

Digital Transformation in Bangladesh's Media: An In-depth Analysis of Journalists' Opinions

Ameena Islam*

[**Abstract:** Technological advancement is inevitable in today's world. Advancements in technology are having a profound impact on every aspect of human life. Media companies are no different. Adapting to the latest technology is a must to survive in the marketplace. This technological advancement has led to digital convergence, bringing together old and new media in business to grow together. This resulted in a revolutionary transformation in media, opening opportunities to reinvent how they engage audiences and grow revenue in a multimedia environment. Additionally, it made the adjustment process somewhat challenging for the existing employees in certain aspects, as well as for the management of the new media departments within the same organisation. This research aims to elucidate the situation of digital transformation through technological shifts, newsroom management activities, and economic growth resulting from the digital transition. The research method employed here is a qualitative, in-depth interview method. Two media houses, RTV Online, the online portal of a leading broadcast television channel, and Bangladesh Pratidin, the online portal of a leading daily newspaper, were selected for data collection. In-depth interviews with eight journalists from these two media organisations were conducted with a semi-structured questionnaire. This research sought to capture the evolving features of digital transitions in media institutions in Bangladesh, brought about by technological advancements. The interview data show that shifts are visible, and that competition, technological changes, increased audience engagement, and greater flexibility in content production are driving structural change.]

Keywords: *Digital transformation, Newsroom Activities, Management, Bangladesh.*

Introduction

The year 2021 marked 50 years since Bangladesh gained its independence. The country has made significant progress since breaking away from Pakistan. Bangladesh is advancing from the start of then-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 'Digital Bangladesh and Vision 2021' initiative to transform the nation into a technologically advanced society. This effort has become even more crucial since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The Bangladesh government aims to accelerate its digital transformation by integrating digital

* **Ameena Islam** : Associate Professor, Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342, Email: islam.ameena@juniv.edu; islam.ameena@gmail.com

services into government operations and promoting the Information and Communication Technology industry. The development of the ICT industry is central to the digital transformation plans. An important part of the Vision 2021 was 'Digital Bangladesh,' which aimed to bring socio-economic change through information and communication technology. As a result, the 'Digital Bangladesh' concept gained nationwide importance. Development in ICT infrastructure, technological skills, and e-governance has grown significantly. Spurred by widespread digitization across both the public and private sectors, the country has experienced exponential growth in internet connectivity, mobile phone use, IT export earnings, the use of ICT in education, and the accessibility of public services (CRI, 2017).

When the Digital Bangladesh efforts began in 2009, only 20 million Bangladeshis had mobile phones. The aim was to transform Bangladesh into a digital economy by 2021 and a knowledge-based economy by 2041. The Bangladesh Awami League (AL) government included this plan in its 2009 electoral manifesto. The ICT Policy 2009, the ICT Act 2009, and the Right to Information Act 2009 laid the foundation for Digital Bangladesh's priorities. The Digital Bangladesh concept for 2021 established the groundwork for a digital economy. However, full institutionalization, a complete change in behavior, and the delivery of these services through new methods and technologies—replacing the old ones—still need to be achieved (Chowdhury, 2021).

Today, that number has grown to over 120 million and continues to rise. A total of 5,275 digital centers have been established across the country, serving people 120 million times with services such as registering 70 million births and providing essential information to more than 2 million overseas job-seekers. Around 1.3 million ICT professionals and 10,000 ICT entrepreneurs have become self-reliant, helping the country earn about \$300 million over the years and turning Bangladesh into an emerging hub for ICT outsourcing. The total size of the ICT market in Bangladesh was just \$26 million in 2008, reaching \$600 million in 2017. With the launch of the country's first satellite, Bangladesh entered the space age in 2017 (CRI, 2017). Experts attribute the increasing growth rate in the country's GDP per capita, from 6.9 in 2021 to 7.1 in 2022, with a slight decrease in 2023 to 5.8 and 4.2 in 2024 (World Bank, 2024; Trading Economics, December 2024), to the improvements in service delivery through digital adoption across all government departments and nearly every sector of society (Chowdhury, 2022). The service sector contributed 51.04% to Bangladesh's Gross Domestic Product in the fiscal year 2023-24, according to the Ministry of Finance. The growth rate of the information and communication sector for that year was 6.49%, surpassing the growth rates of the past two years (Bangladesh Economic Review, 2024). Additionally, revenue in Bangladesh's media market is expected to reach \$3.23 billion in 2025, driven by increasing shifts toward digital platforms and rising online content consumption among youth (Statista, 2025).

A major shift in the media landscape since the mid-90s, coinciding with the rise of Internet access, has been transforming Bangladesh's media environment. Since the mid-1990s, researchers have observed a proliferation of television broadcasters—including terrestrial, satellite, and transnational channels—that compete for the attention of Bangladeshi audiences, challenging authorities. Currently, there are 39 television channels operating in the country (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GoB, July 2023). Additionally, alongside the surge of private TV stations, there has been a rapid growth of online digital portals and expanded connectivity through social networking sites. The country has 14 successfully operating IPTVs (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GoB, October 2023). Similarly, print media has expanded significantly,

especially in the digital space, with 3,310 newspapers now circulating nationwide (Department of Films and Publications, March 2025). This transformation is driven by various factors, including viewers' insatiable demand for instant audio-visual content, the commercial appeal of TV and print media shifting toward digital expansion, legacy media organizations competing in 'newsroom convergence'—which involves changes in work routines and organizational structures related to content production across platforms—the entry of global tech giants, and broader shifts in the relationship between the state and media. Collectively, these factors help explain how Bangladesh's media industry is evolving, shaped by intricate influences such as the adoption of new technologies and the competitive dynamics of the media market.

Under these circumstances, this study aims to understand and explore how media organisations, both newspapers and television channels, are adapting to changes in their everyday news operations. This also explores the adjustments that media organisations are making to their traditional workflows. Additionally, this study examines the experiences of journalists arising from technological shifts.

Research Questions

This qualitative study aims to get answers to the following questions:

1. What factors influence the transformation of media in Bangladesh?
2. How much have traditional journalism practices changed?
3. How do journalists adapt to the digital transformation?
4. To what extent is new media management viable for Bangladesh's media industry?

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research method to explore and analyse changes in journalistic practices and new media management brought about by the digital transition, and to examine how the media industry in Bangladesh is adapting to this change. Following a qualitative research method, this study seeks to understand the research questions from journalists' perspectives by obtaining specific information about their values, opinions, behaviours, and the social contexts in which they practice their profession (Mack et al., 2005). For Stake (2010), qualitative research relies primarily on human perception and understanding, and it aims to improve how things work. Eight respondents were interviewed using a semi-structured and open-ended questionnaire. The study reached data saturation, at which additional data collection no longer yielded new insights or themes. As recommended by Ahmed (2025) in a qualitative case study, 4-10 cases or a single case-in-depth analysis is standard. Journalists from the online portal of *bd-pratidin.com* (a leading daily newspaper's online portal), the highest circulated newspaper with more than five lacs copies sold every day in 2025 (Boostupads, 2025) and *Rtv.com* (a leading private TV channel's online portal), a fast growing private TV channel which is consistently ranked among the popular TV channels in Bangladesh, were interviewed using a purposive sampling technique. Findings are analysed in thematic explanations. Following the audio recording and transcription of each interview, a thematic analysis was conducted based on participants' opinions. For anonymity purposes, participants were referred to by alphabetical order, like A, B, C, and so on. Due to participants' busy schedules, which were one of the study's limitations, interviews were paused and resumed later. Participants have also expressed reluctance to discuss

issues of financial gain and loss and the pressure that the government and owners have placed on the media.

Literature Review

Society's adoption of technology is always subject to context and conditions. Technology is perhaps the most dramatic force that catalyses change across the media and communication markets (Shapiro and Varian, 1999, cited in Albarran, 2010, p. 28). Albarran (2010) identified five external forces that interdependently transform the media and communication industries worldwide: globalisation, regulation, economies, technology, and social aspects. However, social networking services gained popularity in societies and initiated changes in relationships with governments, and recently, online media emerged as a powerful alternative to journalism in many East Asian countries, including Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan (Torii and Kasuga, 2020, p. 417). Technology does not simply dictate consumer behaviour; it actively influences and shapes it by enabling and encouraging specific forms of engagement (Centre for Media Transition, UTS, 2018). The advancement of communication technologies and the practice of journalism are often intertwined. The role and functions of journalism have undergone revolutionary changes due to digital technologies, and the media is evolving to meet the industry's shifting demands (Mahmud and Nasreen, 2009). However, Mahmud and Nasreen (2009) observed that new communication technologies are gradually but steadily being incorporated into media outlets in developing countries, from the processes of information and entertainment production to delivery and distribution.

Technology plays a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour, though it does not outright dictate it. By providing various tools and platforms, technology encourages consumers to interact in particular ways. For instance, social media and mobile applications foster a sense of community and instant communication, prompting users to engage more with brands and products. Additionally, advancements in data analytics enable companies to better understand consumer preferences and habits, leading to more personalised marketing strategies that further influence purchasing decisions. In this manner, technology acts as a catalyst, guiding and enhancing how consumers connect with products and services. To attract audiences, news producers often have to make their content available to search engines and social media with little or no financial return. Moreover, to satisfy the workings of digital platforms, news producers create content that is more emotive and shareable. Additionally, the contemporary media environment, heavily influenced by new technologies, has introduced new challenges to maintaining journalistic quality: the 24/7 news cycle, algorithms, and the blogosphere. For news consumers, this represents a new information asymmetry (Centre for Media Transition, UTS, 2018).

The conceptual framework of this study draws on insights from Thorstein Veblen's Theory of Technological Determinism. The link between technology, media, and society, and its social and political contexts, can be well understood if we critically develop an in-depth analysis of the theory. This approach views technology as an independent force that can determine a society's development. According to this viewpoint, the features of digital media influence how people interact with one another, leading to specific types of social organisation. Additionally, policy initiatives pertaining to digital technologies or journalism that outline the changes they bring about are required, as digital media are perceived as responsible for changes in economic structures and business models (Delfanti and Arvidsson, 2019). According to research by Hauer, T. (2017), society is shaped and influenced by technological progress, which is essential for adapting to new

technologies and fostering innovation. Technological determinism suggests that as we move from one technological era to another, media technology influences how individuals and society as a whole think, feel, act, and operate (uky.edu, no date). Technological determinism remains popular in mainstream culture even though it has largely fallen out of favour among scholars. It is the idea that technological change is the primary driver of societal transformation. In communication, technological innovation spreads ideas, shaping people and society by bringing individuals together, encouraging participation, and amplifying influence (McKean, 2012). A social movement and significant shifts in communication are produced when online media technology is combined with offline activities. Unbeknownst to them, people have already changed the way of communication; whether they like it or not, they must embrace technology that facilitates connections (Thitivesa, 2017).

Findings and discussions

Bangladesh's media industry is part of the service sector, which accounts for around 51.04 per cent of the GDP growth in the fiscal year 2023-24 (Bangladesh Economic Review, 2024). The contribution of the media as the Fourth Estate lies in both its explicit advocacy and its implicit ability to frame political issues. In addition, the media's role in national development, job creation, and the provision of support services is enormous. The media landscape in Bangladesh is undergoing a transition driven by technological advancements and changing user behaviours. To adapt to these changes, media organisations plan to rearrange their existing workforce and resources. Viewers' shift to online and interactive media has lured traditional media organisations to reach and capture this audience through their online expansion. Viewers enjoy digital technology for media consumption. Digital transformation made media consumption freer and easier to access. Traditional media organisations adopted digital technology and transformed accordingly to keep their existence and show their presence in the digital world to some extent. In other words, media organisations were forced to shift to digital manoeuvring due to changes in audience media usage patterns. Innovations in technology created a new market for device-oriented media use. Audiences now watch TV news via links posted by publishers, watch movies on mobile phones with Netflix subscriptions, and enjoy short dramas on YouTube. Consequently, traditional media organisations expanded their media ventures into new platforms to reach audiences who were already there.

Technology is the deciding factor for the transition

Participant F (Online Chief, *Bangladesh Pratidin Online*) opined that the technological change ushered in the rest of the changes. In the early stages of our online version, the sites were just static copies of the print version. Gradually, we moved to hourly updates and then shifted to an online platform streaming with digital wings, he continued. However, management has to be equipped with the resources and implement the policies. Some push-pull service policies and device-oriented techniques for content dissemination across multiple platforms require management decisions and financial investment (Participant B, Deputy Online Chief, *Rtv Online*). Online sub-editor (*Bangladesh Pratidin*, Participant H) expressed that in the age of globalisation, everything is becoming digitalised. The Internet has created an enormous scope for online activities. People are thinking paperless. Everything is virtual. The world is discovered in one click. This shift in the audience's news and information habits, driven by technological advancement, has prompted media managers to think and implement new media ventures. Participant C (Online Business Chief, *Rtv Online*) observes that initially, a few people ran the online

business. Now, all media houses are gradually becoming visible online, which is the demand of the new age. Technology is advancing by the minute, and this has led to competition among media to keep up. Senior Online Chief (*Rtv Online*, Participant D) explains that as most of the press moved towards technological shifts, it became a challenge for the rest of the media to compete and keep up. Consequently, most media organisations now have separate sections, online and digital. Participant A (Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) expressed in the same manner that:

Technological changes, along with the advancement of the new age and time, have compelled all media organisations to shift to online ventures. Survival competitions are a necessity. This is the age of market competition. We need to be updated every minute. We need to deliver the latest to satisfy the audience's know-it-all thirst.

Competition for more income and audience is high on the horizon

In this study, most participants mentioned two reasons for pursuing online endeavours. One is the changes in the audience's media use habits. Participant F (Online Chief, *Bangladesh Pratidin Online*) observes that the audience has time limitations. They do not have enough time to sit in front of the TV for a particular program or the news. As Participant H (Online sub-editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin Online*) sees it, 'the audience wants different media to be on online platforms.' The innate nature of broadcast is that if you miss the transmission at a specific time, you cannot rewind it.

On the other hand, any video or any content published online is there forever. Unless withdrawn or made private, it is saved forever. The audience can consume online content at their convenience. Participant G (In-charge Online International Desk, *Bangladesh Pratidin Online*) observes that everybody is online. It's a global phenomenon. This is the digital age. Everyone thrives on updates and frequently checks them. Audiences crave the latest.

The other important reason for going with the online venture is the income lure or the opportunity to increase revenue. Participant C (Online business chief, *Rtv Online*) mentions that online has become a strong source of additional income for the traditional media. Channels sometimes publish many exclusive pieces online and on digital/social media platforms, which get more views than traditional broadcast, and these extended views bring them extra money. In addition, on the more positive side, they reach more audiences with their content, he added. Participant E (The Editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) expresses in his fashion, 'the whole globe is dependent on the Internet, which is a strong source of revenue. Again, to reach the maximum audience, we need to be online.' Participant A (Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) puts it interestingly:

The utility of new media is far greater than that of old media. Online has helped traditional media sell their content to multiple platforms, leading to the speedy transformation towards media convergence.

This study scrutinises the professionals working in the online and social media departments of TV channels and online print media, and the work they perform, to ascertain how TV channels and online print media are managing their new media ventures. The majority of the workforce of online and social media departments is young and a comparatively new face in the journalism profession. As participant F (Online Chief, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) explains briefly:

we started with print journalists; however, now many are recruited from an online working background. We even hire people from a digital marketing background so that they can boost our sales. Online sales and marketing

demand different kinds of sales techniques. We need to know how story impressions are created, how pixels work for better visibility, how advertising needs to be fitted in different output devices, etc.

As of today, most senior-level journalists work in broadcast TV or traditional print newspapers. A few mid- or senior-level journalists are appointed from the same channel's broadcast department or the same newspaper to the online and digital media sections as in charge and with extended responsibilities.

Online and digital media workforce features

The online and digital media workforce has a mixture of old (not in the sense of age) and new people. Participant E (The Editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) mentions:

The new generation works in online media outlets. However, our media's information-gathering team is comparatively old and experienced. On the contrary, the new generation of journalists is more engaged in information and news-making activities for online and digital outlets.

However, the top-level positions are held by professionals with long working experience in print or traditional broadcasting in Bangladesh. The job requirements for an online top-level position are pretty demanding. As participant D (Senior Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) sees it, 'the top position in any online portal should possess knowledge and skills about online content management, workforce management, and workflow management. In reality, there is a crisis of a skilled workforce that can meet the requirements of a top executive online.' Participant H (Online sub-editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin Online*) puts it, 'most of the resource persons are from a print background. However, online communication requires knowledge of information and communication technology to function properly. Thus, in our online unit, we hire tech-savvy young people.' Participant B (Deputy Online Chief, *RTV Online*) observes that most of the journalists working at *RTV Online* have a print background; interestingly, they are not from our broadcast TV section. He said, 'We also have new journalists working as interns. After a certain period of training, they are hired permanently.'

Participant G (In-charge Online International News Desk, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) further explains that most online journalists are new in terms of service duration. He continues:

The thing is, online journalism is a blend of new and old journalists. The old have experience handling critical and ethical issues, whereas the new journalists have the talent to make content quickly and present platform-oriented ways. The new journalists are usually university graduates from a communication, journalism, and technology education background.

The job descriptions for broadcast and online are quite different, as are the daily news management tasks. Participant B (Deputy Online Chief, *RTV Online*) explains how a single central management manages both outlets (*RTV Broadcast* and *RTV Online*). 'The central policy directs both online and broadcast *RTV*. Furthermore, the editorial decisions are independently handled, but the online *RTV* depends on the news provided by the broadcast journalists. We share the same news sources,' he expanded.

However, the old group has limited or little skill and know-how in technology handling. This creates a gap between the top tier and the low or middle-tier sections of journalists working in these new media platforms. As a result, the overall performance of

most TV channels' online and digital media outlets has not met expectations. Participant H (Sub-editor, *RTV Online*) explains that, in practice, content production for online and digital media is comparatively easy; however, handling technology and understanding the digital audience are quite complex, he continued. The Editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin* (Participant E) argues that, like the old, new online and digital media journalists sometimes lack the know-how of tech handling. One might think that creating a short video and uploading it to the Facebook page is so easy. However, they have little idea about the community guidelines for this type of content, he also observed that, though the demand for a technologically sound and skilled workforce is high in the fast-growing online and digital media organisations in Bangladesh.

This has an impact on the making process and the purpose of online and social media content. Participant B (Deputy Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) argues that though the original content is the same and shared across the departments of the TV channel, the making process and purpose of online and social media content being somewhat different have made it not so convenient for the TV people to engage. Online and social media content is sometimes remade, improvised, and changed from the formal TV screen content. Professionals in the online and social media section complete this job.

Online and broadcast management are quite different. Participant G (In-Charge, International News Desk, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) shares:

'We share the same organisational umbrella but are managed by different unit heads. Online has its chief, and broadcast has its, too. Also, the news publishing process is quite different. Since technology is different by nature, so is the publishing process. Broadcast news-making takes time and team efforts, whereas online is fast, and a single person can prepare and publish stories for a certain time. However, online is preferred by many as it is suitable for the spirit of the age and economically viable.'

Again, it can be noted that social media or online media have little or no limit on showing or presenting content, which formal TV or traditional mainstream media have. In addition, the target group for online and social media has somewhat different tastes, and this requires careful observation, which is a different task. This has no connection to a TV screen.

However, most print newspapers started with the rearrangement of employees from the print version. Later on, some new people with technological know-how have been appointed for the online. These new people are basically from other web-based news portals and have some work experience in handling digital technology. Some newspapers' online portals have even hired marketing people who have already worked in the digital marketing area. Participant E (The Editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) elaborates:

We need IT services every minute. They check the portal's functionality, visibility, and online boosting; if the site is down, they work on it; they work in the background; if any additional segment is decided, the IT department creates that option; and the IT department also oversees the site's security from hackers.

Online or digital marketing is quite different from print media marketing. It is not just about attracting column-inch advertisements; online and digital media platform marketing needs to understand impressions, hits, and pixels, and their relationship with audience views, which are very platform-specific. In the digital world, product advertisements are not the only source of income; there are many innovative ways to earn money.

Structural changes are underway in online and digital media ventures

One of the crucial observations came from participant A (Online business chief, *Rtv Online*), who said that organisational change is inevitable as the digital world transforms. Participant F (Online Chief, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) observes that structural changes, such as the expansion of office space, the increase in the number of employees, investment, and income revenue, have all changed. For online functionality, additional setups of machines and equipment, space, workforce, web development, and a separate marketing team were established, as mentioned by participant C (Online business chief, *Rtv Online*).

Initially when the traditional mainstream media was adopting to the tit bit of digital technologies, TV channels were holding a static page of online portal or a mere page on social media sites, however, with the progress of time online and social media sites started to gain popularity and traditional media houses began to emphasise the activities and presence on their online and social media pages, participant A (Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) continued. Participant C (Online business chief, *Rtv Online*) explains succinctly:

An online venture itself is a structural change for any traditional media house. New men, new machines, new culture, new income sources, new presentation styles, and a new audience - this is online. Bringing all these phenomena under one umbrella is quite a structural shift.

Social media and online portals are now an integrated part of mainstream media. Traditional mainstream media now even have a presence on multiple platforms, with varying content specifications. For instance, for news content, TV channels maintain several streaming lines; for entertainment content, separate platforms; and for content categories such as sports, children, health, politics, and foreign events, channels maintain separate streaming lines, participant E (The Editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) elaborated.

An essential aspect of this transition is that, a few years ago, during the initial adoption phase, the online and social media streaming platforms were maintained and monitored by the TV channel's broadcast or production department. At the beginning, the online portal was just like print media. TV news packages were converted into online news scripts, participant G (In-charge Online International News Desk, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) mentions. Participant A (Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) recalls, 'We started with online, now we have a digital media section for platform content streaming. 'Online has a separate server, archive, office space, staff, equipment, and operations,' participant H (Online sub-editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) mentions.

However, the last couple of years saw tremendous growth in internet connectivity and mobile phone use, which pushed the big TV channels, for example, *SomoyTV*, *DBC News*, *EkattorTV*, *Channel24*, and *JamunaTV*, to go for separate setup and management arrangements for their online and social media ventures. Most channels now operate online media businesses and digital media departments along with their traditional broadcast. These online and digital media operate under separate and independent sections and workforces. However, the administration, human resources, and accounts departments are the same for all. Participant H (Online sub-editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) elaborates:

The print and online units share the same resource people for news gathering. However, news writing and preparation for the online and digital units are handled separately. Though print is independent and self-sufficient, the online unit is not. Online relies on print resources for its everyday operations, as online does not have reporters dedicated to online only. Online and print coordinate with everyday functions.

Another development here is seen in that channels that are doing good business are now hiring new people for their online and digital media departments, and the reporters/news team are independently gathering news and views for the digital and online media outlets, respectively. The top positions and the sectional head or person in charge are appointed separately; the online and digital media departments maintain their hiring and firing, job division, and responsibilities. This is gradually showing a trend of working independently and relying on unique production content by the online and digital media departments, which are not available on screen. This shows the trend of adopting an independent editorial policy for each of the ventures under the same ownership. Under their editorial policy, whenever required, the Digital Media section takes assistance from the broadcast and online departments. The news and programme departments of broadcast TV and online portals take cooperation from the digital media section in the same way, following an in-house procedure.

Organisational structures needed to be changed in the new work environment. For most of the TV channels in Bangladesh, convergence meant readjustment with little extension of work routine and staff management. *RTV* has a separate team of content creators/writers who work solely for the website's purpose. On the other hand, all other contents (news, views, and entertainment) for the online and digital media departments are of a shared nature. Reporters are shared across the broadcast TV and online portal, and the news desk of the online portal mainly reproduces the TV content in a web-specific format. The broadcast department shares the video content for the online department and social media. However, the massive demand for content for online and digital media (social media) is provided by the reporters of the TV channel. The office premises are very much the same. *RTV* is an entertainment-based channel. The news content is comparatively low in quantity. However, *RTV's* online portal produces more news content than broadcast TV. For this reason, the channel's reporters work more to provide the extra news content for the online and digital media streaming.

Most print newspapers operate their online versions with print professionals. The old print media professionals work as extended support workers for the online outlet, just as the online chief still works as a makeup editor in a specialised page of the print version of *Bangladesh Pratidin*. Also, whenever needed, the online chief takes guidance from the print news department. Staff reporters and district correspondents are the same for both print and online outlets. Only the news desk is separate. This is to maximise resource utilisation and earn more money from a single investment. The Editor (*Bangladesh Pratidin*, participant E) explains that at *Bangladesh Pratidin*, online marketing, news section, tech team, and revenue are all handled separately. We share content mostly. However, many pieces of content are produced independently, both in print and online formats. We coordinate.

However, the resource flow is hierarchical. Most reporters cover events for print first, then, upon demand, send the duplicate copy for the online. Participant B (Deputy Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) observes that every print media outlet has an online version. However, everybody runs with their existing journalists working for both outlets. Those who work in print media also work for its online version. This is because the online version and digital media streaming are deemed as a subsidiary of the mainstream print. Furthermore, sometimes special, exclusive, or scoop news, even if produced by the online department, is decided to be published in the print version. The print version's sale is the top priority. Day's events are easily published online and in print independently, but the special or investigative news reports are published in the print version first. *Bangladesh Pratidin* print newspaper prioritises capturing the newsprint reader more than attracting

online viewers. The 'online first' strategy is not for mainstream media that has expanded to online and digital platforms. The mainstream print media still gives top priority to their print venture. If everything is available online, then there is a risk of losing print readers and their interests. However, the online-only portals can directly publish their scoop news or investigative news on their online page. Participant E (The Editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin*, print) expresses vividly:

print is still the primary concern for management. Stories are considered for print version first, and then they appear online. Hence, the daily news of happenings is considered equally and breaks equally in both media, but the specials or scoops are mainly considered for the print version first, and then they appear online. This is because if the online readers read the news online first, then they will no longer go for the print stories. However, those outlets appearing only online can break the news as fast as possible.

The flow of materials and contents is mainly from the upward print version to the downward online version. It can be said that the shared resources are primarily mobilised from the mainstream print *Bangladesh Pratidin* to its online version. So, *Bangladesh Pratidin* tries to keep the face of their print and online very special and unique. Participant F (Online Chief, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) speaks of another noticeable attitude and perception change trend among the working journalists, showing that they are willingly sending copy to their respective online outlets because they see this as an added benefit to publish their stories on dual platforms (print and online) and get multiple exposures and many more audiences.

Skills to manage the newly digitised work environment

First and foremost, complete knowledge about the new media is utterly essential to operate and survive in the digital world. Online sub-editor of *Bangladesh Pratidin* (Participant H) rightly expressed that 'journalists with a background in digital media handling are in high demand now. Bangladesh is lagging behind in this aspect.' Secondly, fully knowing and understanding the audience or audience research is very crucial. A newspaper comes with a complete package. Readers get what is offered by the newspaper on a particular day as a whole package for the fixed subscription price. Once it is sold, it is done for the subscription price that the paper gets. Also, the newspaper receives valuable money from advertisers for the space sold in the advertisements. If any news or any content from that particular day's newspaper is not read or seen by the reader, the paper still gets the subscription price. However, for online portals, all content must be viewed by the viewers. Viewing means earning. Every content is independently separate. Thousands can view one national news, but one sports news might not get that many views. As such, knowing which beat has more views, when the audience is most active, and which section of the audience likes what type of content matters a lot in online and social media operations. Online and digital media employees need to be vigilant 24/7. Google Analytics helps monitor how content is going. With the help of these applications, which content is most read, and how long readers continue, every development can be observed. On the employee side, most of the young workforce is user-minded. They know how to use tech platforms; however, they lack the perspective of platform management. Professional technological skill improvement training is essential to keep the online and digital media team up to date. Participant A (Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) notices a change in work culture. Now, collaboration and team effort within the

broadcast and online outlets are vital for media survival. The old workforce has to be open to change and speed, he continued.

Online management should make quick decisions, check facts, and publish as soon as possible. Participant G (In-charge Online International News Desk, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) expects that management should understand the employee mentality, work as a bridge between employees and employers, and have excellent IT knowledge; they should also have extensive knowledge of real user data.

Income sources and fund allocation

Media engagements with different platforms have increased tremendously. This has led to an increase in media content production and income sources. Participant A (Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) mentions that the broadcast has limited income sources compared to the online outlets. Online platforms have different ways of earning. Firstly, it depends on the website's online traffic. The number of views the portal has received in a definite period of time is measured, and the monetisation level determines the amount of money to be paid by Google through Google AdSense. Secondly, online portals can earn from showing logos, sponsored ads for live online publishing, and direct pop-up ads on online websites. These are mainly paid advertisements. Television channels can earn money through streaming content on digital media platforms like Facebook and YouTube. Google AdSense pays a share depending on the views of the content. Another way of getting money is from sponsor ads. Participant C (Online business chief, *Rtv Online*) mentions that advertisements shown and managed through Google, YouTube, and Facebook have different values for different brands. Universal brands and local brands have different rates. Attracting foreign or universal brands depends on the territory and language specifications. A few Bangladeshi TV channels and newspapers started creating content in the English language to catch the eyes of international viewers and attract international advertisements. Participant F (Online Chief, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) rightly expressed:

Online unit management is quite different. Making content decisions and monitoring them every minute is essential for any professional site. User clicks, story hits, and audience comments are all analysed regularly. Sometimes, after observing the story hits, the online desk prepares new and side stories with fresh angles.

The earning process for online and digital media is comparatively more straightforward. Advertisers are making online and digital media platforms their first choice for ad positioning. A noticeable amount of money from the advertisers' budget is going to online and digital platforms rather than the traditional mainstream print, broadcast, radio, books and film markets. Here, a significant competition is going on between the web-based online portals and the digital platforms. Trends show that digital media streaming controlled and managed by the big tech giants is attracting more ad revenue than web-based news and entertainment portals, participant C (Online business chief, *Rtv Online*) observed. Web-based online media outlets earn revenue from Google AdSense and local small-scale direct advertisements. Some promotional contents go on display, and portals earn money from this. From Facebook streaming, media outlets earn in two ways. For text content, Facebook gives ads such as 'instant article ad' and 'creator studio ad' for video content.

Fixed or direct advertisements (minimum 15 days up to one year), click advertisement, CPM (by click from Google), Google AdSense, Welcome ad, and pop-up

ad are all different types of advertisements. Advertisements are mainly counted by 'click' and 'seen, viewed, or observed' categories. Local third-party ad is another source of income for online outlets. Google has created a bigger marketplace for the media. However, the negotiation power of the publisher is limited. These tech giants do have a monopoly and have different rates for different regions, which are solely dependent on their business terms. Participant C (Online business chief, *Rtv Online*) vividly expressed:

The tech giants are like a necessary evil. The innumerable user base of social networking sites has allowed each of us to reach an uncountable number of audience or receivers for our messages within a second. This might have taken several months for traditional media before the Internet age. Facebook, YouTube, or any other platform has given us this scope. Yet, the spread of rumors, fake news, misinformation, or disinformation, and the virulence of such content have posed serious threats and challenged the ethical and objective practice of journalism. We have to adapt to the fact-checking techniques, which are in turn the products of big manufacturers who control the platforms.

Challenges to meet

The new media departments would need to emphasise two different matters: content creation and presenting that content on specific platforms. Market research and audience analysis of each platform are crucial to making this venture economically viable and publicly successful.

Digital content creator, content writer, or copywriter for online media: these terms are very new in news media. Required educational institutional learning opportunities are scarce for this specific job. On the other hand, being a new job market, the learning opportunities from professional bodies or under an organisational structure are also limited in Bangladesh. As a consequence, when TV channels hire journalists or technologists, most of them do not come from the required field and do not have the required skills. The necessary number of journalists is managed by the TV channels either as trainees or interns with a nominal salary or from the traditional broadcast or production section of the same organisation to work in the online and digital media departments with some salary and role adjustments. Participant A (Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) observes that sometimes, the new workforce is paid less than the old. However, we think the new workforce is in the driving seat. The third way of hiring or recruiting workforce for this new venture is by circular or job vacancy announcements. Some skilled and qualified people are hired from the circulation process, which is very nominal for running challenging online and digital media ventures. This mixing of skilled and non-skilled workers with varying experiences and divergent levels of capabilities makes the online and digital media team an imbalanced one. Obviously, the output is somehow compromised, and the management of such a team becomes challenging. The gap between experiences and skills makes the team vulnerable to professional jealousy and tensions, and the payment structure is also not well-planned. Participant B (Deputy Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) observes that experienced but not skilled individuals get higher payment while inexperienced but skilled or apt at technology handling get less, altogether creating division among colleagues. This scenario is not conducive to this sectoral growth.

Meeting the corporate agenda sometimes takes a toll. As participant F (Online Chief, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) expresses candidly:

Our perils are not visible from the outside. Every corporate media outlet has its agenda. This is not to say that these agendas are implemented in everyday affairs all year long. Also, this is not at the cost of the audience's truth-seeking

thirst. Even though the owners sometimes expect their agendas to be fulfilled. How journalists handle this is a matter of compromise and bias.

National media laws also complicate things. As participant A (Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) explains, 'We need to filter many content. Many items are often omitted from the list. Though we have not directly faced any lawsuit under the Digital Security Act of 2018, its purposeful and intentional use to curtail citizens' voices and dissidents is intimidating for us.'

The transition was not easy. Participant E (The Editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin*, print) observes that skill development and smooth delivery of journalistic works are both needed adequately for online ventures. The media house needs to keep abreast of the times. Chasing time to be in the competition is very challenging. Competition with national competitors and attracting the international diaspora with timely and accurate content is tough. Participant D (Senior Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) elaborates more vividly:

The competition to grab the audience's attention and make money also greatly pushed the change. The time factor and cross-checking of facts are key to being competitive. The rigorous checking of facts like names, numbers, places, and proper attributions of accused and plaintiffs is key to sensible reporting. The treatment of news is crucial. Again, using pictures should be sensible; follow-up news also needs continuous monitoring to be competitive.

Big media conglomerates are controlling the media market globally. Once, television and radio were a challenge for print media; now, mobile journalism, new media, and social media platforms are a challenge for broadcasting, participant A (Online Chief, *Rtv Online*) postulates.

Google has created an enormous marketplace for products. However, for this visibility, the tech giants are claiming much more, which sometimes takes a face like a monopoly, participant F (Online Chief, *Bangladesh Pratidin*) expresses.

Compliance with the tech platforms' community guidelines and standards and fact-checking efforts are the challenging technological aspects that the online and digital media team should adhere to and be vigilant about. There is a matter of concern that the tech giants mostly set the community guidelines and fact-checking standards, and these are mostly Western viewpoints that sometimes collide with the regional or local perspectives. This creates substantial operational problems for the local media outlets to comply with. As participant H (Sub-editor, *Bangladesh Pratidin Online*) makes careful remarks that social media is becoming a growing source of news and information for the press. However, the use of social media sources in any media organisation requires careful decision-making.

Time management is a big challenge. Timely fact-checking is crucial to getting Google's count or revenue. Online and digital media departments run on a strict schedule. Responsible journalism is very hard to maintain in a fast-moving media environment. As participant G sees it, updates and uplinking require 24/7 vigilance. *Bangladesh Pratidin* has adjusted by a cent per cent with the new tech advancements. We publish once a week from New York and London. We are among the top five most popular news media online. We have a considerable audience presence on our website. We believe that gimmicks and glamour last for a few hours, but professionalism lasts a lifetime, she expressed vividly.

Dealing with fake news with responsible journalism has become a matter of reputation and credibility. Tech platforms' fact-checking guidelines monitor potential

copyright violations and other legal issues in information dissemination. In addition, national laws and regulations governing media and online communication pose challenges to the management and functioning of media in the new media ecology.

Conclusion

The media landscape of Bangladesh is rapidly changing. An increase in the number of online and digital media outlets is apparent. In addition, the media industry's economic growth is evident. A noticeable change in workforce management in media organisations is ongoing. Creating ideas to grow advertising sales is one of the major drivers that media managers feel necessary to make ends meet. Blending new employees with old employees and integrating new technological skills with long-standing journalism professional experience is not easy for media managers. However, the media convergence and digital transition have raised professional and ethical issues that this study finds challenging for most media organisations in Bangladesh. The mingling of some media outlets in certain malpractice has led to unchecked and unedited content going public. This conflicts with objectivity.

The online media must oversee national sovereignty issues. Readers' choices and privacy, conflict with the state and the court, uncovering corruption, and protecting the right to information are all vital for online media management. Another worrisome fact is that many traditional media management still do not acknowledge the online and digital media outlets as mainstream media. Salary discrimination is apparent between online and traditional broadcast media professionals. Furthermore, the control mechanisms of the big tech giants are placing a burden on the new media ventures in Bangladesh's media. Big tech companies hold confidential information about their users. They steal sensitive and confidential information from targeted sources. Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be used for targeted abuse and killing. AI runs with data. The more data, the more powerful the AI model. We, the online users, are continuously sharing our private, individual, and even organisational data across various social media platforms. When we use Google Maps, Google can track our location; Facebook asks for our contact list, which can then identify our network identity; Chrome, as a browser, remembers every password we use; and many other examples confirm that our lives are under constant surveillance.

References

- Ahmed, S. K. (2025) 'Sample size for saturation in qualitative research: Debates, definitions, and strategies'. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*. Vol. 5, April. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2949916X24001245> (Accessed: 02 February 2025).
- Albarran, A. B. (2010) 'The Transformation of the Media and Communication Industries'. Media Markets Monographs, N11. *Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra*.
- Bangladesh's Digital Revolution. (March, 2017) Center for Research and Information. Dhaka: Bangladesh. Available at: <https://cri.org.bd/publication/digital-revolution/Bangladesh's%20Digital%20Revolution.pdf> (Accessed: 07 September 2024).
- Bangladesh Economic Review. (2024) 'GDP, Savings and Investment'. *Ministry of Finance*. Available at: <https://mof.portal.gov.bd> (Accessed: 12 April 2025).
- BoostUpAds. (2025) 'Top newspapers in Bangladesh'. Available at: <https://www.boostupads.com/top-newspapers-in-bangladesh/> (Accessed: 12 October 2025).

- Centre for Media Transition. (UTS) (2018) The impact of digital platforms on news and journalistic content.
- Chowdhury, A. (25 December 2021) 'Digital Bangladesh to innovative Bangladesh: The road to 2041'. *UNDP Bangladesh*. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/bangladesh/blog/digital-bangladesh-innovative-bangladesh-road-2041> (Accessed: 16 June 2025).
- Chowdhury, A. (20 February 2022) 'Digital Bangladesh to innovative Bangladesh: The road to 2041'. *Dhaka Tribune*. Available at: <https://www.dhakatribune.com/317126> (Accessed: 05 May 2025).
- Delfanti, A. and Arvidsson, A. (2019) *Introduction to Digital Media*. Wiley Blackwell.
- Department of Films and Publications. (March 2025). Available at: www.dfp.gov.bd (Accessed: 12 April 2025).
- Hauer, T. (2017) 'Technological determinism and new media'. *International Journal of English, Literature and Social Science (IJELSS)*, 2(2), 1-4.
- Mack N, Woodsong C, MacQueen Kathleen M, Guest G and Namey E. (2005) 'Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector's Field Guide', *Family Health International*, USA.
- McKean, D. (2012) 'IT Strategy & Technology Innovation'. *BookBoon* - The eBook Company.
- Mahmud, S. and Nasreen, G., (2009) 'Net switching in journalism education in Bangladesh: Problems and prospect', *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, January.
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GoB. (July 2023). Available at: www.moi.gov.bd (Accessed: 12 May 2025).
- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GoB. (October 2023). Available at: www.moi.gov.bd (Accessed: 10 June 2025).
- Stake, R. E. (2010) 'Qualitative Research: Studying How Things Work'. The Guilford Press, NY.
- Statista (January 2025) Media – Bangladesh. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/outlook/amo/media/bangladesh> (Accessed: 09 April 2025).
- Technological Determinism Theory. (no date). The University of Kentucky. Available at: <https://www.uky.edu/~drlane/capstone/mass/determinism.htm> (Accessed: 10 October 2025).
- Thitivesa, V. (30 August 2017) 'Technological Determinism & Social Media'. Available at: <https://medium.com/@vorapilailuckthi/technological-determinism-social-media-9232614920ef> (Accessed: 14 February 2024).
- Torii, A. and Kasuga, N. (2020) In M. Bjorn von Rimscha (Ed.) (2020) *Management and economics of communication*. De Gruyter.
- Trading Economics (December 2024) 'Bangladesh GDP growth rate'. Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/bangladesh/gdp-growth> (Accessed: 13 April 2025)
- World Bank (2024) 'GDP growth (annual %) –Bangladesh'. Available at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=BD> (Accessed: 12 April 2025)

[সার-সংক্ষেপ : আজকের বিশ্বে প্রযুক্তির অগ্রগতি অনিবার্য। মানব জীবনের সকল পর্যায়ে প্রযুক্তির অগ্রগতি প্রভূত প্রভাব বিস্তার করেছে। গণমাধ্যম এর বাইরে নয়। বাজারে টিকে থাকতে হলে সর্বাধুনিক প্রযুক্তির ব্যবহার অত্যাবশ্যকীয়। প্রযুক্তির অগ্রগতির কারণে ব্যবসায়িক সাফল্য পেতে নিউ মিডিয়া ও মূলধারার গণমাধ্যমের মধ্যে সম্মিলন ঘটছে। এর ফলে গণমাধ্যম জগতে একটি যুগান্তকারী পরিবর্তন এসেছে যেখানে অডিয়েন্স

সম্পৃক্ততার এবং মাল্টিমিডিয়া প্ল্যাটফর্মে আয় বৃদ্ধির নতুন নতুন সুযোগ সৃষ্টি হচ্ছে। যদিও এই পরিবর্তনের কারণে কিছু কিছু ক্ষেত্রে একই প্রতিষ্ঠানের মূলধারার গণমাধ্যমে কাজ করেছেন এমন পেশাজীবীদের খাপ খাইয়ে নিতে এবং অনলাইন ডিপার্টমেন্টের ব্যবস্থাপনার মধ্যে সমন্বয়ে জটিলতার সৃষ্টি হচ্ছে। এই গবেষণায় ডিজিটাল রূপান্তরের প্রক্রিয়ার কারণে প্রযুক্তির অভিনব ব্যবহার, সংবাদ কক্ষের ব্যবস্থাপনা কার্যক্রম এবং আর্থিক প্রবৃদ্ধি ইত্যাদি ক্ষেত্রে যে পরিবর্তনের সূচনা হয়েছে তা বিস্তারিত তুলে ধরার চেষ্টা করা হয়েছে। তথ্য সংগ্রহের পদ্ধতি হিসেবে এই গবেষণায় গুণগত গবেষণা পদ্ধতি এবং ইন-ডেপথ সাক্ষাৎকার পরিচালনা করা হয়। বাংলাদেশের অন্যতম প্রচলিত প্রাইভেট স্যাটেলাইট টেলিভিশন চ্যানেল আরটিভি'র অনলাইন পোর্টাল 'আরটিভি অনলাইন' এবং সর্বাধিক প্রচলিত সংবাদপত্র 'বাংলাদেশ প্রতিদিন'র অনলাইন পোর্টাল 'বিডি-প্রতিদিন ডট কম' কে গবেষণার নমুনা হিসেবে বেছে নেয়া হয়েছে। প্রতিটি গণমাধ্যম থেকে চারজন সাংবাদিক নিয়ে মোট আট জন সাংবাদিকের সাক্ষাৎকার গ্রহণ করা হয়। গবেষণার অনুসন্ধানে দেখা গেছে, প্রযুক্তি ব্যবহারে পরিবর্তন দৃশ্যমান, সংবাদ পরবেশনায় প্রতিযোগিতা বেড়েছে, অডিয়েন্সকে আরো বেশি সম্পৃক্ত করতে এবং নতুন নতুন কনটেন্ট সৃষ্টিতে অভিনবত্ব ও নমনীয়তা এসেছে যা কিনা সংবাদমাধ্যম দুটিতে কাঠামোগত পরিবর্তনের সূচনা করেছে।]