
WFP Biscuit	36	7
Help/Problem for health care	121	22
Observation of Special 'Day's	12	2
Incidental	3	1

July also saw events developing around the Paracetamol crisis. This month claimed 33 percent of the child-related items, while August held a 25 percent share. The Paracetamol issue continued through to August, but faded as the month progressed. The gradually declining coverage reflected in editorials, in-depth stories and features.

Monthly Coverage					Academic Achievement / Talent	Education
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent			
June	1094	41.4	41.4	June	192	232
July	895	33.9	75.2	July	23	81
August	655	24.8	100.0	August	15	42
Total	2644	100.0				

4. Comparison between Newspapers: All but two of the Bengali newspapers were well ahead of the English ones in their frequency of covering children.

- Four of the dailies published more or less the same number of child-related items within the study period. *The Daily Ittefaq*, *Prothom Alo*, *Jugantor*, and *Naya Diganta* all had a monthly average of around 100 items. Newspapers *Samakal* and *Amar Desh*, followed with a monthly average of 86 child-related items. The monthly averages for the English dailies was roughly half of this number, with *The Daily Star* scoring higher than the *New Age* by a small margin.
- *Prothom Alo* published the highest number of in-depth stories (52). Its close competitors were *Jugantor* and *AmarDesh*, followed by *Ittefaq*. Eight of the dailies, including the English ones, published less than 30 in-depth stories each. The lowest scorers were *New Age* and *Amader Shomoy*, with only eight and five in-depth stories respectively.
- For all newspaper editorials combined, the monthly average of child-related editorials per paper is zero. *Manabjain* and *Amader Shomoy* did not publish any editorials addressing children at all, while *Ittefaq*, *AmarDesh* and *Naya Diganta* one or two. The rest published between four and six child-related editorials each, the highest numbers belonging to *Prothom Alo* and *Samakal*.

Number of Stories per Newspaper

Newspapers	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
ProthomAlo	302	11.4	11.4
Jugantor	302	11.4	22.8
Samakal	260	9.8	32.7
Ittefaq	311	11.8	44.4
Inqilab	229	8.7	53.1
NayaDiganta	302	11.4	64.5
Janakantha	207	7.8	72.4
AmarDesh	257	9.7	82.1
Manabjamin	146	5.5	87.6
AmaderShomoy	64	2.4	90.0
The Daily Star	142	5.4	95.4
New Age	122	4.6	100.0
Total	2644	100.0	

- *Prothom Alo* had the largest proportion of stories showing no problems with authenticity and clarity by a reasonably wide margin. In this category the English dailies were among the forerunners.
- The highest numbers of pictures showing violent images were in *Ittefaq* and *AmarDesh*. Following this were *Prothom Alo* and *Jugantor*. *Amar Desh* and *Inqilab* were more prone to showing images of dead bodies.
- The highest number of news items that were not problematic in tone or in implication was in *Jugantor*, followed by *Ittefaq*. All except *New Age* published names of victims or offenders in at least a few reports.
- Before judging the comparative child-friendliness of the dailies based on these statistics we must bear in mind that the comprehensive quality of coverage is a crucial determinant. Moreover, this study addressed child-related mainstream news coverage as a whole, while special pages/sections/supplements for children were excluded from study. The inclusion of these could also be a factor in comparative assessment.

5. Treatment and Effective Importance: The child-related items, although not enough in number, received moderately good treatment.

- Roughly one fourth of them made it to the front and the back pages. About half of the items was equally divided between the inner pages for national news and metropolitan city news.
- More than half of all the items had the advantageous placement in the upper folds of the

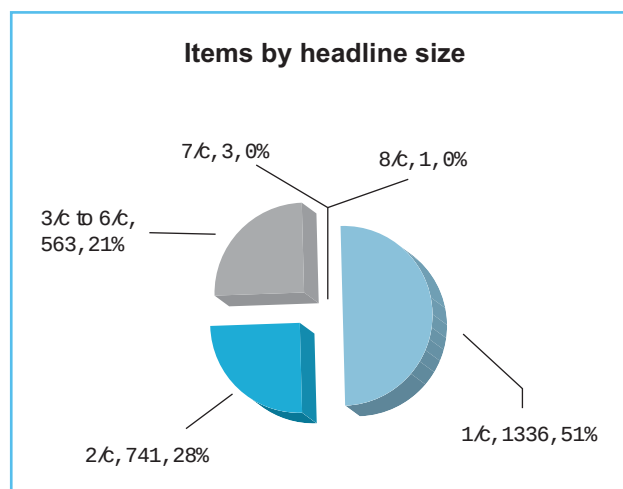
papers. About 40 percent of all items were given special treatments, mainly by running accompanying of photographs alongside them.

Placement of items by fold

	Frequency	Percent
Upper Fold	1440	54.5
Lower Fold	1204	45.5
Total	2644	100.0

- A quick look through the stories suggests that when children were involved in an event, they were usually mentioned in headlines and intros. This could be interpreted as an attempt to sell the story by playing up the human interest appeal to readers.

- There is ample evidence to suggest that newspapers see child-related stories as generally unworthy of extensive coverage. For example, half the items were brief single-column pieces. Only 14 percent of news stories merited a three-column headline and fractional or marginal percentages were given more importance than that. The prevailing trend of event-based reporting is responsible for this. The neglect of children is corroborated by the lack of editorial attention to child-related issues. This is also established by the type of news coverage.



6. Types of Reports: The print media coverage of children and their affairs appears to be short on in-depth pieces. Rather they are more likely to take the tone of record keeping.

- Three-fourths of the total reports and features were hard news stories recording deaths and murder; health problems including the trio of crises, diarrhoea and other illnesses; educational issues including the SSC results and the gifted students or other such events. The bulk of these straight news pieces did not merit more than single-column treatment. Some 21 percent of the stories were only one or two paragraphs in length. Because these stories were so minimal they neglected much relevant information. For example, reference to legal issues should have been an integral part of reports on abuse. Yet merely 29 percent of sexual abuse stories included this information.

Follow-up reports comprised less than 10 percent of the total news. Taken together, 83 percent of the stories were event-based spot reports.

- In-depth reports made up only 14 percent of the total news on children and these overwhelmingly focused on education and individual academic achievement or talent. Moreover, daily events were mostly done as one-off stories without pursuing their development over time.

This was followed by healthcare issues related to children. Further up in this section, we will be looking at the lopsided topics and some of the deficiencies in these reports. The share of features was about 3 percent. In-depth reports and features together did not make up even one-fifth of the news coverage on children.

News Items Excluding Standalone Pictures and Editorials

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Event based Spot News	1836	75	75
Follow-up Report	205	8	83
In-depth/issue-based Report	338	14	97
Feature	84	3	100
Total	2464	100	

Reportorial enterprise or proactive reporting is essential for highlighting significant issues or events and to do justice to the constituent sections of society. Proactive reporting would be manifested in the quantity and quality of in-depth and issue-based reports. It would also indicate a media institution's policy thrust.

In-depth reports and features can delve deeper into an issue or event, and focus on processes, while spot news chronicles only daily events. Spot news is very important for keeping the public up-to-date and for the purpose of keeping records, but cannot achieve what in depth coverage does. To serve public interest, spot news should lead to relevant in-depth coverage.

7. Narrow and Lopsided Range of Topics and Issues

- Children were featured in news the highest number of times when they died. Some 21 percent of the items featured death by accidents. Our researchers often came across very brief accounts of children drowning. Some 7 percent of stories reported children being murdered and 4

percent listed deaths from health-related reasons, and a tiny proportion reported suicide. In total, death was featured in 33 percent of all child-related news items.

Total Number of Items Covering Death

Death by accident	560	21
Murder	185	7
Suicide	43	2
Death due to health-related reasons	95	4
Total	883	33

As mentioned previously, child mortality is of absolute importance and should be reported on. The newspapers, which are generally most responsive to daily events, carried some 24 in-depth reports on child death. This made up about 7 percent of the in-depth stories. In addition, there were 10 editorials on the issue. However, surface reports on singular cases of child death came without enough complementary focus on the serious issues involved. Children die in great numbers for many underlying reasons, and these reasons deserve more media attention even when not directly linked to daily events. To take one example, death by accident, a leading killer of children, featured in only two editorials and 7 in-depth stories.

- Issues related to healthcare appeared in 21 percent of all child-related news items. This was followed by education, which made up 13 percent of all coverage on children. These two issues topped both the lists of in-depth stories, features and editorials. As noted above, this coverage was in large part a response to the publishing of SCC results and to the three health crises.

10-most covered Issues		Total	% of all items (2644)
1	Death by accident	560	21
2	Health care	547	21
3	Education	355	13
4	Academic achievement/talent	230	9
5	Maternal and child nutrition	225	9
6	Legal support/Aspects	188	7
7	Murder	185	7
8	Sexual abuse/harassment	126	5
9	Accident	120	5
10	Rescue and Rehabilitation	120	5

About half of the items on education related to the SSC results and about 40 percent of the healthcare items concerned the health crises. Nearly one-fourth of healthcare stories came in the form of appeals to help from individuals. As such, the bulk of these stories did not cover a diverse range of issues.

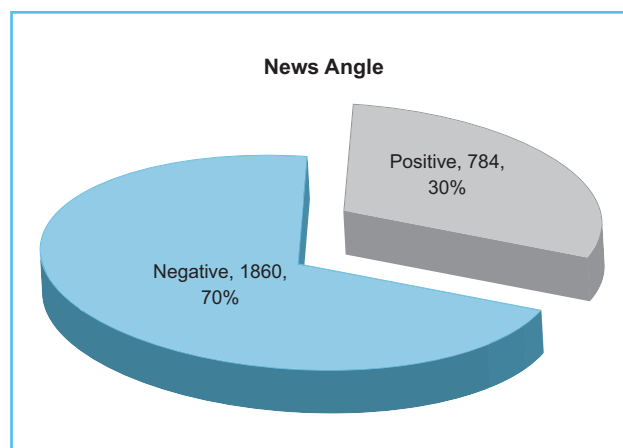
- The predominance of news concerning topics of death, healthcare and education contributed to a lopsided coverage of children-related issues. Some of the top10 issues were overlapping, which contributed to an even more unbalanced coverage.
- On a scale of 48 issues and topics, education and healthcare accounted for the vast majority of the news items. None of the other issues that were covered accounted for more than 5 percent of items. Some issues entered the news agenda in response to internationally recognized days - Father's Day, Environment Day, Tree Plantation Week, etc. A few in-depth stories resulted from this.
- In light of this, it is the issues or topics neglected by the newspapers that give cause for the most concern. A dozen issues were covered by a handful of reports, counting for not much more than zero percent of all monitored news. These included birth registration, special government institutions for children, government allocations or misuse of funds and HIV/AIDS. Thirteen issues each claimed just about 1 percent of coverage. These largely neglected issues included government policies related to children, juvenile justice, street children and other marginalised groups, and reproductive health. In other news items, children featured only incidentally, making up 9 percent of the items.

Barely 1% and zero % coverage

Issues	Frequency	% of all items
Children's associations	38	1
Police handling/Police custody/Justice	36	1
Vulnerable children-child marriage/teen mothers	35	1
Other marginalized groups	28	1
Positive others	28	1
Vulnerable children: Street	27	1
Govt. policies related to children	27	1
Psychological abuse	25	1
Vulnerable children: Domestic work	24	1
Reproductive health	22	1
Acid attacks	21	1
Shelter homes/Correction centres	19	1
Vulnerable children: Other hazardous labour	17	1
School corporal punishment	13	0
Drug abuse and peddling	13	0
Govt. special institutions for children	13	0
Child birth registration	10	0
Freedom of expression	9	0
Govt. allocations/misuse	5	0
Creativity	4	0
Vulnerable children: Sex-work	3	0
Social contribution	2	0
Incest	1	0
HIV/STDs	1	0
Innovation	0	0

8. **A Negative World:** Negative items dominated the sample. About 70 percent of the child related items were negative in nature i.e. they were bearers of bad news or contained no positive information for children. Apart from the daily chronicles of accidental death, killing, abuses, vulnerabilities, legal issues or children's conflicts with the law, the healthcare items were overwhelmingly negative stories. So too were the items featuring legal and survival issues.

A proportion of health-related items were positive stories. These included reports on seminars, health advice features and similar issues. The larger bulk of positive stories, however, concerned education and academic achievement or other talents. In fact, 70 percent of the items on education were positive in nature. This was presumably because of the SSC results and related coverage. Items on recreation, sports, and culture also claimed a considerable share of positive stories.

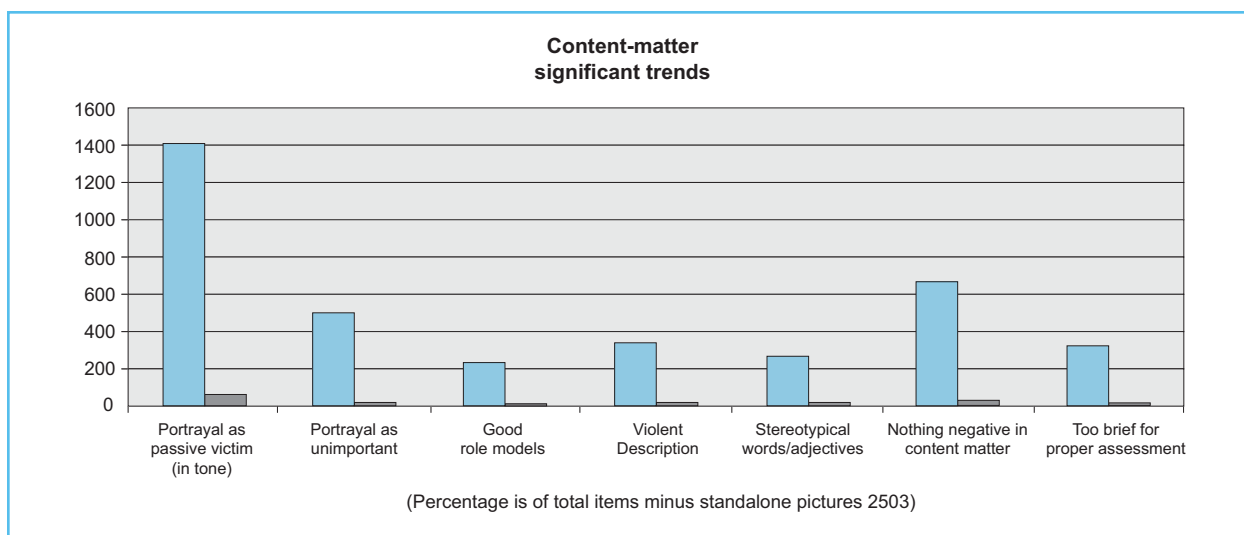


Interestingly, stories related to children and governance were mostly positive. These generally reported on various announcements or statements by dignitaries and authorities. The lopsided angles of the stories suggest that many reports do not reflecting reality in a balanced way. Some of the issues were slanted in a positive light and neglected crucial and relevant problems.

9. **Tone and Implication of content-matter:** Roughly 27 percent of the stories and editorials (2503) were unproblematic in tone or in the implications of their content-matter, while some 13 percent were too brief making a proper assessment⁹. The remaining 60 percent of stories suffered a range of problems.
- Researchers monitoring news found that 56 percent of the child-related stories portrayed children as passive victims and 20 percent portrayed or treated them as unimportant¹⁰. The next most common problems were violent depictions and stereotypical or prejudicial language and descriptions, prevalent in 13 percent and 11 percent of stories respectively. **(See Annexure-1)** A considerable proportion of stories portrayed positive role-models, but suffered from other shortcomings. The data suggests a tendency of presence of multiple problems in a single item.
 - The more alarming problems in the surveyed news stories relate to issues of safety, security, protection and privacy of children. This is especially true for children in vulnerable situations. Some 13 percent of the stories on sexual abuse disclosed the names of victims, while 33 percent contained details that identified them. This indicates a real lack of care on

⁹ These were generally one-paragraph stories, a few sketchy lines giving the very basic information about an incident.

¹⁰ Monitoring may have missed items dealing with issues subtly related to the wellbeing of children, but not featuring a child. If these were taken into account, the phenomenon of children not being heard could have been more even pervasive.



the part of reporters and editors, or confusion about what is required for real identity protection. Similarly, some 28 percent of stories on violence and other crimes named the accused child, and an equal proportion provided their detailed identification. This seems to be a common practice towards children who are on the wrong side of the law, reflecting the prejudices of news-workers and their lack of awareness about ethical and legal responsibilities. (See Annexure-1)

Items on sensitive issues showing negative elements in content-matter

Negative elements in content-matter	Sexual abuse/ harassment (126)	%	Drug abuse and peddling (13)	%	Violence and other crime (40)	%
Name of victim/accused child disclosed	16	13	0	0	11	28
Address or other identification of victim/accused child given	41	33	0	0	11	28
Photo/Image of victim/accused child shown	1	1	0	0	2	5
Stigma/blame/bad image/ negative image in portrayal of a child	6	5	1	8	4	10
Stereotypical words/adjectives used	21	17	2	15	3	8

10. A cursory glance at gender: Boys featured in more items than girls did. About one-third of the total 2644 news items dealt with boys. Girls featured in nearly one-fourth of all items. Less than one-third of the news items addressed both boys and girls, while less than one-fifth of them did not have any gender context.

Items that overwhelmingly featured girls included those on sexual and other abuses, suicide, acid attack, and the vulnerability of domestic workers. Boys were more present in items on murder, trafficking, missing persons, violence and other crimes. Gender biases, real or perceived, in portrayals of victims and offenders is rather clear to see.

Two of the areas where boys dominated are worth mentioning separately. These are stories on academic excellence or talent and healthcare appeals. Nearly 70 percent of all health-appeals were for boys. Information on these stories is usually submitted by families, and reflects their priorities for the health and wellbeing of boys. The focus on gifted boy students may reflect a similar bias. Having said this, the imbalance could also indicate that journalists are less inclined to look for girls in these matters.

11. Authenticity, Clarity and Readability: The majority of items excluding the stand-alone pictures (2503) showed no problems with regard to authenticity, clarity and readability. About 13 to 14 percent of items were too brief for proper assessment, normally one-paragraph stories containing just a few lines of sketchy information.

- Roughly 56 percent of the items seemed authentic. Some 30 percent of items had one or more problems that compromised their authenticity. The most prevalent problem was weak sources of information. The other major problem was of not covering all essential parties involved in the matter at hand. Together these problems were present in 22 percent of the news items. Authenticity is a core professional and ethical requirement and the number of stories with problems in this respect are high enough to raise much concern.
- Roughly 67 percent items presented the news clearly. Around 20 percent of them lacked clarity and most of them gave incomplete information or left questions unanswered. This lapse also needs to be addressed as a priority concern.
- Around 70 percent of the pieces were easy to read and only some 15 percent of the items were unreadable. The most common problem was that stories were cluttered with irrelevant information. On another front, very few items were rich in human interest¹¹, which indicates that news writers are missing out on a basic technique of making pieces more attractive and meaningful to readers.

¹¹ i.e. depiction of life and people that appeal to human compassion and establish connection.

12. Dissecting the In-depth: For the purpose of this study, a close look into the quality of the in-depth reports is essential.

- Nearly two-thirds of the in-depth or issue-based stories had no problems with authenticity. The remaining 35 percent of the genre suffered from problems of weak sources, followed by not covering all essential sides of an event or issue, and lastly, the tendency to make sweeping statements. A tiny proportion did not cite their sources of evidence and quite a few were simply too brief. Nearly one-fifth of the stories were incomplete.
- Only 5 percent of the in-depth stories had nothing negative in tone or content-matter. About half of the in-depth stories portrayed children as passive victims, one-fourth treated them as unimportant, and one-fourth displayed stereotypical or prejudicial sentiments. Many had multiple problems. Nearly one-fourth of these stories, also portrayed positive role-models mostly in relation to SSC results.
- Along with the inadequate volume of coverage, the lopsided range of issues that were given in-depth coverage is a serious concern. Around 40 percent of the in-depth stories covered the generic issue of education. Almost half of these focused on the SSC results and many focused on cases on individual academic achievement. The second most frequent in-depth issue covered was healthcare in which many stories focused on the three health crises. A marginal portion of these stories related to survival issues mostly related to the after-effects of a recent cyclone and tidal upsurge in the southwest of the country. A small proportions covered a handful of other issues¹².

Interestingly, in less than five percent of the in-depth stories children were mentioned incidentally, as part of a bigger picture. There was a near-absence of in-depth stories on children and governance issues.

13. News Producers: About half of all child-related items came from local i.e. district correspondents. Staff reporters, who are mostly Dhaka based, contributed to only about one-fourth of the flow. This distribution seems to indicate that central reporters neglect children's issues. A good chunk of the remaining items were reports compiled by the desk staff or sub-editors. In addition, there were items from staff photojournalists, press releases/official handouts, feature writers, foreign correspondents and news agencies.

- Local correspondents were the key source of in-depth stories as well. Close to 60 percent of the in-depth stories came from them.
- Inadequacies of authenticity, clarity and readability were found more in often stories by local correspondents.

¹² These comprised issues such as sexual abuse, child labour, drug abuse, rescue and rehabilitation and disability.

Authenticity, clarity, readability and item producers

Authenticity:

% of items by staff correspondents with no authenticity problems	69
% of items by staff correspondents with weak sources	10
% of items by local correspondents with no authenticity problems	46
% of items by staff correspondents with weak sources	19

Clarity:

% of items by staff correspondents with no clarity problems	77
% of items by staff correspondents with Unanswered Questions	16
% of items by local correspondents with no clarity problems	60
% of items by local correspondents with Unanswered Questions	21

Readability:

% of items by staff correspondents with no readability problems	79
% of items by local correspondents with no readability problem	69
% of items by local correspondents with irrelevant information	8
% of items by local correspondents too short for assessment	16

- The inadequacies found in the stories from local correspondents also indicate weaknesses of the copy editors or sub-editors at the district-news desks.

14. What Pictures Tell: Photographs or graphics call for extra care since they have a greater capacity to affect children directly or cause them lasting harm. The sampled items included a total of 971 images, which depicted or concerned children. The overwhelming majority of them accompanied news pieces.

One fourth of these pictures did not contain any negative elements. Nearly half of the pictures had human-interest elements, while another significant chunk seemed to show children solely to evoke sympathy. The major news events of the period - the SSC results, the three health crises, survival in the aftermath of a cyclone - all provided ample scope for pictures rich in human interest or for using children solely to elicit sympathy from viewers. The latter practice is not ethical and could be seen as media exploitation. Human interest photos may also be damaging if not handled carefully. They could inadvertently cause a child harm or stress, especially in situations of grief, distress and suffering. Photographs could compromise a child's privacy or put them at direct risk, just as the few photographs of victims and youthful offenders published over the study period did.

These aside, about 10 percent of the pictures had decidedly negative elements. They showed gruesome, violent or traumatic images, dead bodies, antisocial activities, and indecent images or had multiple negative elements.

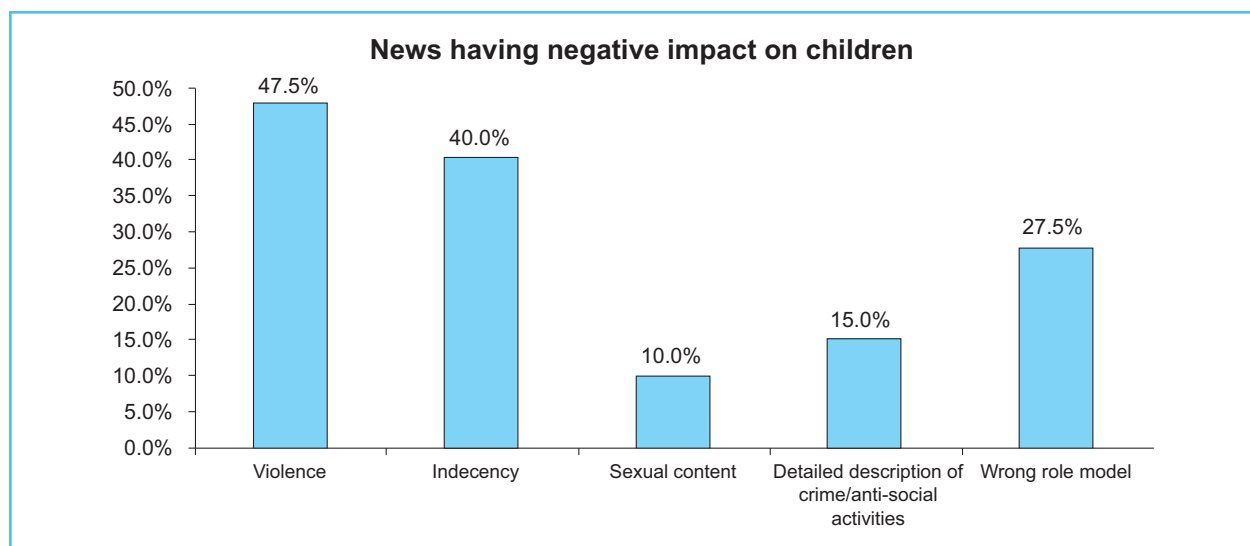
The total number of these negative photographs came to 86 which accounts for more than two pictures per newspaper per month. Even one such image is enough to do the damage. The trend is persistent and present whenever there is a convenient event. **(See Annexure-1)** The situation is especially concerning and dismal when one examines the pictures included in the general arena of news that might affect children negatively.

Note: Please see additional tables in Annexure-2.

General Contents Having Negative Impacts on Children

A random analysis of the sampled newspapers over the three months identified 40 reports, features and photographs in the general news that could have serious negative influences or impacts on children:

- **Classification of Items:** A little more than half of these items were spot news pieces or accounts of daily events. Nearly one-fourth were in-depth items. The rest were features and standalone photographs. Almost all of these 40 items told negative stories.
- **Negative Elements:** As is shown in the graph below, some of these items had multiple negative elements. Nearly half of them depicted violence. Some 40 percent were marked by indecency, while 28 percent of the items presented wrong role-models for children. Detailed descriptions of crime or anti-social activities and sexually provocative contents were two other areas of negative influence, marking 15 percent and 10 percent of the items



respectively.

- **Negative Pictures:** About 90 percent of the items featured photographs and almost all of them showed negative images. The bulk of the photographs - a little less than half of them - showed dead bodies. About one-fifth showed drug consumption and other antisocial activities. A similar proportion showed violent and traumatic images or indecent images. A

considerable proportion showed sexually provocative images and a marginal proportion contained multiple negative contents.

- **Glaring Presence:** The bulk of the problematic photos were in full display on front pages and a good number were on the back pages - together covering nearly two-thirds of the items. Thus most of these images would have jumped at any child who accessed the papers even momentarily.
- **Fixing Responsibility:** The overwhelming bulk of these items were produced by the staff reporters or staff photographers and local correspondents. The final responsibility lies with the gatekeepers or the editing staff at the news-desk.
- **Newspapers:** The highest numbers of these disturbing images were in *Manabzamin* and *Amar Desh*. Closely followed *Jugantor* and *The Daily Janakantha*.

Graphics Content matter

	Frequency	Percent
Violent/traumatic images	3	8.33%
Dead bodies	16	44.44%
Indecent images	3	8.33%
Sexually provocative images	4	11.11%
Anti-social activities	7	19.44%
Negative Multiple Content	1	2.78%
No Negative Elements	1	2.78%
Human interest	1	2.78%
Total	36	100.00%
Missing	4	

Note: Please see additional tables in Annexure-3.

Key Findings: Electronic Media

Only child-related news items in the bulletins were monitored. We will first list the basic characteristics of the data and then present the key points of our analysis.

The Basics

- The evening news bulletins of the three television channels over the three-month monitoring period¹³ yielded 127 items directly related to children or children's interests and affairs. Compared to the newspapers, the sample was very small.
- A breakdown of the items by category is as follows: a.) *Spot* news or straight news reports on day's events (98); b.) Follow-up reports on the previous days' events (11); c.) In-depth or issue-discerning reports i.e. stories that provide background and contexts, goes deep into the causes and consequences of events (17); d.) Feature (1). The combined airtime of these items was 157 minutes.

¹³ June-August, 2009

¹⁴ The three bulletins of all three channels were timed excluding the advertisement breaks for one month. This count was then multiplied by three to get an approximate duration of all news items totalled over three months.

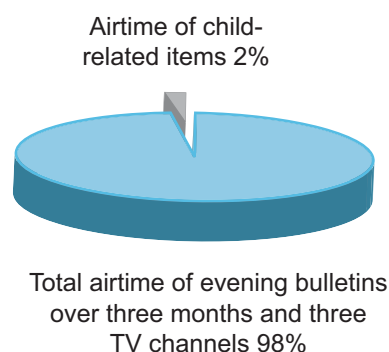
- Calculated on the basis of one month's bulletin, the total airtime of the scrutinised bulletins of three channels over the three months comes to 6,750 minutes.¹⁴
- Unlike newspapers there is no spot item on TV news bulletins representing editorial views. Other TV programmes that could reflect such views were not within the purview of this study.

Two General Observations

- The television bulletins carried mostly short daily-news stories, often too brief for researchers to register any trade. Short and containing only basic information, the stories monitored seemed to have fewer problems with content-matter. This is not to say that ethical problems including sensationalism do not pervade Television news, but only that we did not come across this much in our short study period. However, a few samples selected from beyond the study period raised serious ethical concerns.

Unlike in the newspaper monitoring, no general news stories were identified for a more in-depth examination of their potential impacts on children. One thing common to the TV news in Bangladesh is the practice of showing dead bodies in stories of accidents or disasters. In fact as observed in our general overview of findings, compared to newspapers, TV seemed to have more shortcomings in a number of ethical requirements. Perhaps a wider scope of study would be necessary to fully assess the ethical standards of TV stories.

Share of Child-related items



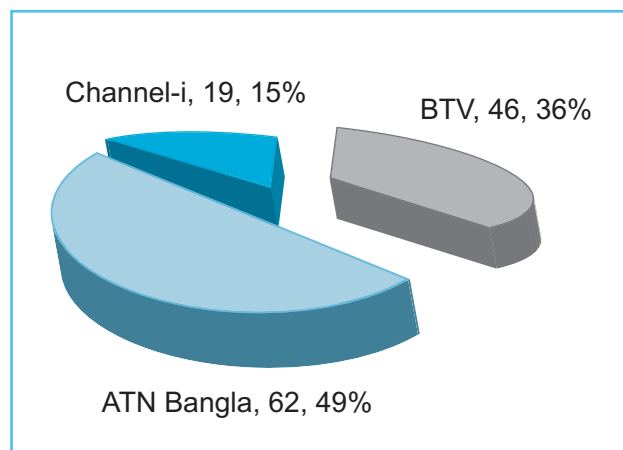
Analysis

- 1. Insignificant Coverage:** Only 2 percent of bulletin airtime dealt with children, indicating a very insignificant coverage of child-related issues in three leading of the television channels of Bangladesh. Because of the short airtime devoted to TV bulletins, the absolute number of child-related stories here is very small as well.
- 2. Monthly Coverage, Short-lived Events, and Competing Interests:** In TV, events and issues die quickly. The competition for space is also a driving force during primetime bulletins. Unlike newspapers, the SSC results in late May were old news on TV evening news by early June. In June the Vitamin-A crisis generated some reports. The announcement of the annual national budget competed with this for airspace, and, did not contain any content on children.

The coverage peaked in July, the month of the Paracetamol crisis, with 53 child-related stories in total. June had 45 stories and by August the coverage had dwindled to 29 stories. July saw the highest number of stories on education as well. No trend is apparent in TV primetime coverage on children, which is almost exclusively dictated by daily breaking news and events.

3. Comparison between Channels:

- *ATN Bangla* showed a, while *BTV* delivered better quality in some respects.
- *ATN Bangla* aired the highest number of children-related stories, followed by *BTV* at a considerable distance. The monthly averages for these two channels were 21 and 15 stories respectively. In contrast *Channel-I* carried on an average only six child-related stories per month.¹⁵



- *ATN Bangla* was a leader in in-depth coverage as well, with double the number of stories than *BTV*. Child-related stories in *Channel-I*'s short late evening bulletin came nowhere near this. *ATN Bangla* also seemed to air more long pieces.
- The content monitor found *BTV* performing better by a wide margin with regards to the proportion of items showing no problems in tone or in implications of content-matter. *Channel-I* came last. But the rating varied with other indicators. For example, the largest proportion of items portraying good role-models was on *ATN Bangla*, while the smallest proportion of items portraying children as unimportant was on *Channel-I*.
- Authenticity problems were less common with *Channel-I* stories. Both *ATN* and *Channel-I* did better on indicators of clarity than did *BTV*.
- The largest proportion of items with images showing no negative elements was on *BTV*; not far behind was *ATN*; *Channel-I* had a considerably smaller percentage of safe pictures.
- As noted earlier about newspapers, statistics alone cannot judge the child-friendliness of a channel conclusively. This data is more equipped to provide a general assessment of the child-related news coverage on television.

In-depth items by channels

TV Channels	In-depth/Issue based report	%
BTV	5	29
ATN Bangla	10	59
Channel-I	2	12
Total	17	100

¹⁵ Calculation of the entire bulletins over one month suggests *Channel-I* had the shortest time in total. One should bear in mind that this was not the channel's primetime bulletin and had a shorter span. The primetime bulletin of *ATN Bangla* had the longest stretch of time, far higher than that of *BTV*. Item durations by time slots indicate that *BTV* might have been devoting nearly the same percentage of the total primetime as *ATN Bangla* to child-related items.

4. Treatment and Effective Importance: The child-related items that TV covered received fairly good treatment.

- A bulletin was divided into three segments or timeslots in order to gauge the importance given to news items according to their placement in the news hour.

Some 42 percent of child-related stories were placed in the first segments of the bulletins.

When in the news?

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1st Segment	53	41.7	41.7
2nd Segment	33	26.0	67.7
3rd Segment	41	32.3	100.0
Total	127	100.0	

- The first and the second segments together accommodated a little over two-thirds of the reports. In other words, nearly one-third of the children-related reports were placed in the third or the last segment of the news bulletins, which is the slot most likely to be missed by viewers.
- In terms of general treatment, nearly all the items were allotted relatively good coverage. Close to 40 percent of the stories were packages. The largest section, roughly 60 percent of the reports were so called ‘out of vision’ pieces, comprised of rolling footage shown while the anchor narrated the story.

Treatment of News	TV Channels			
	BTV	ATN Bangla	Channel i	Total treatment
In-Vision (IV)	3		2	5
Out-of-Vision (OOV)	31	32	12	75
Package (Pkg)	12	30	5	47
Total items per channel	46	62	19	127

- Nearly half of the child-related stories were given special treatment and some stories featured multiple special treatments. These could include the use of graphics, sync, live phonos, vox-pops, studio discussions, special stings and scrolls.

Despite this, child-related stories could not gain much importance effectively. Items on TV bulletins are expected to be short. To make their presence felt, the number of child-related stories would need to be increased. Additionally, TV channels would need to come up with more in-depth pieces.

- About 60 percent of the news items featuring children were only one minute in duration or less. The bulk of the remaining stories were between 1-3 minutes, and only a few ranged between 3-5 minutes. One item was nearly six minutes long, which is very lengthy for a bulletin. Most of the news items longer than one minute were ‘packages’; more in-depth or feature type items. However, the majority of these packages did not adhere to this definition.

The longest piece, which ran on *Channel-I*, was about the vitamin-A crisis, which basically consider of a group of stories to follow up the ongoing issue.

5. The Same Old Story: The trends in TV coverage and the ethical concerns about them are rather similar to those we have identified in newspapers. As follows:

- More than three-fourths of the reports related to children were spot news on the day's events. Follow-up reports comprised less than 10 percent of the news pie.
- In-depth and issue-discerning reports claimed only 13 percent of the child-related news. These stories also had quite a few problems which will be discussed in further detail below. Only one piece could be classified as a feature.

- The monitoring indicates that even the selection of child-related events favoured those which were obvious or, those which were easy to access. Just over half

Type of items	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Event based Spot news	98	77	77
Follow-up report	11	9	86
In-depth/Issue based report	17	13	99
Feature	1	1	100
Total	127	100	

of the stories were on seminars/ roundtables/ workshops or different programmes. The content monitor observed that most of these programmes were attended by dignitaries such as ministers or prominent figures. The coverage of these events consisted of very basic facts about the programmes and the statements of the dignitaries.

- The impression of the monitor was that children received very limited coverage on TV news. Even the channel with the most child-related news, *ATN Bangla*, only aired an average of one children-related story per day. Considering the constraints of primetime bulletins, children will not get proper coverage without a conscious and decisive effort on the part of the channels. Special programmes are needed to give space for longer and more in-depth coverage of children's issues, but primetime bulletins need to be made more accommodating nonetheless. The coverage trend is even more discouraging when one examines the narrow range of issues and topics dealt with.

6. Very Narrow, Very Lopsided: The range of issues covered by the television news stories was even narrower and more lopsided than that of newspapers. That in itself is a serious ethical concern.

- As many as 20 topics or issues out of the list of 48 indicators received no coverage at all on TV. These included sexual and psychological abuse, trafficking, acid attacks, suicide, and various vulnerabilities that affect children including disability, street children, hazardous child labour, and government allocations or misuse of it. Some issues that are of crucial relevance received only very marginal coverage, such as physical abuse, murder, survival struggles or birth registration. As the newspaper coverage shows, accidental death of children is a very common problem, but TV news largely ignored this topic.
- The topic claiming the most attention and featuring in the highest number of TV stories over the monitoring period was education. The next most-focused on issue was healthcare. Healthcare stories were closely followed by stories on recreation/sports/culture. The stories on education and recreation were largely reports covering seminars or other programmes, and not the in-depth proactive reporting that has the most impact. Healthcare stories became more prominent when the Vitamin-A and Paracetamol syrup crises unfolded, and thus nutrition got some coverage as an issue.
- The predominance of these three generic issues, which cumulatively claimed a little over three-fourths of the stories, contributed to a very lopsided news coverage. Television agencies in Bangladesh must broaden their news agenda with respect to children and also minimize the extent to which they cover the programmes and seminars of high profile citizens in order to make way for more substantial and proactive news.

Top ten issues/topics covered

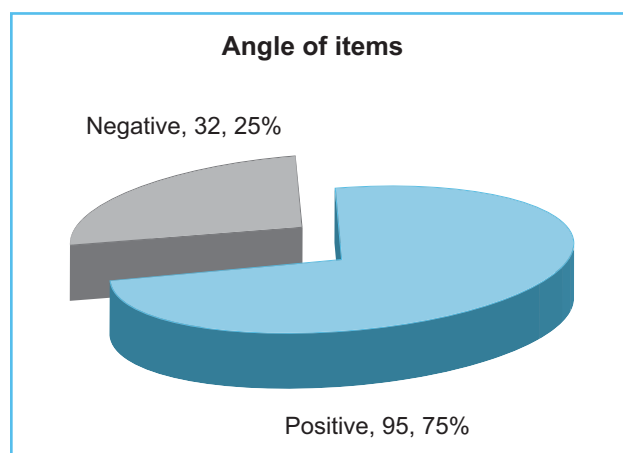
		Frequency	% of all items=127
1	Education	38	30
2	Health care	25	20
3	Recreation/sports/culture	23	18
4	Announcements by govt./ state dignitaries	20	16
5	Nutrition-mother and child	10	8
6	Violence and other crime	7	6
7	Rescue/Rehabilitation	6	5
8	Lifestyle	6	5
9	Death by accident	5	4
10	Educational achievement/Talent	5	4

Barely 1% and zero coverage

	Frequency	% of all items=127
Physical abuse	1	1
Murder	1	1
Vulnerable children: Domestic work	1	1
Accident	1	1
Death from health-related reasons	1	1
Reproductive health	1	1
Child birth registration	1	1
Survival	1	1
Social contribution	1	1
Sexual abuse/harassment	0	0
Incest	0	0
Trafficking	0	0
Psychological abuse	0	0
School corporal punishment	0	0
Acid attacks	0	0
Suicide	0	0
Vulnerable children: Street	0	0
Vulnerable children: Sex-work	0	0
Vulnerable children: Other hazardous labor	0	0
Vulnerable children-child marriage/teen mothers	0	0
Other marginalized groups	0	0
Missing	0	0
Drug abuse and peddling	0	0
HIV/STDs	0	0
Freedom of expression	0	0
Legal support/Aspects	0	0
Govt. allocations/misuse	0	0
Govt. special institutions for children	0	0
Innovation	0	0
*29 issues/topics are 1% or less		

7. **A Positive World:** One characteristic completely opposite to the trend of newspapers stories concerned the angle of reports. In contrast to newspaper items, three-fourths of the TV reports were positively slanted. Education, recreation, children and governance or juvenile-justice stories were mostly positive stories. The bulk of the negative stories were on healthcare and a smattering of others on issues like death by accidents, children in conflict with the law and rescue and rehabilitation.

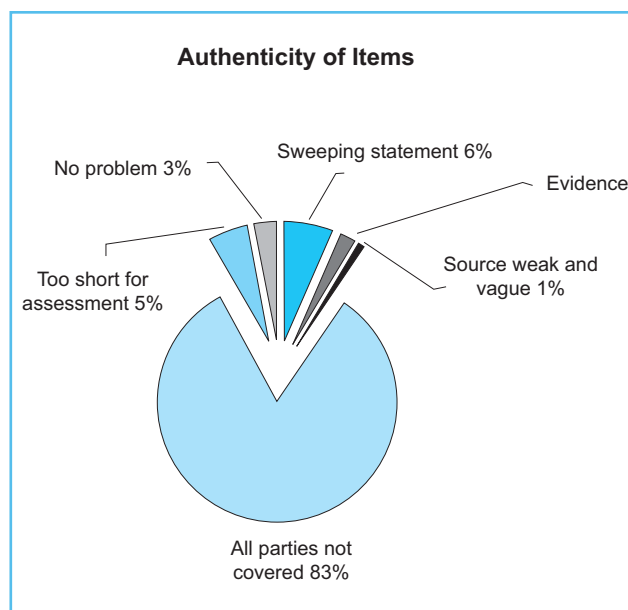
The issues and topics covered by TV coupled with its extensive coverage of programmes and other events are largely responsible for so much positive coverage. Overwhelmingly positive reports lend themselves to a skewed view of the situation of children in Bangladesh.



8. **Poor Authenticity and Clarity:** Compared to newspapers, TV stories had greater problems with authenticity and clarity.

- Only four stories, accounting for just 3 percent of all child-related reports, had no problems with authenticity. Almost 5 percent were too short for a proper assessment to be made. The remaining 92 percent had one or multiple shortcomings. The biggest problem was that reporters were not consulting some of the essential subjects of the report, and not giving all sides of the story.

Only two stories - 2 percent of all child-related items - had no problems with clarity. Another 13 percent were too brief for proper assessment. The remaining 84 percent had one or more problems. More than half of all the stories lacked focus while one-fourth contained inconsistent information. As a way to judge the clarity of TV items, monitors reviewed stories with an eye for human interest contents and style. Barely two stories were considered to contain this element.



9. Concerns about Tone and Implication: About 30 percent of all child-related news items (127) had no problem with the tone or implications of their content-matter. More than half of the stories were too brief for a proper assessment. Less than one-fifth of the total stories exhibited varying degrees and types of problems.

- The most prevalent problem was the portrayal or treatment of children as unimportant. This pervaded nearly 40 percent of the child-related stories¹⁶. Most commonly, these reports did not seek the views or perspectives of children involved in a news story. For example, *ATN Bangla* ran a series of reports on day-care centres, but the stories focused exclusively on the mothers' situations.
- The next two most prevalent problems were the portrayal of children as passive victims and the depiction of violence, which were prominent in 13 percent and 12 percent of the stories respectively. A marginal proportion contained stereotypical or prejudicial elements.
- Close to one-third of the stories depicted good role-models, but these often exhibited problems in other areas.
- TV did not cover sexual violence stories. The stories on children in conflict with the law, which were few in number, did not identify the offender. This is positive, and in part it is related to the fact that most of the TV reports were too brief to say much, whether good or bad. It should be noted that in a random review of cases (presented in Annexure-1) there are some serious deviations from this general trend, especially in cases of reports on children in conflict with the law.

Content-matter: Pictures

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Violent/Traumatic images	7	5.6	5.6
Dead bodies	2	1.6	7.3
Violation of privacy	1	.8	8.1
Indecent images	2	1.6	9.7
Sexually provocative images	1	.8	10.5
Negative multiple content	4	3.2	13.7
No negative elements	97	78.2	91.9
Human interest	5	4.0	96.0
Using children for sympathy evoking only	5	4.0	100.0
Total	124	100.0	
Missing System	3		
Total	127		

¹⁶ Monitoring may have missed items dealing with issues subtly related to the wellbeing of children, but not featuring a child or showing any obvious link. If these were taken into account, the phenomenon of children not being heard could have been more pervasive.

10. Dissecting the In-depth: For the purpose of this study, a close look into the quality of the in-depth reports is in order. They exhibited a number of problems.

- The authenticity of twelve out of the 17 in-depth stories was questionable. The main issue of concern, which marked all but one of these twelve stories, was the tendency to neglect one or more pertinent sources for an event or issue.
- Fifteen out of the 17 in-depth stories lacked clarity, the equivalent of 90 percent of this genre. Ten of the stories were unfocused, while five gave inconsistent information.
- Only three of the in-depth stories did not have any problem in the tone or in the implications of their content-matter, and one story seemed too brief for proper assessment. The remaining 13 stories, roughly three-fourths of the genre had one or another shortcoming, such as the portrayal of children as passive victims or as unimportant, containing violent descriptions or stereotypical and prejudicial elements.
- The main concerns however are the small number of the in-depth stories and their narrow range of issues they cover. Lifestyle (the series on day-care centres), education and healthcare are the three most covered issues. The issues left out of the in-depth agenda should be regarded as a major concern. Particularly worrying is the dearth of in-depth reporting on children and governance issues.

11. The News Producers: Unlike newspapers, the overwhelming number of reports were filed by the Dhaka-based staff reporters. They were shown as contributed 86 percent of the child-related news. Only about 13 percent of the stories were credited to regionally based correspondents. Only one report was credited to the desk.

- The in-depth reports were mostly credited to staff reporters.
- Authenticity and clarity problems were common in stories from each group, with the local correspondents somewhat more prone to this. The most prevalent problem for both the groups was to not cover all involved parties. All stories from the local correspondents had some clarity issues with the most prevalent problem being inconsistent information, Staff reporters had the most difficulty with keeping their pieces focused.
- A higher percentage of stories by local correspondents showed images of violence, though such stories from the staff reporters were greater in number.
- The only report credited to the news desk had problems on all counts - it was not properly sourced, it provided incomplete information, and its visuals had multiple negative contents. The output producers at the central news desk play an important role in compiling and then editing the footage as well as preparing the scripts of reports sent by local correspondents. In order to achieve ethical reporting, their training is equally important.

12. Positive Images: The visual nature of TV makes it a particularly sensitive area of the media when it comes to children. Extra vigilance is required in television because visual imagery has the capacity to affect children directly, and may have immediate and lasting impacts.

As noted above, many of the child-related stories on television were positive and in accordance with this, they contained very few negative images. Nearly 80 percent of them contained no potentially harmful footage.

About four percent of the stories featured human interest elements and another percent presented children in a manner that seemed to be solely intended to elicit sympathy from viewers. We have already discussed the issues of care and concern in both these respects in the discussion on newspaper pictures.

Just under 15 percent of stories had decidedly negative elements. These included violent or traumatic images, dead bodies and indecent images. Some contained multiple negative elements. As we have already observed, all it takes is just one such image to do serious and lasting damage. Randomly selected cases show that news footage could be especially harmful and prejudicial when the media saw an opportunity for sensationalism. (See Annexure-1)

13. A Cursory Glance at Gender: TV news on children remained more or less gender-neutral, meaning the issues they covered did not involve any aspect of gender as such. Nearly 50 percent of the items addressed both boys and girls, while nearly 40 percent did not have any gender context.

Interestingly, the only story portraying children in a sexual light was about boys. Most of the stories on education, sports/recreation and academic achievement or talent addressed male and female genders both. The few gender-focused stories on these issues, however, focused on

girls. If these trends were found to be significant in a larger number of stories, one could almost say that the TV news is largely free from gender stereotyping.

Gender of child/children involved

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	9	7.1	7.1
Female	8	6.3	13.4
Both	61	48.0	61.4
Not applicable	49	38.6	100.0
Total	127	100.0	

Note: Please see additional tables in Annexure-4.

Key Findings: Questionnaire Survey

The survey of two groups of news-workers, gatekeepers and reporters, used two similar but appropriately adjusted sets of questions. These questionnaires were based in part on a set of ethical requirements for reporting on and for children, discussed in the first part of this paper. The survey was also designed to explore whether safeguards such as a code of conduct or mentoring existed in the country's media. Besides this, the surveys asked respondents to assess what their own perceived training needs were.

The twin questionnaire surveys give comparative pictures of how reporters and gatekeepers look at the issue of covering children and show their approaches to relevant ethical concerns. It should be noted that some of their positive responses do not correspond with the findings of the content analyses, indicating a gap between perceptions and practices. On the other hand, the survey responses also validated many of the research findings when respondents highlighted issues that they themselves acknowledged. The responses also reveal a number of misconceptions and misunderstandings.

Of Codes and Misconceptions

Out of the 80 reporters surveyed, 30 said their institutions had formal codes of conduct. This accounts for a substantial 39 percent of all media institutions covered by the survey. Five gatekeepers out of the 15 surveyed claimed that their offices had established ethical codes. They represented five media institutions.

In a follow-up with the editorial managers of these institutions, the study team found that at best only four institutions actually had a formal code. These include the state-run Bangladesh Television, which has a set of guidelines provided by the regulatory authority of the government. This is not actually what is defined here as a real code of ethics. The daily *Naya Diganta* gave the team a list of four editorial principles, which briefly lists some very basic ethical norms for professionals. The English daily *New Age* confirmed having a code but the study team never managed to get hold of a copy. Only one institution, the Bangla daily *Prothom Alo*, could produce a full-fledged code of ethics.

The misconception of the respondents suggests that many media staff have only a hazy grasp of what a code of ethics actually is and what it should look like. Eighteen percent of the reporters surveyed responded honestly that they did not know if such codes existed for their institutions.

Less than one-third of the reporters and the gatekeepers went further to said that their codes contained special guidelines or that they had separate guidelines for covering children. The study team did not find any evidence of this in follow-ups. The majority of both the groups did however confirm the absence of child-related policies or reported being unaware of any. So much for codes!

Analysis

The respondents demonstrated a fair extent of knowledge or awareness of the ethical considerations that should be applied to reporting on children. They were quite frank to admit any gap in knowledge. They also claimed giving importance to children in their work.

1. Almost all the reporters claimed to do special reports on child rights-issues or on issues concerning children's interests. About two-thirds of the gatekeepers said their institutions often published such reports. One gatekeeper however said that their institution did not accommodate any child-related news.

They were asked to mention the issues they and their news outlets cover the most. Aside from education and health, their perceptions or claims did not match the findings of the media content analyses. For example, almost all of the gatekeepers and nearly two-thirds of the reporters thought that they mostly covered incidents of physical, psychological and sexual abuse against children. The content analyses showed negligible coverage of these incidents. To give another example, close to half of the reporters and two-thirds of the gatekeepers thought that they frequently covered stories on child death. Child-deaths was in fact the most frequently covered child-related issue in newspapers, whereas TV stations largely ignored it.

The gatekeepers were additionally asked¹⁷ to list children's issues that they considered reportable. They mentioned basic child-rights issues, street children, child labour, juvenile justice, child abuse, kidnapping, science news and children's creativity. Again, in reality they were not covering these issues much.

2. All of the gatekeepers and most of the reporters said they were aware of the potentially negative effects of news reports on children.

In terms of prioritising issues that may negatively affect children, all the editors and nearly all the reporters agreed that sexually provocative materials were bad. The gatekeepers were also unanimous on the potential of gruesome photographs and images of dead bodies to cause harm. All but one-fifth of the reporters regarded this as a problem.

On the other hand, less than two-thirds of gatekeepers identified detailed descriptions of crime or antisocial activities as a potential negative influence on child viewers. A considerably higher proportion of reporters, however, believed this to be a problem. Less than two-thirds of the reporters and the gatekeepers identified bad role-models as a negative influence.

A small proportion of reporters added that advertising and consumer culture, news of psychological torture, religious dogma, misinformation, superstitions, and the use of incorrect language to the list of negative impact issues. The gatekeepers didn't stray from the checklist given in the questionnaire.

¹⁷ This question was only for gatekeepers.

The responses show that the obvious issues - sex and violence - are accepted as harmful negative influences. This was inconsistent with the content analyses which showed that materials depicting violence in particular were not being avoided.

3. Nearly all of the gatekeepers said they provided guidelines and advice to the reporters working under them, especially if a child was involved in a news event. When probed further, they listed the following types of advice being given:

Not to disclose the identities of victims of rape and other similar abuse; to exert care and caution in sensitive cases; to be sensitive and consider carefully the potential family or community level consequences; to exercise care in handling cases of children in conflict with the law and to make sure to investigate whether adults may be responsible for the child's behaviour; to take extra care if the incident had legal implications; to avoid including information that might have negative impacts on a child; to be conscious of child-rights; and to highlight positive news on children.

A cross check with reporters yielded mixed results. Some denied having ever received any special instruction, while others supported the responses of the gatekeepers. Some of the reporters extended the gatekeepers' list and mentioned receiving advice to safeguard the interests of the child and to always seek the truth.

The above responses may be usefully compared with those on the topic of decision-making, listed below.

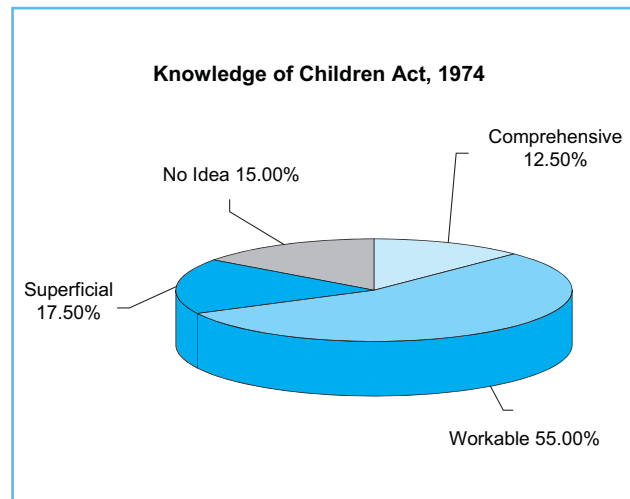
- Respondents were more willing to protect the identity of a victim than that of an offender. About half the reporters and two-thirds of the gatekeepers said they would protect the identity of a child victim of crime or sexual and other abuses unconditionally. A few reporters said they would disclose the identity. The rest of the reporters and gatekeepers would consider the matter after weighing the interests of the child involved.
- In the case of a child offender, about two-thirds of the reporters would consider the matter of identity disclosure after weighing the interests of that child. A good number - about 10 percent - felt that the identity should be disclosed. The rest, barely one-fourth of the reporters' said they would under no circumstances identify children who are in conflict with the law. The responses of the gatekeepers were similar.

This inclination to expose offenders is linked to the habit of labelling a child or an adolescent as a criminal or convict. More than half of the respondents in both groups said they would do this. Paradoxically, the majority of gatekeepers said they would view such a child as a victim of circumstances.¹⁸

Not surprisingly, the findings of the content analyses revealed that significant proportions of news items have failed to provide identity protection to both victims and offenders.

¹⁸ This question was only for gatekeepers.

4. Responses about juvenile offenders also exposed the ignorance of journalists and gatekeepers about legal frameworks. Very few gatekeepers and reporters - a mere 13 percent of each group - said that they had any comprehensive knowledge about the Children Act, 1974. The large majority in both the groups said they had workable knowledge of the law. Sizable groups said they had superficial ideas, while some 15 percent of the reporters said they knew nothing about it. The content analyses findings have also reflected a lack of knowledge.



5. The gatekeepers did not mention providing any guidelines or advice on respecting the privacy of children but reporters seemed to be fairly aware of this requirement. Not surprisingly, inconsistencies are apparent:
- Nearly 90 percent of respondents said that they secured the informed consent of the child and/or the guardian before talking to a child. About 20 percent of the reporters, however, did not obtain permission before photographing a child.
 - On disclosing personal information about a child, two-thirds of the reporters said they would consider privacy aspects and any probable risk for the child.¹⁹ The content analyses, however, found a considerable breach of this pledge.
6. Reporters also seemed to be fairly aware of the vulnerability of children and the need to deal with them sensitively:
- Only 3 percent of them said they would continue questioning a distressed child even if it caused further stress.
 - Nearly three-fourths of respondents said they would be careful not to jeopardise the safety or wellbeing of children while crosschecking the information provided by them. Almost a quarter said they would verify the information without considering any impact on the child and a small percentage said they would use the information without verifying it.²⁰

¹⁹ These two questions were only for reporters.

²⁰ This question was only for reporters.

7. Responses varied on questions posed about reporters' sense of responsibility. Some 32 percent of the reporters said that they had communicated with a child after a report was published to find out about any negative effects the report may have had. About 43 percent said that they did this sometimes, while the rest of the reporters, 25 percent, said that they never followed up with children after a story.

Gatekeepers said that if they sensed any probable harm to the child, they protected her/his identity, sought assistance from the administration or the NGOs involved and made sure that follow-up reports were done.

8. Children were largely disregarded as valid sources of information or opinion. Only a third of the reporters said they would seek the views of children when assessing the impacts of relevant government policies or major events on them.²¹

Nearly 70 percent of the reporters and 60 percent of the gatekeepers, however, said it was necessary to include the views of children in reports on child-related issues or events. The remainder felt that it was not necessary in all such reports. Again, as the content analyses showed, in practice children's views were often neglected in reports concerning them.

9. Almost all the respondents acknowledged that the media sometimes stereotypes children. Most respondents thought that the media portrays children as victims of crimes and abuses. About 67 percent of gatekeepers and 56 percent of reporters said that the media tend to showcase the 'gifted child' image in stories on academic achievement. Considerable proportions of both the groups thought that the media was prone to portraying children as 'innocent' and 'delicate'. Reporters and gatekeepers also acknowledged other stereotypical portrayals including those of troublemakers and those prone to crime or drug abuse. These responses more or less match the content analyses findings.
10. Nearly 90 percent of the gatekeepers said that their staff had received training on journalism ethics and morality. About 80 percent of the reporters confirmed receiving such training but noted that the training did not include specific guidelines about children. Respondents from both the groups specified areas that they wanted a child-focused ethics training to cover. These self-assessed training needs will feature in the recommendations of the study.

Note: Please see additional tables in Annexure-5.

²¹ This question was only for reporters.

Twin FGDs: Children Speak

Two groups of children aged 12 to 17 participated in FGDs aimed at outlining key expectations of children from the news media. One group was from middle-income families and another from a shelter home for street children. Interestingly, the groups expressed rather similar views of what issues were important to them. The two groups also specified special needs or preferences in accordance with their different circumstances and life experiences.

Participants in both the groups said they regularly read newspapers and watched television, especially the news on events that concern children. Their common expectations from the media were:

- More coverage of children's issues.
- Continuous, complete and in-depth coverage, i.e. reporting that follows through the developments of important events or issues and makes them more understandable.
- Sensitive handling of children and their concerns in news reports featuring them.
- A special page allotted to children in every newspaper.
- Exclusive programmes for children on every TV channel.

Disadvantaged Children: Ten children residing in a Dhaka shelter home run by the NGO *Aparajeyo-Bangladesh* participated in the FGD. They said:

- Newspapers and TV channels did not cover children's affairs and issues adequately. Newspapers should publish a children's page at least every other day, if not daily. Although the television channels broadcast some programmes for children, TV news rarely carried reports on children's affairs.
- They read *Prothom Alo* (the only newspaper subscribed by the shelter) everyday and were fond of its weekly children's page *Gollachhut*. They enjoyed stories written by children and loved to watch children performing on TV. They particularly liked *Sesamepur*, a BTV adaptation of the American educational production *Sesame Street*.
- In news, they especially liked entertainment and sports reports, and any happy story concerning children. News of children's cultural activities interested them as well.
- Newspapers mostly run stories about children's wrongdoings. For example, street children are reported on when they are involved in stealing or mugging. Children are usually forced to commit such petty crimes for various reasons or are pushed to do it out of desperation and poverty. Newspapers should broaden their coverage to show stories about things other than crime. Journalists should explore the reasons why children get involved in crimes and expose the adults who coerce children into crimes.

- News that touched children deeply and depressed them included - reports of acid attacks on girls, sexual and other violence or abuse, exploitation and oppression of children, drug-peddling and addiction, child labour, oppression and abuse of domestic child-workers, difficulties with getting healthcare, and the situation of street children. One of the participants mentioned a report that tells the story of a poor mother who chains her son up before going to work every morning.
- The issues mentioned above are not reported on adequately. Journalists often suppress or neglect information on abuse and violence against children.
- While journalists need to reveal and properly highlight such sad situations, they should also publish more reports on positive issues and activities of children. Reports should instil hope among children and inspire those who are misguided to shun the path of crime and violence.
- Journalists must not use humiliating terms when describing a child. For example, they should not address a street child as *tokai*, a term that connotes vagrancy and a scavenging life. No one is born a street child.
- Watching TV reports on murder and child trafficking is depressing. News media should stop printing images that are gruesome and violent. Some of the child participants disagreed. They thought that pictures could show terrible things to some extent since it may make viewers realise the consequences of their own violent actions and encourage them to change their ways.
- The news media should be careful not to identify a victim of sexual abuse by name or in any other way. Journalists should be vigilant about identity protection so much so that even a victim's school friends would not be able to identify her in an article. This is essential for protecting her from further humiliation socially. Such humiliation and stigmatisation could and does lead to child suicide.
- Journalists have a responsibility to write about the plights of street children and draw the attention of the government to their situation. Such reports could also inspire others to do something about the extreme vulnerabilities faced by these children.
- One cannot always rely on the authenticity of reports. News reports on children have a number of inadequacies - some have inconsistencies, while others are incomplete. Reporters rarely dig very deep into an incident. Instead they tend to write articles after talking to just a few people. Reporters need to focus more on the story behind the news, and endeavour to make reports less superficial.
- One of the participants said that the political animosity between Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia always get a lot of media attention even though this is behaviour that adds to people's sufferings. The leaders should be working jointly for the welfare of the nation.

Better-off Children: Ten children from Dhaka and Gazipur participated in the FGD. They said:

- Political affairs centering on different parties and dignitaries dominated the news and the media gave very little space to children's affairs. This shows that adults do not pay attention to children or regard them as important and do not really know what matters to children. There are very few children's organisations in the country and organised activities that highlight children's issues are rare. If these were in place, children's issues could attract media attention.
- Adults dominate and take control of media coverage on children's affairs. Children should have their own spaces. Every Newspaper needs to start including a special children's page like *Gollachhut* of *Prothom Alo*, that if possible would run every day, covering entertainment and sports news. These reports should be written by children. The TV channels should broadcast programmes (like the popular *Sesamepur*) that target child audiences and involve children in the production of contents.
- Children need information on the changing world; they need to be made aware of issues that affect them. Issues that need more media coverage include - child marriage, child labour, trafficking, child abuse, children suffering from hunger, the lack of playgrounds and confinement of children's movement between home and school. Child labour is not right or fair and every child has the right to an education. Some parents prevent their children from attending school even if they can afford it. Sometimes guardians abuse children. In many families, girls are still discriminated against and are deprived of education. Many parents still think that regardless of her educational attainments, a girl's ultimate destiny and responsibility is as a homemaker. Such beliefs should be exposed and challenged by news media and reports on these issues should be given prominence.
- Reports on relevant issues should include children's opinions.
- The authenticity of many media reports is dubious. They found discrepancies in reports covering some events they knew about directly. Often news accounts seemed unconvincing to them.
- Photos of rape victims must not be published or shown in the media. Reports or photos featuring women should avoid any indecent portrayal.
- Violence depicted in news accounts, especially in photos, is terrifying. The children said that negative images could stay in their mind for days. Particularly harrowing photos that they recalled were of incidents like a grenade attack. Violent pictures on the front page are so off-putting that many say they would be reluctant to pick up the paper even if a favourite comic was on the inside. Children found television programmes like *Crime Watch* and *Crime Diary* disturbing.
- Adults are often behind the crimes of children, using them in drug peddling and other crimes, but news reports do not explain this or contextualize these issues. Instead, reports almost always portray the children involved as guilty. Children cannot be held solely responsible even for their own drug addiction.
- Media reports tend to generalise. These often portray a whole group of children as criminals.

One child living in a slum may engage in criminal behaviour but reports should not imply that all slum-dwellers are criminals.

- Reports on sexual harassment and suicide involving children should not be framed in a way that could incite other children to commit such offences or self-harm. These reports should rather try to help authorities take measures against the causes of these issues in an effort to curb them.
- Just because they are children does not mean that they are unimportant. They preferred to be called ‘adolescents’.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The study suggests multi-level activities and initiatives to facilitate ethical reporting on and for the children in Bangladesh's newspapers and news broadcasters. All of them may not be accommodated within the scope of the MRDI project but they are mentioned here nonetheless.
- Confusions and inadequacies revealed by the questionnaire surveys, the indications from the media content analyses and the FGD brainstorming - all confirm a strong need for journalist training on ethics and children. The main recommendations of the study aim at developing an appropriate training programme to be undertaken by the MRDI project.

General

1. **Share findings with editors:** The findings need to be conveyed to all the media institutions and not just those covered by this study. UNICEF could arrange a meeting and share the report with editors and gatekeepers.
2. **Get the media's response to the findings:** Steps should be taken to ensure that the findings of this study get appropriate attention. UNICEF should make provisions for periodical consultative meetings with the editors and gatekeepers of news institutions to follow up on project activities.
3. **Recognise good practices:** UNICEF could initiate a system of publicly recognizing the work of media outlets that demonstrate good ethical practices in the context of children. This could take the form of an award for impressive performance over a certain period of time, or a letter of thanks to newsroom to acknowledge distinctively good work.
4. **Train child reporters who contribute to different news media:** Children participating in the FGDs said that they liked it when a child reported on events concerning children. Children contributing regularly to special programmes/pages/supplements on TV news or in newspapers need some training in journalism. There is also a need to sensitise producers and editors to the age-appropriateness of stories commissioned.
5. **Conduct qualitative studies on the content-matter of news:** The tone and implications of news reports and of the images or footage require more in-depth and qualitative research.
6. **Conduct qualitative studies on gender in news coverage:** Gender perspectives including gender sensitivity of news coverage require more in-depth and qualitative research.

Principles of Ethics

- 7. Impart a broad training on journalism ethics which should include specific training on ethics with regard to children:** Training should address issues of basic journalism ethics first and then proceed to the case of children. Unless a focus on ethics and children is couched within a larger system of ethical norms it may not be sustainable.

The need for training was stressed both in the gatekeepers' FDG as well as in the twin questionnaire surveys put to gatekeepers and reporters. Some participants particularly wanted to know the general boundaries - the do's and don'ts for a journalist, while others were keen to know more about the ethics of dealing with children.

- **Discuss morality and Journalism; introduce key ethical guidelines and the leading codes of conduct:** The training programme should discuss the moral backbone of journalism and its main ethical guidelines. It should introduce the existing major codes of conduct and ethical guidelines such as those of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC); the National Union of Journalists for the UK and Ireland (NUJ, UK), the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ, USA), and The Press Complaints Commission (PCC, UK). It should discuss the few codes available in Bangladesh, including that of the Bangladesh Press Council.
- **Discuss special ethical concerns in the context of children:** The training programme should identify and emphasise the ethical guidelines for reporting on children and their affairs. Those topping the list above have special guidelines. In addition, guidelines devised by the UNICEF, the Children's Rights Information Network (CRIN) and other relevant organisations should be consulted.
- **Clarify the best interest of children and how to minimize of harm:** The reporters and gatekeepers participating in the questionnaire survey had queries about how photographs and reports impact children. Some reporters wanted to know the role of a journalist in ensuring a child-friendly society. This indicates a need for conceptual clarification. Discussions on ethics should therefore explore and clarify core concepts such as how to safeguard the interests of children and limit harm to them.
- **Incorporate sub-editors/copy-editors/gatekeepers in training:** Reporters partaking in the questionnaire survey thought that copy-editors and gatekeepers also required sensitisation to and training on all ethical issues. It is the gatekeepers who select news items, assign stories to reporters and edit the final work. They make the final decisions on headlines, which can often be sensationalized and violent. Their training is therefore very important.

8. Emphasise proper representation and adequate news coverage as a core ethical requirement: The dearth of reports on issues involving children, the predominance of superficial reporting on daily events and the narrow range of issues covered in the news are in their own right major ethical concerns. These problems are linked and interdependent. Together they indicate that the media is neglecting children. Addressing these problems will require a multi-pronged approach:

- **Address the need for more coverage:** The training programme should point out why children deserve more space in news. It should stress that serving all constituent sections of society is a core ethical demand; children are especially important because they represent tomorrow's society. Especially important are disadvantaged groups and those in difficult situations.
- **Point out the limitations of superficial coverage of events:** The study finds that both print and TV media are spending a lot of time covering daily events such as different announcements, accidents, mishaps, sporadic crises or different programmes. These spot reports are useful for record keeping purposes and to keep the public up-to-date, but they do not explain complex realities. As long as this trend persists, the news will not achieve the scale and quality of coverage that children deserve.
- **Stress the need for proactive, in-depth reporting:** Big events, especially those with a real impact on the public, do not occur every day and reports on routine or random events do not address children or children's issues effectively. And this coverage trend will not get children more news space. It will neither help children effectively nor merit importance in news coverage or treatment.

Reporting is simply not proactive enough. News agencies and journalists seem to wait for events to occur rather than explore factors or issues that may lead to events. This means that only the most obvious of news is reported on making the news agenda is therefore narrow and lopsided. This trend does not do justice to the diversity of groups of children and the wide spectrum of issues important to them. Lack of representation thus becomes a multidimensional concern.

Improvement can only be made if in-depth, investigative, and issue-discerning coverage is prioritized in the media. Reports need to put events into meaningful contexts, explore causes and consequences and elaborate on themes and trends. If done properly, such reports will fulfil journalists' ethical responsibilities as well as earn big headlines.

- **Stress the need for continuity of coverage:** A conscious effort to follow issues up, rather than be satisfied with simple one-off reports is needed.
- **Address the need for reportorial enterprise:** The goal is not just to increase the number and scale of reports, but to move towards a different kind of journalism altogether. What is needed is reportorial enterprise that dig deep and broaden the agenda, consistently following events and issues. The training programme should:
 - Highlight building capacities for such reporting.

- Especially focus on the needs for monitoring child rights concerns including children's right to freedom of expression.
- Explore all possible avenues for greater inclusion of children in news; promote emphasised coverage of children's issues as a beat, i.e. assigning one or more reporters to do regular coverage, and ensure the inclusion of children's concerns in the general flow of news.

9. Facilitate an enabling environment: The desired change in news coverage trends will require editorial or policy prioritisation. Simultaneous initiatives are needed both at the reporter and gatekeeper levels. The minute proportion of children-related editorials in newspapers and the limited coverage of TV news sadly indicate a policy disinterest in children.

- Among other things, the MRDI project should try to facilitate an 'enabling environment' by lobbying with gatekeepers and editors.
- Initiatives are needed to inspire newspaper editors to do more editorials on issues concerning children.
- Consultation with gatekeepers and editors should also make suggestions for incorporating reporting by children in special supplements, magazine editions, and different special pages/programmes including those focusing on children. The media outlets, which currently do not have any, should be inspired to put out special pages or programmes for children. It should be explored if the existing children's pages need to be planned more creatively and innovatively. It is especially important for TV stations to create special slots for in-depth coverage on children's affairs.
- Equipping reporters with the resources and time to do in-depth reports is a crucial practical need. This will require a commitment at the decision-making level. Reporters need time and facilities to undertake this kind of journalism.

10. Emphasise the essentials of reporting as a core ethical responsibility: Children have the right to receive accurate, truthful, impartial, fair and balanced information. This is an integral part of journalism ethics. The training programme should seek to develop the capacity of journalists to ensure that the required standards are being met in all reports.

- **Stress Authenticity, impartiality, clarity, completeness and logical accounts:** The content analyses highlight this need.
 - A demand from gatekeepers was that reporters need training on how to make reports authentic. They need to be reminded of the professional and ethical requirements for truth-seeking including accuracy, verification, fairness, balance, covering all important sides or parties, and being comprehensive in the reporting.
 - The content analyses suggest that district journalists and district desk editors need training more than central counterparts on the basics of journalism.

- **Stress the significance of basic standards in the context of children:** Ethical standards in news are especially important considering the fact that children also learn about reality from what they read and see on media. News needs to provide them with adequate information. News reports should keep in mind children's need to learn openness and tolerance to diversity, in terms of religion, ethnicity, opinions, and values.

11. Highlight ethical guidelines concerning sensitivity, good taste, obscenity, sensationalism and gruesome depictions: While discussing ethics, special attention will need to be given to these aspects.

- **Instill a respect for the dead and explore the impacts of any such disrespect on children:** During the FGD with gatekeepers, a debate arose over publishing photographs or running footage of dead bodies in news reports. One participant insisted that it was the public who wanted to see these images; that often when a notorious criminal dies in a police 'encounter' readers want to see the photo of the dead in next day's paper or on TV. One way of approaching this problem could be asking the trainees to find out how readers, including children, react to such coverage and then weigh the pros and cons of this practice.
- **Be aware of the negative impacts of sexually provocative material, and graphic images or portrayals of violence, gruesomeness and indecency.** The cases we have cited in Annexure-1 of report demonstrate the media's tendency to show such images, presumably in anticipation of commercial gains. Gatekeepers mentioned Peer-pressure, 'others are doing it', as a big reason for such practices. News people should understand through their training that not only can certain materials have a negative impact on viewers but also that in choosing to go against the grain and only publish or broadcast things in good taste, they may win lasting approval from readers/audiences.
- **Stress caution against sensational presentation and portrayal:** Making reports sensational is a major ethical concern. This can also lead to out-of-context misreporting. Sensational presentation can cause media exploitation of children. The training should emphasise caution against sexualised depictions of children in news stories, details in sexual abuse stories, and the need for care in the words/language used.
- **Stress that even one story with such features is enough to do the damage.**

12. Highlight concerns particularly relevant for stories dealing with crime, violence and antisocial activities: Within the wider training on ethics, careful attention will need to be paid to how stories involving children and crime should be handled and presented. Reporters and gatekeepers approached by the study said that they would benefit from training on the ethical aspects of covering crimes. Among other issues, the training should:

- **Caution against detailed descriptions of crime and antisocial behaviour:** Caution against glorification of criminal or antisocial behaviour. The training should point out the risks of children learning to imitate such behaviour from these reports.

13. Be sensitive to the privacy, dignity, safety, security and wellbeing of children involved in news stories: Another important part of the training concerns the need to be responsible when dealing with children involved in the news, particularly with issues of identity protection. Many of the following training needs were flagged by reporters and gatekeepers:

- **Sensibility to children’s rights, privacy and dignity:** The training should emphasise that reporters need to respect children’s rights to privacy and dignity while gathering information and writing news. Discussions should focus on how to remain vigilant about not disclosing personal information without proper editorial justification or consent.
- **Emphasize the need for sensitive handling:** Not to cause stress, trauma or discomfort are particular points of concern. Reporters should be cautious not to use children solely for evoking the emotions of readers.
- **Take caution when reporting on children in conflict with the law:** Reporters and gatekeepers partaking in the study said that they needed training on the ethical aspects of covering these cases. The qualitative content analyses and the responses to the questionnaires highlight an urgent need for educating reporters on the importance of identity protection and protection in general. The best interest of children in dangerous and criminal situations must be the priority and journalists must be trained in how to approach these issues without letting their own prejudices get in the way.
- **Take caution when reporting on victims:** Reporters and gatekeepers also sought guidelines on covering child-victims and minimising harm to them. The protection of victim’s identity needs extra-special attention. Content analyses show a tendency of not naming victims but providing other identifying details is common.
- **Protection of identity even if a child is dead:** Content analyses show that reports generally disclose the identities of children in sensitive cases, if they are dead. The training needs to stress that reporters should consider the immediate and long-term impacts of this on the family of the deceased.
- **Point out special concerns for TV:** A training focus on perpetrators and child-victims in vulnerable situations may be especially important for television news-workers. There is a dearth of vulnerability related stories on TV presumably because it is visually difficult to represent. However, juvenile offences are covered and reports on these often do not safeguard the offender’s interests.
- **Point out that responsibility is ongoing:** Gatekeepers questioned in the survey said that they tried to keep track of what happened to children that were featured in news reports. Reporters stated that this wasn’t always the case. They were unsure of whether their reports had led to stigma or other hardships for the child. This gap should be addressed during training.
- **Caution against stereotyping and gender insensitivity:** Stereotypical portrayals and gender-insensitivity requires special attention. Reporters need to be sensitised to the risks of portraying children as passive victims and be careful about not taking a patronising attitude.

- 14. Stress caution against over-protectiveness and self-censorship:** While discussing ethics, it should be emphasised that protection responsibilities should not curtail children's right to be informed and their rights to expression unduly.
- 15. Introduce frequently occurring ethical dilemmas and explore solutions:** One training session should be devoted to exploring common ethical dilemmas that confront reporters in Bangladesh and seek collective problem solving. At the FGD, a few gatekeepers pointed out that often dilemmas arose at the last minute, making any thoughtful resolution very difficult because of deadline pressure. It would be best to ask trainees to recount situations they have faced and review their decisions. A complementary list of common dilemmas those which arise out of competition with other media should be drawn up and discussed. This exercise would enhance the trainees' understanding of ethical journalism by focusing on a variety of probable situations. The list should cover broad ethical concerns, which concentrating on children-related concerns.

Training: Specific Points for Ethical Reporting

- 16. The UNCRC and Child Rights:** For reporting to be ethical, journalists need to focus on child rights issues. The training should introduce the key provisions of the United Nations Child Rights Convention and the rights of the children in the context of Bangladesh.
- 17. National Legal Framework:** The responses to the questionnaires confirm a general lack of knowledge, by reporters and gatekeepers alike on state laws regarding children. The training should include an introduction to the relevant state laws.
- The list should include:
 - The Children Act, 1974
 - The Suppression of Repression of Women and Children Act, 2000 (amended in 2003)
 - The Majority Act, 1875
 - The Bangladesh labour Act, 2006
 - The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929
 - The Guardian and Wards Act, 1890 (with reference to family laws)
 - The Penal Code provisions on the age of criminal responsibility

The module development team should seek the assistance of a legal expert to ensure that the list is comprehensive.

- The legal discussion should specify the areas of reporting that require special care. A checklist would include:
 - Sexual and other abuses
 - Children in conflict with the law; criminal responsibility
 - Commercial sex work
 - Trafficking
 - Child labour
 - Child marriage
 - Ward-ship and inheritance or property rights
 - Any contract made with a minor
- Journalists need to be made aware of the significance and provisions of The Birth and Death Registration Act, 2004. They should know where and how to find or verify birth registration information. The training should also discuss the key features of relevant policies, such as the National Child Policy, 1994 and National Child Labour Elimination Policy, 2008.

18. Defining the Child: The training should clarify confusion about the age of childhood. Training sessions on the UNCRC and national laws should help to explain the existing varied age ranges for defining a child.

- The study team suggests:
 - √ Following the UNCRC and the national law Majority Act, 1875, 18 should be the relevant cut-off for consideration of general issues such as media-effects and rights-based approaches to media coverage. This should be the age parameter for identifying child-related media contents.
 - √ However journalists may need to acknowledge a different age cut-off if the story is related to a legal issue and is dictated by national laws. If the situation requires it, journalists should debate and discuss the relevant legal provisions and age-definitions.
- The training should also explore the constructs within which childhood is understood. For example, there is a tendency to regard persons past 11 or 12 years of age as adolescents and forget that they are children. The connotations of various terms such as *balok-balika* (kid), *kishore-kishori* (adolescent) and *shishu* (baby or child) have to be explored and trainees need to be made aware of not letting these create confusion about who is a child.

19. Finding and Developing Ideas for Stories: The training programme should focus on exploring new story ideas.

- It should convince trainees that broadening the news agenda for children will be worth the effort - it will give scope to do numerous good and important stories. For example, it could point out that children constitute close to 50 percent of the population of Bangladesh and that just by this fact alone, hundreds of reportable issues are being neglected.
- It should explore how focusing on the real needs of the people, children in this case, can lead to proactive and preventive reporting. This may also help journalism overcome its tendency towards superficial or sensational event-reporting.
- Brainstorming story ideas.
 - Issues that are neglected should be pointed out and their importance and potential discussed. The issue code used in the content analyses could be consulted.
 - Children in vulnerable or neglected situations, the UNCRC and the state of its implementation in Bangladesh, different government policies, government action or inaction, achievements and failures are some of the major areas that need to be monitored and reported.
 - Coverage of positive phenomena or good work should be prioritized.
 - Reporters could talk to children and find out about their concerns, learning about new stories in this way.
 - The content analyses suggest that Dhaka-based reporters in national media need more training on how to broaden the agenda.
- It should cover the techniques of developing theme-based, well-focused story ideas and planning a story - be it event-based or in-depth Training should:
 - Cover developing in-depth story ideas in detail.
 - Stress the importance of developing a complete story, without leaving questions unanswered. For example, stories on abuse should explore and examine legal issues. Seminars, so common in media, should be covered innovatively and be bolstered with additional information. The same goes for press conferences and press release coverage.
 - A complete story should be balanced and not always decidedly positive or negative in angle. Extreme portrayals in most cases do not reflect reality. Negative things have positive aspects and vice versa. Besides, problems need constructive coverage that explore the ways to overcome issues.

- Since newspapers do many daily routine stories on child death or other bad news, it could be possible to cover these in a more comprehensive way. For example, reporters could keep track of such event and occasionally report on trends. On the other hand, while analysing the contents, a positive angle given to some of the issues suggested that the media was avoiding important realities.
- It should point out the need to diversify sources and check their reliability and relevance, including verifying the credentials of NGOs that claim to be acting on behalf of children.
- It should show trainees how to locate and use news pegs. The content analysis of newspapers shows them regularly covering international or other special days, including those involving children. Reporters should be encouraged to plan worthwhile in-depth stories using the days as news pegs.
- It should show how follow-up stories both on day events and on in-depth issues can be planned and produced. It should point out how following up an event or issue can lead to important groundbreaking news stories.
- Every reporter should be inspired to single out a few areas to investigate - areas in which to develop expertise and concentrate on.

All these points have been suggested by the monitoring, and many came up at the FGDs and in the questionnaire surveys

20. Handling Positive Stories and ‘Human Interest’: The newspaper reports showcasing the success stories of the SSC results provided a welcome respite from the usual flow of bad news. At the same time, some of these did create a stereotypical image of poor students performed well despite many obstacles. Sometimes these stories were inadvertently disrespectful of their dignity, were patronising in attitude. This indicates that along with training on sensitisation and avoiding stereotypes, journalists need guidelines on how to handle positive stories in the right way. Such stories need to be compassionate without compromising the subject’s dignity.

A similar concern is apparent in the ‘human interest’ elements that mark reports or images of children. Content analyses found instances of using visuals of children solely to sell stories by appealing to readers’ emotions. This indicates that journalists need to understand the great strength of the human interest element as well as its potential pitfalls. If handled the wrong way, it can make stories sappy, melodramatic, patronising or sensational and exploit the appeal of children in undesirable ways.

21. Inclusion in all Pertinent News: Training on idea development should emphasize that reporting needs to broaden in other dimensions as well.

- **The child perspective:** Inclusion of children does not only mean incorporating or covering them in a compartment of stories marked out as ‘child issues’. The perspective of children should be considered in general stories as well, for example on relevant policy matters.

Because Bangladeshi reporters do not normally seek this, our monitoring of media contents also failed to single out potential stories that could have used a child-perspective. A new perspective is needed, one in which events such as national budgets or a decision to lower the standard of educational qualification for teachers at government primary schools could generate important child-centred stories. This way, children could really be included in the news-agenda effectively.

- **The voice of the child:** Journalists should understand that incorporating children's views applies not just to reports that feature them and their issues. Children could be interviewed on other issues if relevant. This will make reports complete and bring fresh views, and above all it will ensure children's access to the media and their participation in news.

22. Interviewing Children: Reporters and gatekeepers covered by the study wanted training on how to gather information from children. This need should be addressed in the training programme and must involve quite a few ethical norms, such as - sensitivity, respect for privacy and safety, securing informed consent, and verifying information provided by children without putting them at risk. Interviewing children requires special skills as well. Quite a few resources are available including guidelines used by the UNICEF, CRIN and Save the Children.

23. Writing skills: Training on writing skills, especially for child-related reports, was a priority raised by reporters and gatekeepers. The content analyses have shown that reports sometimes lacked clarity and readability. This was more of a problem for district-level journalists. On another front, considerable proportions of reports and features used value-loaded adjectives and stereotypical words. Language used in mass media demands further attention as children learn from reading newspapers or watching TV. While the MRDI training programme cannot possibly incorporate a serious writing-skills component, it could perhaps consider a session on word choices and correct language.

24. The reporters and gatekeepers covered by this study wanted training on reporting on the following issues:

- Children with disabilities and other special needs.
- Child labour.
- Various forms of child exploitation.
- Reporting to raise awareness of children on relevant issues.
- Reporting on drug addiction from an awareness raising advocacy angle for children.
- Quite a few wanted to learn about child psychology.

While the MRDI training programme may need to concentrate on thoroughly covering the ethics and general reporting concerns, UNICEF and others may facilitate to address these needs.

For Ethics and Ethical journalism

- 25. Encourage journalists to devise a self-code of ethics:** The MRDI training programme should incorporate exercises for the trainees to devise a set of ethical norms, both in general and in relation to children. This could then be owned by the individual journalists as well as provide a basis for individual institutional codes. The project can point out the need for ethics codes in its consultation with media authorities. It could be worthwhile for UNICEF to follow the initiative up with leading media institutions and journalist associations.
- 26. Self-regulation is Essential:** Ethics requires vigilant self-regulation. Ethical standards are best ensured when there is a voluntary system of media accountability. The journalist community or media institutions must establish systems for self-criticism and peer-review in order to uphold ethical standards in all their work, not just in regards to children. Ethics is one of those fields where partial approaches do not work. The MRDI project can highlight the issues to journalists and media institutions but at the end of the day journalism ethics has to grow from within the community.

CASE-STUDY/EXAMPLES

Below are some examples of ethical lapses in child-related stories in newspapers and on television. These stories include samples from the main data set for content analyses as well as randomly selected items from outside of it. Please note that we chose not to identify the media these appeared in.

The problems are interlinked and they often overlapped in the same story.

Gruesome, Violent, Irresponsible

While violence and gruesomeness are mostly manifested in images, the tone of the story and what it depicts can be just as violent. We will discuss a TV story chosen from outside of the main data set, broadcast on a satellite channel in 2009. The footage that was chosen, as well as the aggressiveness of the narration made this piece particularly irresponsible and harmful.

The piece opens with an image of a dead child recovered from an abandoned industrial plot near a township close to Dhaka. The story focused on a police arrest of four boys charge with the murder. All, including the victim, were around 12 years of age.

The scared faces of the accused boys were clearly on display in the footage. One of the boys tried to deny the charge, but was quickly silenced by a voice of authority. One was asked to lie down on the ground while another was made to enact how they had butchered the victim. This was elaborately shown in close up.

The reporter made sweeping comments that children and adolescents of the locality were getting involved in killing and other crimes. The accused four boys were referred to as ‘killer street-children’ in the report and the killing was described as a ‘sensational murder.’ It was obvious that the police had made special arrangements for the reporter to film the accused boys who were in their custody.

Can’t Show These Pictures

Photographs of mutilated dead bodies appear on many TV channels and in some newspapers when big road accidents kill people or when bodies are recovered from capsized launches. Often the bodies are of children. Towards the end of 2009, one photo appeared on the front pages a few dailies in full colour, showing the decomposing body of a child dangling from the hands of a rescue worker. The photo was cruel, to say the least. It appeared on the front pages.

Again in 2009, when police arrested a man allegedly admitting to serial killing, many of the newspapers and TV channels showed the distorted faces of three dead girls allegedly killed by this man. These were obviously obtained from police files since the murders had taken place many months before. No one thought of the trauma to the victims’ families upon publishing these pictures, let alone considered the potential impact of such images on a child viewer.

In another case, the photo accompanying an article on street children shows a group of small children smoking cigarettes and having a seemingly good time. The picture not only shows the boys in a bad light - implying a reckless antisocial life - it also promotes the idea of smoking. Similarly, an article on intravenous drug addiction had a full blown close-up photo of a man injecting himself.

The study team randomly located quite a few newspaper photos - in colour - showing men being beaten up by the police, mob beating and lynching of outlaws, and dead bodies in different incidents. The photos of the dead tend to focus on their faces or on body parts showing injuries. Often a lurid red colour is dabbed on the photo to make the pictures look bloody. These pictures do not appear in the media everyday, nor are they carried by all newspapers. Even one such picture is unwelcome, considering the disrespect shown to the dead and also the terrifying, demoralising impact they can have on children.

No Need to Seek a Child's Opinion?

We have selected three newspaper stories to demonstrate how common it is for the media to ignore the perspective of children, even when the topic is a child-related one.

The first was an in-depth report on the problem facing high schools in an area that have headmaster posts vacant. The focus was on the negative impact of this on the education of students. The report does not feature a single child. Another example, also an in-depth story, was on a school being run in an abandoned prison complex. The reporter had talked to parents, teachers, and elite community members. Like in the last case, no student was interviewed. A third story described the poor nutritional status of children in an area prone to river erosion. The report is accompanied by a picture of near-naked potbellied children standing in a group. The photo is undignified in its exposure of these children. The report openly promotes the cause of an NGO working in the area and quotes statistics and information on the community and the NGO's work. No community member or children were interviewed.

In some cases this kind of coverage can be the result of a lack of resources to visit field locations and gather information, first hand but more often it is due to the oversight of the reporter, who does not regard children as reliable sources of information.

Insensitive, Sensational, Irresponsible, Stereotypical

Here are a few words often found in different reports on children: *komolmoti*, (innocent, angelic), *oshohai* (utterly helpless), *tokai* (street urchin, scavenger), *sharirik bikrito shishu* (physically mutilated children; referring to disability), *shoroshi* (16, with a connotation of 'sweet sixteen' found in; reports on rape). One report describes a sexually harassed girl as *chonchola kishori* (vivacious teen). A girl is often forced into being raped (*jorepurbok*), which seems to imply that one can be willing to be raped; a rape takes place after taking away her clothes (*ulongo kore*), etc.

Quite a few reports imply that the reporter had not thought about the child's safety, security, or welfare. A girl being harassed by a teacher at school risks harsher treatment as a report identifies her as having made the allegation. The study team came across quite a few reports on sexual abuse

that were sensationalized and included detailed descriptions. These reports contain identification details as well.

A report on an alleged rape published the photograph of the accused on the very first day, and include detailed identification of the girl. A report on a girl being gang raped in Dhaka uses special treatment to draw attention to the report, which describes the incident in minute details. A girl was filmed while being raped and the footage was uploaded on a website. The report went so far as to provide the site and file names.

The study found a few reports on drug abuse showing photos of children taking drugs and providing detailed information on how to use it and where to find it.

Tokai and Killers

Tokai is a term much used by the media to refer to children living on the street. It's randomly used when describing these children's alleged involvement in antisocial activities.

One report in the main data set is on a 17 year old boy alleged to be a mercenary killer. The report describes him as '*Pichchi shontrashi al Amin*' (little criminal Al Amin). This term and another - *uthtiboyosher shontrashi* (criminals in early ages), are repeatedly used in the report. The report also provides his photo and detailed information on his family. It's written in a sensational tone, providing his 'low-rate' charges per kill. The report appears to be totally based on a Rapid Action Battalion (an elite Bangladeshi police force) account of his arrest.

In the Guise of Sympathy

A series of reports in the main dataset of newspapers published the photograph of a child sex-worker. It shows an overtly sympathetic attitude to the girl's plights and describes in detail her daily life. The girl is exposed in the name of sympathy. The language and tone of the report are patronising and melodramatic.

Protection?

The main dataset yielded a bunch of reports with names and/or identifying details of child victims of sexual abuse. Such details include names of parents, specific addresses, name of schools and classes she attended, descriptions of places of occurrence, all which cause used to disclose the identity of victims. In a few reports, names have been publicized in connection with incidents that took place in the past.

Children of a Serial Killer

When a man was alleged of killing a nubmber of young women, the media jumped on full-blown coverage for a few days. Some of these reports showed the distorted faces of the dead girls. Almost all provided detailed information about the accused man's wife and children. The address of their home, the names of his childrens' school, their photographs - all were carried by newspapers and TV. No one kept track of what the children must have faced from such publicity.

PRINT MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS DATA

Print Media Content Analysis Data

Types of Items

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Event-based Spot News	1836	69.5	69.5
	Follow-up Report	205	7.8	77.2
	In-depth/issue-based Report	338	12.8	90.0
	Feature	84	3.2	93.2
	Editorial	39	1.5	94.7
	Standalone Photos	141	5.3	100.0
	Total	2643	100.0	
Missing	System	1		
Total		2644		

Item Producers or sources

		Frequency	Percent
	Staff Correspondent/Reporter	722	27.4
	Local Correspondent	1313	49.8
	Staff Photojournalist/Artist	142	5.4
	Feature/Special Writers	77	2.9
	Desk Report	226	8.6
	News Agency	34	1.3
	Foreign Correspondent	42	1.6
	Press Release/Handout	83	3.1
	Total	2639	100.0
Missing	System	5	
Total		2644	

Headline Size (Standalone pictures segregated)

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 Column	1335	50.5	50.5
2 Columns	720	27.2	77.7
3 Columns	362	13.7	91.4
4 Columns	95	3.6	95.0
5 Columns	43	1.6	96.6

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
6 Columns	14	.5	97.2
7 Columns	3	.1	97.3
8 Columns	1	.0	97.3
StandalonePics S/C	1	.0	97.4
StandalonePics D/C	21	.8	98.1
StandalonePics 3-6/C	49	1.9	100.0
Total	2644	100.0	

Note: S/C—Single-column; D/C—Double-Column; 3-6/C—3 to 6-column

Placement of items by newspaper Page

		Frequency	Percent
	Front	327	12.4
	Back	360	13.6
	News	403	15.2
	Editorial	39	1.5
	Metro	674	25.5
	National	673	25.5
	Cultural	2	.1
	Women's	33	1.2
	Health	31	1.2
	Others	101	3.8
	Total	2643	100.0
Missing	System	1	
Total		2644	

Special treatment to news

	Frequency	Percent
Boxed	67	6.4
Italic Heading	3	.3
Coloured Heading	19	1.8
Reversed Heading	40	3.8
Screen	6	.6
Logo	39	3.7
Insert	19	1.8
Reports with Pictures	468	44.7
Multiple	385	36.8
Total	1046	100.0
Missing System	1598	

The missing value refers to those which were not given any special treatment

Content-matter

	Frequency	% is of 2503
Representation		
Portrayed as passive victim (in tone)	1409	56
Portrayed as criminal (in tone)	36	1
Sexualized portrayal (in tone)	45	2
Portrayed as unimportant	500	20
Featuring and promoting bad role models	49	2
Good role models featured	232	9
Safety and security		
Name of victim or accused child is published	48	2
Address or other identification of victim or accused child is given	69	3
Photo/Image of victims on accused child is shown	6	0
Harmful information released	30	1
Impact/Consequences		
Stigma/blame/bad image/ negative image attached to child	35	1
Racial/Gender discrimination	6	0
Detailed description of crime/anti-social activities	18	1
Presentation/Style		
Violent Description	336	13
Sexual Provocation	2	0
Sensational	71	3
News presented in a way that might invite copycat behavior	32	1
Stereotypical words/adjectives	266	11
Violation of privacy	107	4
Insensitivity/Patronizing attitude/Overly appealing to emotions	27	1
Out of content statements/Info	95	4
Using children for evoking sympathy only	7	0
Showing no problem		
Nothing negative in content matter	667	27
Too brief for proper assessment	322	13

Percentage is of total items minus standalone picture = 2503

Content-matter: pictures

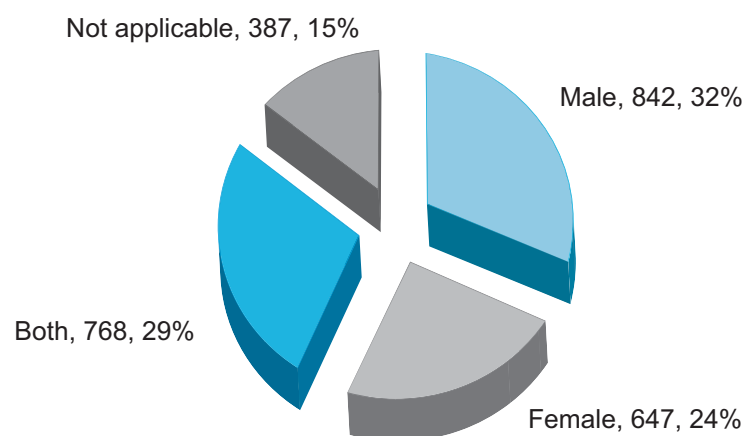
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Violent/Traumatic Images	24	2.5	2.5
Dead Bodies	19	2.0	4.5
Violation of Privacy	1	.1	4.6
Indecent images	16	1.7	6.3
Glorifying crime/criminals	3	.3	6.6
Harmful depiction of Anti-social/Criminal Activities	8	.8	7.4
Multiple Negative Contents	15	1.6	9.0
No Negative Elements	253	26.5	35.5
Human Interest	455	47.6	83.1
Using children for evoking sympathy only	161	16.9	100.0
Total	955	100.0	
Missing System	1689		

The missing value includes 1673 text items

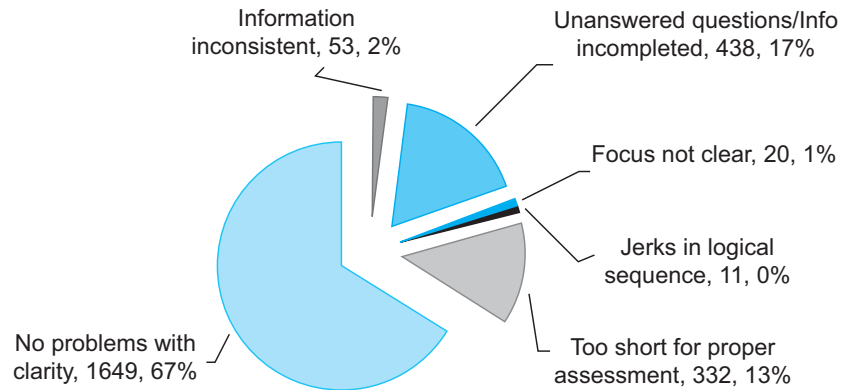
Gender of children involved in news

	Frequency	Percent
Male	842	32
Female	647	24
Both	768	29
Not applicable	387	15
Total	2644	100

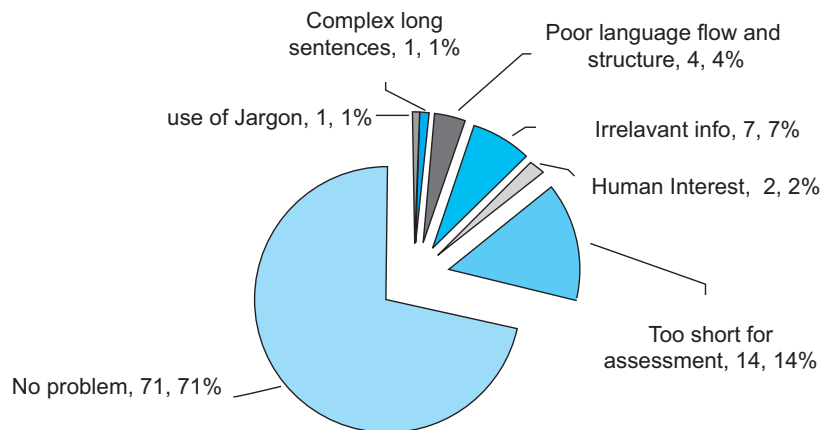
Gender in news



Clarity (Of all items except standalone pictures=2503)



Readability (Of items minus standalone pictures = 2503)



Gender and issue coverage

Issues/Topics	Total	Items and Gender			
	Frequency	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
Sexual abuse/harassment	126	21	86	13	6
Trafficking	76	32	13	20	11
Physical abuse	59	14	38	4	3
Acid attacks	21	7	12		2
Murder	27	102	63	15	5
Suicide	43	8	30	5	
Vulnerable children: Domestic work		2	20	1	1
Drug abuse and peddling	13	6	1	2	4
Academic achievements/talent	230	73	40	104	13

Tone and implication of content-matter	Gender frequency			
	Male	Female	Both	Not applicable
Portrayed as passive victim (in tone)	481	374	394	160
Portrayed as criminal (in tone)	18	10	8	
Portrayed as sexual image (in tone)	7	27	8	3
Portrayed as unimportant	120	111	191	78
Featuring and promoting role models	22	16	9	2
Good role models featured	67	45	104	16
Name of victim/accused child included	22	20	6	
Address or other identification of victim/accused child	26	33	10	
Photo/Image of victim/accused child	1	3	1	1
Racial/Gender discrimination		4	2	
Sensational	12	27	25	7
Stereotypical words/adjectives	110	87	56	13
Insensitivity/Patronizing attitude/Overplay of emotions	13	10	3	1
Using children for evoking sympathy only	3		2	2

Gender of children involved by selected issues

Issues	Male	%	Female	%	Both	%	Not applicable	%	Total
Academic Achievements/Talent	73	32	40	17	104	45	13	6	230
Individual Health appeal	87	67	35	27	5	4	2	2	129

Authenticity of stories

	Frequency	% of 2503
Information gaps/ Inaccuracy	28	1
Sweeping statements	131	5
Evidence	39	2
Sources weak and vague	357	14
All parties not covered	201	8
Too short for assessment	341	14
No problem	1398	56
Total	2495	100

Percentage is of total items minus stand-alone pictures = 2503, actual missing value=8

Coverage of issues/Topics

Issues	Frequency	% of all items (2644)
Abuse and exploitation		
Sexual abuse/harassment	126	5
Incest	1	0
Trafficking	76	3
Kidnapping	101	4
Physical abuse	59	2
Psychological abuse	25	1
School corporal punishment	13	0
Acid attacks	21	1
Murder	185	7
Suicide	43	2
Vulnerability		
Vulnerable children: Street children	27	1
Vulnerable children: Sex-workers	3	0
Vulnerable children: Domestic workers	24	1
Vulnerable children: Other hazardous labour	17	1
Child labor	58	2
Vulnerable children-child marriages/teen mothers	35	1
People with disabilities	41	2
Other marginalized groups	28	1
Death by accident	560	21
Accident	120	5
Missing	68	3
Children in conflict with the law		
Drug abuse and peddling	13	0
Violence and other crimes	40	2
Police handling/Policy custody/Justice	36	1
Shelter homes/Correction centers	19	1
Rights		
Rescue/Rehabilitation	120	5
Education	355	13
Nutrition-mother and child	225	9
Health care	547	21
Death from health-related reasons	95	4
HIV/AIDS and STDs	1	0
Reproductive health	22	1
Child birth registration	10	0

Issues	Frequency	% of all items (2644)
Recreation/sports/culture	112	4
Freedom of expression	9	0
Legal support/Legal Context	188	7
Children associations	38	1
Survival	63	2
Lifestyle	48	2
Children and governance		
Govt. policies related to children	27	1
Announcements by govt./ state dignitaries	57	2
Govt. allocations/misuse	5	0
Govt. special institutions for children	13	0
Success/Achievements		
Creativity	4	0
Innovation	0	0
Social contribution	2	0
Academic achievements/Talent	230	9
Other Positive Stories	28	1
Total	3938	149

A few aspects of coverage

Percentage of all items minus stand-alone pictures and editorials= 2464

	Frequency	%
Two paragraphs in length	523	21
Seminar/Roundtable/Workshop/Programme	117	5
Appeal for help with health care	129	5
Percentage of all items= 2644		
'Day' Observation	51	2
Incidental	218	9
SSC Result	170	6
Vitamin-A	114	4
Paracetamol Syrup	81	3
WFP Biscuit	46	2

A few features of different items (Frequency)

		Event Spot News	Follow-up Report	In-depth/ issue- based Report	Feature	Editorial	Stand- Alone Photos
Remarks	Two paragraphs in length	491	24	7		1	
	Seminar/Roundtable/Workshop/ Programme	101	2	6		1	7
	SSC Result	100	1	62	5	1	1
	Vitamin-A	70	23	8	4	9	
	Paracetamol Syrup	15	55	6		5	
	WFP Biscuit	33	11	1		1	
	Appeal for help with health care	120	3	3	2		1
	Day Observation	24		8	10	1	8
	Incidental	199	2	14	1		2

Picture content matter and Newspapers (Frequency)

Newspapers	Violent/Traum atic Images	Dead Bodies	Negative Multiple Content	No Negative Elements	Human Interest	Total no. of pictures published
ProthomAlo	3	1	1	27	60	109
Jugantor	3	2		42	43	115
Samakal		1	1	16	40	78
Ittefaq	5	1	2	47	62	140
Inqilab	2	5	2	18	46	95
NayaDiganta	1	1	2	38	51	115
Janakantha	2	1		14	52	92
AmarDesh	5	5	3	27	34	94
Manabjamin	2	2		6	6	24
AmaderShomoy	0	0	0	5	6	16
The Daily Star	1	0	4	7	33	57
New Age	0	0	0	6	22	36

Editorials and Newspaper	Editorial	% of editorials
ProthomAlo	6	15
Jugantor	5	13
Samakal	6	15
Ittefaq	5	13
Inqilab	1	3
NayaDiganta	2	5
Janakantha	5	13
AmarDesh	1	3
Manabjamin	0	0
AmaderShomoy	0	0
The Daily Star	4	10
New Age	4	10

Authenticity of items and newspapers

Newspapers	Frequency	Percentage of 'no-problem' items per newspaper
ProthomAlo	206	68
Jugantor	137	45
Samakal	135	52
Ittefaq	152	49
Inqilab	110	48
NayaDiganta	166	55
Janakantha	117	57
AmarDesh	117	46
Manabjamin	67	46
AmaderShomoy	31	48
The Daily Star	88	62
New Age	72	59

Issue/topic: Features

	Frequency	% of child-related Features (84)
Abuse and exploitation		
Sexual abuse/harassment	2	2
Physical abuse	3	4
Psychological abuse	2	2
Vulnerability		
Vulnerable children: Street children	5	6
Vulnerable children: Domestic workers	2	2
Vulnerable children: Other hazardous labourers	1	1
Child labour	3	4

	Frequency	% of Features (84)
Vulnerable children-child marriage/teen mothers	3	4
Disability	4	5
Other marginalized groups	1	1
Death by accident	1	1
Children in conflict with the law		
Drug abuse and peddling	1	1
Rights		0
Rescue and Rehabilitation	4	5
Education	13	15
Maternal and Child nutrition	15	18
Healthcare	26	31
Death from health-related reasons	3	4
Reproductive health	1	1
Recreation/sports/culture	6	7
Legal support/Aspects	4	5
Children associations	1	1
Survival	5	6
Lifestyle	5	6
Children and governance		0
Govt. special institutions for children	4	5
Success/Achievements		0
Educational achievements/Talents	5	6
Positive others	3	4

A few features of in-depth stories	Frequency	% of in-depth reports (338)
Seminar/Roundtable/Workshop/Programme	6	2
SSC Result	62	18
Vitamin-A	8	2
Paracetamol Syrup	6	2
WFP Biscuit	1	0
Day Observation	8	2
Incidental	14	4

In-depth and Item Producers	Frequency	% of in-depth reports (338)
Staff Correspondent/Reporter	126	37
Local Correspondent	192	57
Desk Report	8	2
News Agency	3	1
Foreign Correspondent	4	1
	333	99

Issue/topic: In-depth

	Frequency	% of in-depth reports (338)
Abuse and exploitation		
Sexual abuse/harassment	12	4
Trafficking	11	3
Kidnapping	9	3
Physical abuse	12	4
Psychological abuse	3	1
Acid attacks	3	1
Murder	9	3
Suicide	1	0
Vulnerability		
Vulnerable children: Street children	8	2
Vulnerable children: Sex-workers	2	1
Vulnerable children: Domestic workers	6	2
Vulnerable children: Other hazardous labour	9	3
Child labour	16	5
Vulnerable children-child marriage/ teen mothers	11	3
Disability	14	4
Other marginalized groups	6	2
Death by accident	7	2
Accident	1	0
Missing	4	1
Children in conflict with the law		
Drug abuse and peddling	5	1
Drug abuse and peddling	12	4
Police handling/Policy custody/Justice	11	3
Shelter homes/Correction centers	7	2
Rights		
Rescue/Rehabilitation	20	6
Education	132	39
Maternal and child nutrition	24	7
Health care	56	17
Death from health-related reasons	7	2
Reproductive health	7	2
Child birth registration	1	0
Recreation/sports/culture	7	2
Freedom of expression	3	1
Legal support/Aspects	14	4

	Frequency	% of in-depth (338)
Children associations	8	2
Survival	20	6
Lifestyle	10	3
Children and governance		
Govt. policies related to children	4	1
Announcements by govt./ state dignitaries	3	1
Govt. allocations/misuse	2	1
Govt. special institutions for children	3	1
Success/Achievements		
Creativity	3	1
Social contribution	1	0
Academic excellence	73	22
Positive others	5	1

Authenticity of In-depth/issue-based Report	Frequency	% of in-depth (338)
Sweeping statement	12	4
Evidence	7	2
Source weak and vague	45	13
All parties not covered	33	10
No problem	221	65

Clarity of In-depth/issue-based Report (338)	Frequency	% of in-depth (338)
Unanswered questions/Info incomplete	56	17
No problems with clarity	261	77

Angle of In-depth/issue-based Report	Frequency	% of in-depth (338)
Positive	122	36
Negative	216	64

Issue/topic: Angles

	Positive	Negative	Total
Abuse and exploitation	Frequency	Frequency	Frequency
Sexual abuse/harassment	14	112	126
Trafficking	6	70	76
Kidnapping	17	84	101
Physical abuse	4	55	59
Psychological abuse	1	24	25
School corporal punishment		13	13
Acid attacks	2	19	21
Murder	13	172	185
Suicide	1	42	43

	Positive	Negative	total
Vulnerability			
Vulnerable children: Street children	13	14	27
Vulnerable children: Sex-workers	1	2	3
Vulnerable children: Domestic workers	3	21	24
Vulnerable children: Other hazardous labour	7	10	17
Child labour	34	24	58
Vulnerable children-child marriage/mothers	6	29	35
Disability	22	19	41
Other marginalized groups	8	20	28
Death by accident	17	543	560
Accident	1	119	120
Missing	8	60	68
Children in conflict with the law			
Drug abuse and peddling	1	12	13
Violence and abuse	2	38	40
Police handling/Policy custody/Justice	4	32	36
Shelter homes/Correction centres	3	16	19
Rights			
Rescue and Rehabilitation	35	85	120
Education	249	106	355
Maternal and child nutrition	89	136	225
Health care	187	360	547
Death from health-related reasons	21	74	95
HIV/STDs	1		1
Reproductive health	8	14	22
Child birth registration	8	2	10
Recreation/sports/culture	85	27	112
Freedom of expression	3	6	9
Legal support/Aspects	28	160	188
Children associations	29	9	38
Survival	26	37	63
Lifestyle	16	32	48
Children and governance			
Govt. policies related to children	20	7	27
Announcements by govt./ state dignitaries	42	15	57
Govt. allocations/misuse	5		5
Govt. special institutions for children	11	2	13
Success/Achievements			
Creativity	1	3	4
Social contribution	2		2
Academic Excellence.	213	17	230
Positive others	24	4	28

PRINT MEDIA NEGATIVE IMPACT TABLES

Newspapers and Items

	Frequency	Percent
ProthomAlo	1	2.5
AmaderShomoy	1	2.5
The Daily Star	2	5.0
Jugantor	7	17.5
Samakal	1	2.5
Ittefaq	3	7.5
Inqilab	3	7.5
NayaDiganta	3	7.5
Janakantha	5	12.5
AmarDesh	7	17.5
Manabjamin	7	17.5
Total	40	100.0

Item Producers

	Frequency	Percent
Staff Correspondent/Reporter	18	45.0
Local Correspondent	16	40.0
Staff Photojournalist/Artist	2	5.0

Placement by Page

	Frequency	Percent
Front Page	18	45.0
Back Page	7	17.5
Metro Page	2	5.0
National Page	6	15.0
Cultural Page	6	15.0
Health Page	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Placement by Fold

	Frequency	Percent
Upper Fold	22	55.0
Lower Fold	17	42.5
Right Page (For non-broadsheet/ tabloid)	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Negative items by source

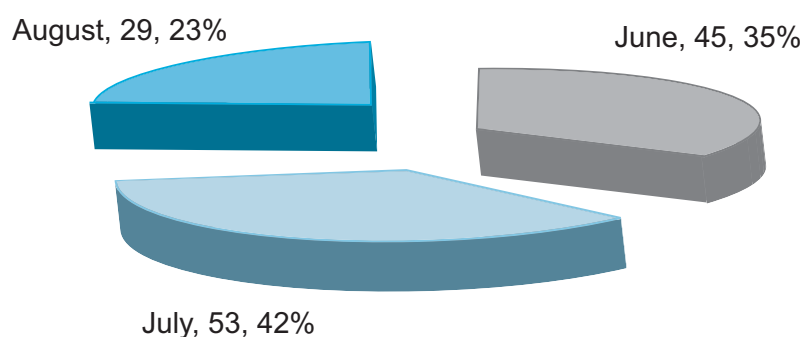
Feature/Special Writers (Page)	3	7.5
News Agency	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

ELECTRONIC MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS DATA

Monthly Coverage

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
June	45	35	35
July	53	42	77
August	29	23	100
Total	127	100	

Child-related items by month



Duration Range

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
0-1 min	76	60	60
1-3 min	42	33	93
3-5 min	8	6	99
5-6 min	1	1	100
Total	127	100	

*The 5-6 minute item was on Vitamin-A

Channels and Item Length

TV Channels	0-1 min	1-3 min	3-5 min	5-6 min
BTV	28	16	2	
ATN Bangla	34	23	5	
Channel-I	14	3	1	1

Channels and Authenticity

	TV Channels		
Authenticity of stories	BTV	ATN Bangla	Channel-I
Sweeping statement	2	5	1
Evidence			3
Source weak and vague		1	
All parties not covered	38	53	13
Too short for assessment	3	2	1
No problem	2	1	1
Total	45	62	19

Channels and clarity of news

Clarity of news	BTV	ATN Bangla	Channel-I
Inconsistent information	14	14	4
Unanswered questions/incomplete information	3	5	1
Focus not clear	24	34	8
Too short for proper assessment	5	5	6
No problems with clarity		2	
Human interest		2	
Total	46	62	19

No negative elements in visuals

Graphics in items	BTV (46)	ATN Bangla (62)	Channel- i (19)
No negative elements	38	48	11

Channels and content-matter: Significant indicators

Content	BTV (46)	ATN Bangla (62)	Channel-I (19)
Representation			
Portrayed as passive victim (in tone)	3	7	7
Portrayed as unimportant	19	25	3
Portrayed as good role models	10	22	5
Presentation/Style			
Violent Description	3	8	4
Stereotypical words/adjectives	1	5	
Out of content statements/Info	1	2	
Using children to evoke sympathy	2	3	
Showing no problem			
Nothing negative in content matter	20	15	3
Too brief for proper assessment	26	28	12
Total Content hits	151	213	66

News Producers

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Staff Correspondent/Reporter	109	86	86
Local Correspondent	17	13	99
Desk Report	1	1	100
Total	127	100	

Special treatment to news

		Frequency	Percent
	Graphics	4	6.6
	Sync	8	13.1
	Phono	1	1.6
	Multiple	48	78.7
	Total	61	100.0
Missing	System	66	
Total	127	100.0	

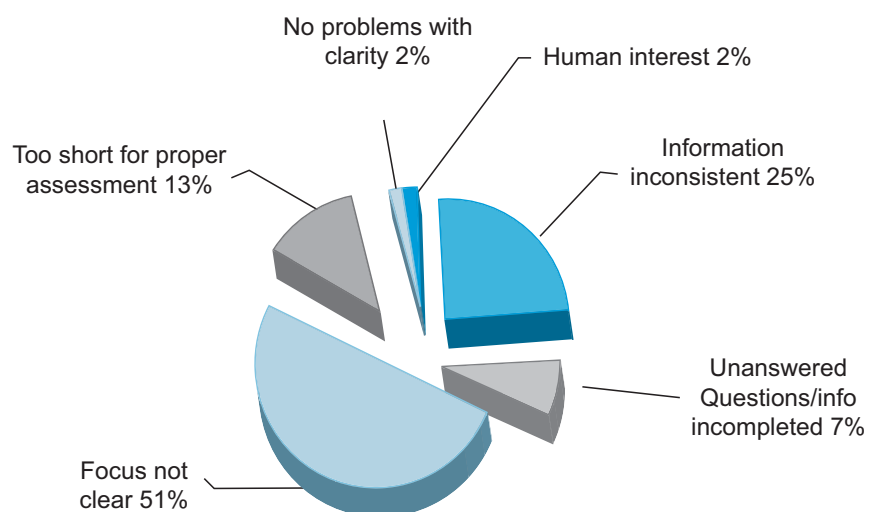
The missing 66 items did not receive any special treatment.

Tone and implications of Content-matter

	Frequency	% of all items=127
Representation		
Portrayed as passive victim (in tone)	17	13
Portrayed as criminal (in tone)	1	1
Portrayed as sexual object (in tone)	1	1
Portrayed as unimportant	47	37
Featuring and promoting role models	0	0
Good role models featured	37	29
Safety and security		
Name of victim/accused child	0	0
Address or other identification of victim/accused child	0	0
Photo/Image of victim/accused child	0	0
Harmful info	0	0
Impact/Consequences		
Stigma/blame/bad image/ negative image attached to child	1	1
Racial/Gender discrimination	0	0
Detailed description of crime/anti-social activities	0	0
Presentation/Style		
Violent Description	15	12
Sexual Provocation	0	0
Sensational	0	0
Presentation of instances in a way that may induce others to follow	0	0
Stereotypical words/adjectives used	6	5

	Frequency	% of all items=127
Violation of privacy	0	0
Insensitivity/Patronizing attitude/Overplay of emotions	0	0
Out of content statements/Info	3	2
Using children for sympathy only	5	4
Showing no problem		
Nothing negative in content matter	38	30
Too brief for proper assessment	66	52

Clarity of items



Issue/topics for Good role models

	Frequency
Vulnerability	
Disability	2
Children in conflict with the law	
Drug abuse and peddling	1
Shelter homes/Correction centres	1
Rights	
Rescue/Rehabilitation	1
Education	13
Nutrition-mother and child	3
Health care	7
Recreation/sports/culture	6
Children associations	2
Lifestyle	3
Children and governance	
Govt. policies related to children	1
Announcements by govt./ state dignitaries	7
Success/Achievements	
Creativity	1
Social contribution	1
Educational Achievements/Talent	3
Positive others	3
Total hits	55

A few features of in-depth reports

	In-depth/Issue-frequency based report (17)
Seminar/Roundtable/Workshop/Programme	5
Paracetamol syrup	2
Help/Problem for health care	2
Day observation	1
Incidental	1

Tone and Implications of content-matter: In-depth stories

	In-depth/Issue-frequency based report (17)
Representation	
Portrayed as passive victim (in tone)	4
Portrayed as criminal (in tone)	1
Portrayed as sexual object (in tone)	
Portrayed as unimportant	4
Portrayed as good role models	8
Stigma/blame/bad image/ negative image attached to child	

	In-depth/Issue-frequency based report
Presentation/Style	
Violent Description	3
Stereotypical words/adjectives	3
Out of content statements/Information	
Using children to elicit sympathy only	3
Showing no problem	
Nothing negative in content matter	3
Too brief for proper assessment	1

Issues/Topics of In-depth stories

Issues/Topics	Frequency	% of In-depth/Issue-frequency based report (17)
Drug abuse and peddling	1	6
Police handling/Police custody/Justice	2	12
Shelter homes/Correction centres	1	6
Education	3	18
Maternal and child nutrition	1	6
Health care	3	18
Death from health-related reasons	1	6
Child birth registration	1	6
Recreation/sports/culture	1	6
Lifestyle	4	24
Announcements by govt./ state dignitaries	3	18
Social contribution	1	6
Other positive stories	1	6
	23	

The four stories in lifestyle comprise a series on Day-care centres broadcast by ATN Bangla.

Some features of coverage

	Frequency	% of all items=127
Seminar/Roundtable/Workshop/Programme	67	52.8
Vitamin-A	8	6.3
Paracetamol syrup	10	7.9
Appeals for help with health problem	2	1.6
Daily News	3	2.4
Incidental	15	11.8

Issue/topics of Govt.-announcements

	No. of items
Seminar/Roundtable/Workshop/Programme	12
Vitamin-A	1
Paracetamol syrup	4
Day observation	1
Incidental	1

Seminar/Roundtable Workshop/Programme: Issue/topics

	No. of Items	Day observation
Education	25	
Health care	7	
Recreation/sports/culture	22	1
Announcements by govt./ state dignitaries	12	1
Maternal and Child Nutrition	4	1
Rescue/Rehabilitation	1	
Lifestyle	1	
Govt. policies related to children	1	
Academic Achievement	4	

Issue/topic: Angles

	Positive	Negative	total	% of positive angles
Kidnapping	1	3	4	
Physical abuse		1	1	
Murder		1	1	
Vulnerable children: Domestic work		1	1	
Child labor		2	2	
Disability	2		2	100
Death by accident		5	5	
Accident		1	1	
Violence and other crime	3	4	7	43
Police handling/Police custody/Justice	3	1	4	
Shelter homes/Correction centres	1	1	2	
Rescue/Rehabilitation	2	4	6	
Education	35	3	38	92
Nutrition-mother and child	6	4	10	60
Health care	14	11	25	56
Death from health-related reasons		1	1	
Reproductive health		1	1	
Birth registration of children	1		1	10
Recreation/sports/culture	23		23	100
Children associations	4		4	100
Survival		1	1	
Lifestyle	5	1	6	83
Govt. policies related to children	2		2	100

	Positive	Negative	total	% of positive angles
Govt. policies related to children	2		2	100
Announcements by govt./ state dignitaries	17	3	20	85
Creativity	3		3	100
Social contribution	1		1	100
Academic Excellence	5		5	100
Positive others	4		4	100

Producers of items and Authenticity, Clarity

Authenticity:	
Percentage of items by staff correspondents with no authenticity problems	3
Percentage of items by local correspondents with no authenticity problems	6
Percentage of items by staff correspondents with All parties not covered	83
Percentage of items by local correspondents with All parties not covered	71

Clarity

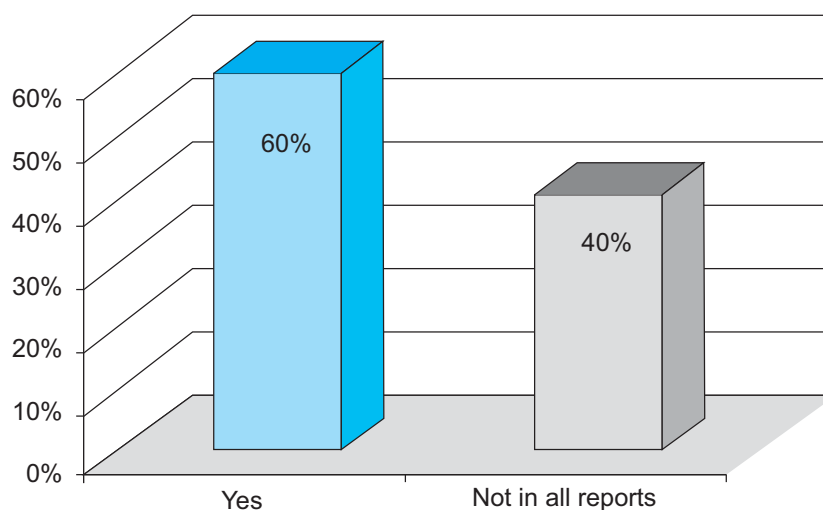
% of items by staff correspondents with no clarity problems	2
% of items by staff correspondents with Focus not clear	53
% of items by staff correspondents with Information inconsistency	21
% of items by staff correspondents too short for proper assessment	15
% of items by local correspondents with no clarity problems	0
% of items by local correspondents with Focus not clear	47
% of items by staff correspondents with inconsistent information	53
% of items by local correspondents with Unanswered Questions	0

Gender of child/children involved

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	9	7.1	7.1
Female	8	6.3	13.4
Both	61	48.0	61.4
Not applicable	49	38.6	100.0
Total	127	100.0	

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY DATA

Is it necessary to seek a child's views?



Does your newspaper/TV report on child-rights issues or on issues concerning children's interest?

Gatekeepers' response

	Frequency	Percent
Often and with importance	10	66.7
Sometimes	4	26.7
No Special reports	1	6.7
Total	15	100.0

Reporters' response

		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	30	38.5
	No	34	43.6
	Do Not Know	14	17.9
	Total	78	100.0
Missing	System	2	
Total		80	

Gatekeepers responses**Question_4: Do you give the reporter special advice/guidelines if a child is involved in an event?**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	93.3
No	1	6.7
Total	15	100.0

Gatekeepers responses**Please identify the topics/issues that may affect children negatively (multiple choice)**

Issues	Number	Percentage
Gruesome Photo	15	100.00
Mutilated Dead bodies	15	100.00
Photos Showing Blood, Mutilated Victims	13	86.67
Sexually Provocative Text/Photo	15	100.00
Detailed Description of Crime/ Antisocial Activities	9	60.00
Negative Role-models	8	53.33
Others	1	6.67

Gatekeepers responses**Mark the issues/events concerning children that you prioritise as important (multiple choice)**

Issues / Types	Number	Percentage
Day's Events Including Accidents	10	66.67
Physical, Psychological and Sexual Abuse	14	93.33
Entertainment	9	60.00
Child Health	13	86.67
Child Education	14	93.33
Child Death	10	66.67
Children's Acts in Conflict with the Law	6	40.00
Others	5	33.33

Reporters responses**Mark the issues/events you cover most involving children (multiple choice)**

Issues	Number	Percentage
Day's Events Including Accidents	37	46.25
Physical, Psychological and Sexual Abuse	51	63.75
Entertainment	26	32.50
Child Health	46	57.50
Child Education	48	60.00
Child Death	32	40.00
Children's Acts in Conflict with the Law	36	45.00
Others	19	23.75

What decision would you take about publishing the name, identification or photo of a child in conflict with the law?

Gatekeepers responses

	Frequency	Percent
Publish	1	6.7
Won't publish	4	26.7
Would consider the matter while weighing the interests of that Child	10	66.7
Total	15	100.0

What decision do you take about disclosing the name, identification or photo of a child in conflict with the law?

Reporters responses

		Frequency	Percent
	Disclose it	8	10.1
	Do not disclose it	19	24.1
	Consider the matter weighing the interests of that Child	52	65.8
	Total	79	100.0
Missing	System	1	
Total		80	

Does your newspaper or TV channel term a child in conflict with the law as a 'criminal'/ 'perpetrator' of a crime? While on court decisions about such a child do you label him/her as a convict?

Gatekeepers responses

		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	8	57.1
	No	6	42.9
	Total	14	100.0
Missing	System	1	
Total		15	

Do you term a child in conflict with the law as a 'criminal'/'perpetrator' of a crime? While writing on court decisions about such a child do you label him/her as a convict?

Reporters responses

		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	42	54.5
	No	35	45.5
	Total	77	100.0
Missing	System	3	
Total		80	

Gatekeepers responses

What Stereotypical Portrayals of children are usually found in the Media? (multiple choice)

Issues	Number	Percentage
Portrayal as victims of crime and abuse	12	80.00
Portrayal as Defiant, Troublemaker, Drug Abuser, Prone to Various Crimes	2	13.33
Children are Innocent, Delicate	3	20.00
Children are Naughty/Unruly	0	0.00
Children are Gifted	10	66.67
A Child can do no Wrong	2	13.33
Others	1	6.67
No Such Portrayal	1	6.67

Reporters responses

What Stereotypical Portrayals of children are usually found in the Media? (multiple choice)

Issues	Number	Percentage
Portrayal as victims of crime and abuse	68	85.00
Portrayal as Defiant, Troublemaker, Drug Abuser, Prone to Various Crimes	12	15.00
Children are Innocent, Delicate	23	28.75
Children are Naughty/Unruly	6	7.50
Children are Brilliant	45	56.25
A Child can do no Wrong	7	8.75
Others	5	6.25
No Such Portrayal	3	3.75

Reporters responses only:

Do you ensure informed consent of the child and/or his/her guardian before talking to a child?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	70	87.5
No	9	11.3
Total	79	98.8
Missing System	1	1.3
Total	80	100.0

Do you ask for consent from the child and/or his guardians before taking photographs of the child?

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	60	80.0
No	15	20.0
Total	75	100.0
Missing System	5	
Total	80	

After the publication of a report, do you check about its effects/repercussion on the child involved?

		Frequency	Percent
	Yes	25	31.6
	No	20	25.3
	Sometimes	34	43.0
	Total	79	100.0
Missing	System	1	
Total		80	

If you see that your questions are adding to the distress of a child that is already distressed or traumatized, what do you do?

	Frequency	Percent
Keep Questioning	2	2.5
Wait and see if s/he gets back to a normal state	37	46.3
Stop questioning and find others for the information	33	41.3
Others	8	10.0
Total	80	100.0

If a child involved in an incident or who is witness to one gives you any information, what do you do with it?

	Frequency	Percent
Use it in the report as a fact	2	2.5
Crosscheck the information before writing	19	23.8
Crosscheck the information while protecting the security of child	58	72.5
Others	1	1.3
Total	80	100.0

Who do you Talk to for Assessing the Impact of Relevant Government Policies and major Events on Child issues (multiple choice)

Issues	Number	Percentage
Talk with Policy /administrative-level persons	61	76.25
Talk with guardians	44	55.00
Talk with social leaders	12	15.00
Talk with experts	60	75.00
Talk with children	28	35.00

CODE SHEETS

ETHICAL REPORTING ON AND FOR CHILDREN: PRINT MEDIA CODE

Codes for National Dailies

ProthomAlo	1
Jugantor	2
Samakal	3
Ittefaq	4
Inqilab	5
NayaDiganta	6
Janakantha	7
AmarDesh	8
Manabjabin	9
AmaderShomoy	10
The Daily Star	11
New Age	12

Codes for Items

Event/spot news	1
Follow-up Report	2
In-depth/issue-based Report	3
Feature	4
Editorial	5
Stand-alone Pictures	6
Opinion reports	7

Item Source Code

Staff Correspondent/Reporter	1
Local Correspondent	2
Staff Photojournalist/Artist	3
Feature/Special Writers (Page)	4
Desk Reports/Desk Compilation	5
News Agency	6
Foreign Correspondent	7
Press Release/Hand Out—without any additional input	8

Heading Size

Single Column	1
Double Column	2
3/C, 4/C, 5/C, 6/C, 7/C	3/ 4/ 5/6/7
Banner	8
Stand-alone Pics S/C	9
Stand-alone Pics D/C	10
Stand-alone Pics 3/C Up to 6/C	11
Stand-alone Pics 7/C and Banner	12

Page Codes

Front Page	1
Back Page	2
News Page	3
Editorial Page	4
Metro Page	5
National Page	6
Cultural Page	7
Women's Page	8
Children's Page	9
Health Page	10
Others	11

Placement Codes

Upper Fold	1
Lower Fold	2

Special Treatment Codes

Boxed	1
<i>Italic</i> Heading	2
Colored Heading	3
Reversed Heading	4
Screen	5
Logo	6
Insert	7
Reports with pictures	8
Multiple	9

Authenticity Code

Info Gaps/Inaccuracy	1
Sweeping Statement	2
Evidence—documentss/Direct observation not cited	3
Source weak and vague	4
All involved parties not covered	5
Too short for proper assessment	6
No Problem	7

Tone and Implications in Content-Matter Code

A. Representation	
Portrayed as passive victims (in Tone)	1
Portrayed as criminals (in Tone)	2
Portrayed as sexual image (in Tone)	3
Portrayed as unimportant, as a mere 'child'—not seeking his/her opinions in matters involving the child	4
Featuring and promoting Role-models	5
Good Role-models featured	6
B. Safety and Security	
Name of Child if s/he is a victim of abuses or in conflict with the law is included	7
Address or other Identification of Child if s/he is a victim of abuses or in conflict with the law is included	8
Photo/Image of Child if s/he is a victim of abuses or in conflict with the law is shown	9
Info that could harm/endanger a child is included	10
C. Impact/ consequences	
Stigma or blame/bad image/negative image attached to child	11
Racial/Gender discrimination is evident	12
Detailed description of crimes or anti-social activities	13
D. Presentation/Style	
Violent Description	14
Sexual provocation	15
Sensational	16
Presentation of Instances in a way that may induce imitative behavior—negative	17
Stereotypical words/Adjectives used	18

Violation of Privacy/Unnecessary personal info	19
Insensitivity /Patronizing attitude/Overplay of emotionsabout child or Situation	20
Out of context statements/Information	21
E. Showing No Problem/Too brief	
Too brief for proper assessment	22
Nothing Negative in content-matter/Positive	23
D. Presentation/Style	
Using children for sympathy only	24

Clarity Problems

Information Inconsistent/Not Authentic	1
Unanswered questions/Incomplete Information (Gaps in context, cause, consequences)	2
Focus not clear/lack of focus	3
Jerks in logical sequence	4
Too brief for proper assessment	5
No problem with clarity/Good and Clear	6

Readability Code

Over use of jargon/difficult vocabulary	1
Sentences are long and complex	2
Lack of flow of language and structure—Ideas or Information/Paragraphs not linked	3
Irrelevant information/Repetition/Unnecessary Length	4
Human Interest	5
Too short for assessment	6
No problem with readability/good	7

Issue/Topic Code

A. Abuse and Exploitation	
Sexual abuse/harassment	1
Incest	2
Trafficking	3
Kidnapping	4
Physical abuse	5
Psychological Abuse	6
School Corporal Punishment	7

Acid Attacks	8
Murder	9
Suicide	10
B. Vulnerability	
Vulnerable children-street children	11
Vulnerable children-sex-workers	12
Vulnerable children-domestic workers	13
Vulnerable Children-Other hazardous labour	14
Child Labour	15
Vulnerable Children-Child marriage/teen mothers	16
Disability	17
Other Marginalised Groups— Adivasis/Scheduled Caste/sex worker's children/Gypsies etc.	18
Death by Accident	19
Accident	20
Missing	21
C. Children in Conflict with the Law	
Drug abuse and peddling	22
Violence and other 'crime'	23
Police handling/Police Custody/ Custody/Justice	24
Shelter Homes/Correction Centres	25
D. Rights	
Rescue/Rehabilitation	26
Education	27
Maternal and child nutrition	28
Health care	29
Death from Health-related Reasons	30
HIV/STDs	31
Reproductive health	32
Child birth registration	33
Recreation/sports/culture	34
Freedom of expression	35
Legal support/Aspects	36
Children associations	37
Survival	38
Lifestyle	39
E. Children and Governance	
Govt. Policies related to children	40
Announcements by Govt./state dignitaries	41
Govt. Allocations/misuse	42

Govt. special institutions for children	43
F. Success/Achievements	
Creativity	44
Innovation	45
Social Contribution	46
Academic achievement/ Talent	47
Positive others	48

Angle of stories/items

Positive	1
Negative	2

Graphics Content Code

No picture	1
Violent/traumatic images	2
Dead bodies	3
Violation of privacy	4
Indecent images	5
Sexually provocative images	6
Glorifying crime/criminals	7
Harmful depiction of Anti-social/Criminal activities	8
Negative Multiple Content	9
No Negative Elements/ Positive Elements	10
Human interest	11
Using children for evoking sympathy only	12

Gender of child/children Involved

Male	1
Female	2
Both	3
Not Applicable	4

Remarks

Two Paragraphs	1
Seminar/Roundtable/Workshop/Programme	2
SSC Result	3
Vitamin-A	4
Paracetamol Syrup	5
WFP Biscuit	6
Academic Achievements/Talent	7
Help/Problem for Health care	8
Day observation	9
Incidental	10

ETHICAL CHILD REPORTING: ELECTRONIC MEDIA MONITORING CODES

TV Code

BTV	1
ATN Bangla	2
Channel-I	3

Codes for Items

Event/spot news	1
Follow-up Report	2
In-depth/issue-based Report	3
Feature	4
Graphics	5

Item Source Code

Staff Correspondent/Reporter	1
Local Correspondent	2
Staff Photojournalist/Artist	3
News Agency	4
Desk Report	5
Foreign Correspondent	6
Producer	7
Press Release/Hand Out—without any additional input	8

When in the news?

1 st Half	1
2 nd Half	2
3 rd Half	3

Treatment of News

In Vision (IV)	1
Out of Vision (OOV)	2
Package (Pkg)	3

Special Treatment

Graphics	1
Sync	2
Phono	3
Vox-pop	4
Lead news	5
Special report	6

1-1 studio discussion	7
Special Sting	8
Headlines	9
Coming up	10
Breaking news	11
Scroll	12
Multiple	13

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Info Gaps/Inaccuracy	1
Sweeping Statement	2
Evidence—documents/Direct observation not cited	3
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All essentially involved parties not covered	5
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Stigma or blame/bad image/negative image attached to child	11
Racial/Gender discrimination in evidence	12
Detailed description of crime/ anti-social activities	13
D. Presentation/Style	
Violent Description	14
Sexual provocation	15
Sensational	16
Presentation of Instances in a way that may induce copy cat behavior	17
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Violation of Privacy/Unnecessary personal info	19
Insensitivity /Patronizing attitude/Overplay of emotions about child or Situation	20
Out of context statements/Info	21
E. Showing No Problem	
Nothing Negative in content-matter/Positive	22
Too brief for proper assessment	23
D. Presentation/Style	
Using children for sympathy only	24

Clarity Problems

Information Inconsistent/Not Authentic	1
Unanswered questions/Incomplete Information (Gaps in context, cause, consequences)	2
Focus not clear/lack of focus	3
Distributions in the logical sequence of the story	4
Too short for proper assessment	5
No problem with clarity/Good and Clear	6
Human Interest	7

Issue/Topic Code

A. Abuse and Exploitation	
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Incest	2
Trafficking	3
Kidnapping	4
Physical abuse	5
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Acid Attacks	8

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Suicide	10
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Vulnerable children-sex-workers	12
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Child birth registration	33
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Day observation	8
Incidental	9

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The image features a background with a light blue and yellow wavy design on the left and a solid blue area with a white dot pattern on the right. The text is located in the bottom left corner.

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