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Between Local Vulnerability and Global Security: Framing Analysis of National and International News Media Coverage on Climate-Induced Migration in Bangladesh

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Abstract
While national and international media play an important role in bringing climate-vulnerable issues to light, coverage of climate-migration issues in Bangladesh is relatively limited. This study examines how national and international media report on climate-induced migration. Given limited international media coverage of this issue, the study applies framing theory and a comparative content analysis to examine the framing of climate-induced migration. The research used a purposive sampling approach; its sample consisted of 80 news articles, with 60 comprising the content of the two leading Bangladeshi newspapers and 20 taken from leading international news media. The study demonstrates that humanitarian angles are predominantly used in Bangladeshi media, showing displacement, adversity, and resistance. In contrast, the international media depicts the issue as a global crisis, showing climate justice, regional imbalance, and geopolitical issues. The results also find a negative tone in the outlets published by both national and international media, showing loss and vulnerability. However, national media tend to use emotive images while international media use alarming ones. The study suggests a balanced global framing as well as more analytical national media framing about climate-induced migration.

Keywords: climate-migration, media, framing, representation, international-coverage.

Introduction

Climate change not only addresses distant environmental problems; it also touches on an urgent and vital global issue. This concern poses an immediate threat to human life and security (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022). For a Least Developed Country (LDC) like

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Bangladesh, this is just so hard. Being a riverine country, bounded by the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Meghna, and Jamuna rivers, and surrounded and directly linked with the Bay of Bengal, Bangladesh is extremely susceptible to sea-level rise, salinity problems, and riverbank erosion (Becker et al., 2020). Such environmental stressors have been argued to be among the factors that account for most of the world's millions of people displaced from their homes, referred to as climate-induced migration. They are climate refugees: people who have to move whether they want to or not. Bangladesh is the 'frontline state' of climate change impacts and is at high risk of further impacts (Penning-Rowsell et al., 2013). A recent statistic suggests that one out of every seven people in the country may be displaced by climate change by 2050 (World Bank, 2021b). While the issue has been well documented from a scientific and humanitarian perspective, scholarly attention has focused primarily on how it is represented in media coverage.

The media are recognized as having soft power that could influence public opinion, establish a policy culture among policymakers, and frame climate-induced migration as an urgent issue and its impacts (Entman, 1993; McCombs & Shaw, 1972). In Bangladesh, national media operate as the primary source of information for both policymakers and the public. On the other hand, international press coverage can elevate an issue onto the world stage and foster policy discussion worldwide. However, there is a significant disparity in coverage across national and international media. Such differences in media coverage and framing may shape public understanding of climate-induced migration from Bangladesh at the national and international levels. Using framing theory, the study intends to disclose the framing differences between national and international media about climate migration. We seek to address the following four research questions to explore how the national and international media frame climate-induced migration in their outlets.

RQ1: How did Bangladeshi and international media frame the news of climate-induced migration from Bangladesh?

RQ2: What is the tone of this coverage (negative, neutral, or positive) in Bangladeshi and international media, and how do they differ?

RQ3: How do Bangladeshi and international media compare in their use and diversity of sources when reporting on climate-induced migration?

RQ4: How do the visual representations of climate-induced migration compare between Bangladeshi and international media?

Literature Review

Climate-Induced Migration and Bangladesh

Climate change migration, also known as environmental displacement, is the movement of people from one place to another due to environmental conditions that affect their livelihoods and well-being, including rising sea levels, droughts, river erosion, salinity degradation, and extreme weather events (International Organization for Migration, 2009). Climate-related disasters alone displaced over 30 million people globally in 2022 (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2023). Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world due to its location in a climate-threatened zone, overpopulation, and dependence on climate-sensitive livelihoods (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2022; G. M. M. Alam et al., 2017). According to statistics, sea levels are expected to rise and could displace as many as 13 million people by 2050 (World Bank, 2021a). Research indicates that climate impacts, including agricultural land loss, salinity, coastal encroachment, and repetitive cyclone hits, are directly linked to displacement in Bangladesh (M. R. Islam & Shamsuddoha, 2017). This has led to migration from Dhaka and Khulna, further aggravated by overcrowding and rising socioeconomic stress. Many studies also indicate that climate-induced migration in Bangladesh has significant social and economic implications, including the loss of livelihoods, urban overpopulation, and poverty (Khan, M.A., 2022). But even though the humanitarian angle has been very well-researched, what role does the media play in framing climate justice, and others' attempts to frame it, remains understudied.

Media Framing of Climate Change and Migration

Issues are framed by selection, as well as by the presentation and representation of information from the media, including what is emphasized and excluded (Entman, 1993), influencing how audiences perceive issues and debates about policy. Media frames often emphasize scientific certainty or uncertainty, human impacts, related economic aspects, or political conflict (Boykoff, 2013). Media representations of climate migration can also be constructed in multiple ways, such as a humanitarian cause for empathy's sake, a focus on security, or even the potential for development (Benson, 2013). Academics note sharp contrasts in how national and international media frame climate-induced migration. Farbotko (2010) has pointed out that the international media usually frame climate migrants' concerns in

terms of 'humanitarian' and victimhood discourse, displaying the Global South as a place where people are overwhelmingly vulnerable to change. On the other hand, national media may focus on adaptation responses, local coping strategies, or political responsibility (Rhaman, 2018; Miah et al., 2011). On the other hand, development-focused frames may unlock discussions on resilience, innovation, and adaptation funding, but leave human suffering at risk. This is how framing decisions can shape the urgency with which we communicate to policymakers and the public, and how people understand climate migration.

Climate Change Communication in Bangladeshi Media

Bangladeshi media have been seen to play a significant role in disaster communication, especially in reporting on extreme weather events such as cyclones, floods, and river erosion (Raza et al., 2025; E. Alam & Collins, 2010). During the national emergency, the media served as key sources of information, for example, by warning people about severe weather and by running disaster preparedness campaigns. But when the issue is climate change, Bangladeshi media seem to report more on event-triggered aspects of climate vulnerability than on ongoing ones (Nurunnabi, 2016). Most reports are found in the context of visible disasters like cyclone surges or floods, whereas hardly any coverage has captured the long-term and structural factors that underpin climate exposure, such as riverbank erosion, gradual salinity intrusion, and climate-induced migration (M. R. Islam & Shamsuddoha, 2017). This ensures that several critical issues in the context of climate-related disasters, including infrastructure deficiencies, livelihood transformation, and the social and political consequences of mass displacement, are underrepresented.

The climate challenge is often reported in Bangladeshi media with a focus on loss and damage, emphasizing poverty and livelihoods (Rhaman, 2016). Consequently, analysis of migration as a survival strategy is relatively underexplored despite its importance in shaping public responses to climate risk (Martin et al., 2014). Moreover, media can influence public opinion by using emotive adjectives, for instance, powerless, helpless, or a sense of urgency (Martin et al., 2014). This is how rhetorical tactics can obscure calls for climate justice and fair burden-sharing.

International media, on the other hand, tended to sensationalize Bangladeshi climate migration. Northern media occasionally highlight vulnerability, positioning Bangladesh as a 'frontline state' for climate change

(Boykoff, 2013; Carvalho, 2007). So, the general framing of the climate issue in Bangladesh is mostly one of episodic crisis coverage and continuous structural engagement. We know less about how news media frame the human dimensions of climate change in the context of a humanitarian crisis, even though that framing can be a descriptive representation. Bangladeshi newspapers focus their coverage on this aspect, which could create normative and epistemic framing gaps with enormous consequences for climate policy (Paprocki, 2022). A comparison between home and foreign media shows that the former integrates climate migrants within wider socio-economic frames, while the latter presents them as a humanitarian problem (Cottle, 2009).

This framing gap can influence whether migration is perceived as a transient disruption or as a systemic, long-term adaptation challenge. Although the literature has focused on climate migration and its social and economic impacts, relatively few studies have conducted comparative content analyses of national media framing and international media portrayals. Filling this gap, this study investigates how the issue is framed for domestic and global audiences and considers how such framing might shape climate justice advocacy.

Theoretical Framework

We use Entman's (1993) framing theory in this study. The theory explains that the selection of certain aspects of issues not only influences public perception but also shapes policy debate in society. In the discourse of climate migration, some specific frames can accentuate human suffering, resilience, security risks, and adaptation. People could also be sensitized by some particular frames used by the media (Benson, 2013). Media framing theory is often applied in environmental communication. How climate change is represented can either serve to mobilize collective action or consolidate apathy towards victims (Boykoff, 2013). Similarly, according to Nisbet (2009), frames can function as interpretative packages that help citizens navigate scientific and political debates about climate change communication. Climate change and its impacts in Bangladesh are a lived experience. That is why the human frame so often dominates media coverage, which offers crisis, loss, and damage. In addition, Bangladeshi journalists tend to frame climate issues as people-focused crises, highlighting individuals' suffering and community resilience, as well as local-level adaptation (Bhowmik & Paul, 2026). But in international media,

security is predominantly framed. Previous studies have also emphasized the tendency to portray climate migrants in Global South countries as victims (Farbotko & Lazrus, 2012), with national media focusing on resilience, adaptation, and political accountability (Riaz & Rahman, 2016). In climate communication, Bangladeshi media aim to sensitize audiences regarding the human predicament (Rhaman, 2016), while international reporting focuses on migration patterns, security threats, and geopolitical risks (Benson, 2013). However, Entman's (1993) framing theory helps to explain how Bangladeshi and international media construct narratives differently.

Methodology

We observed a substantial disparity between national and international news outlets on climate migration. So, to reduce the data bias, the study adopts asymmetrical comparative content analysis. We also used a purposive sampling technique to ensure that all selected news clearly focused on climate-induced migration in Bangladesh and to avoid generic environmental news. Our sample dataset (N = 80) included 60 articles from two leading Bangladeshi outlets (*Prothom Alo* and *The Daily Star*) and 20 articles from two international outlets (*BBC* and *Al Jazeera*) published between January 2021 and June 2024.

We mainly selected two specific national news media based on circulation and audience reach metrics. Prothom Alo is the highest-circulation among Bangla daily newspapers, and The Daily Star is the highest-circulating English-language newspaper in Bangladesh (Department of Film and Publications, 2023; Riaz & Rahman, 2016). On the other hand, regarding the international outlets, we chose BBC and Al Jazeera because of their extensive global readership, well-established South Asian bureaus, and dominant role in setting the international climate communication agenda (Boykoff, 2013; Cottle, 2009).

Our study used the online versions of selected media to search for specific news, where we used some predefined keywords such as 'climate migration', 'flooding displacement', 'climate refugee', 'river erosion migration', and 'Bangladeshi climate migration'. We mainly chose these keywords to identify the news that was related to climate-induced migration.

A detailed codebook was developed to systematically collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data. The individual news article served

as the unit of analysis. The study description contains information on key variables and category coding. First, frame type: humanitarian, resilience/adaptation, security threats, policy, and governance. Second, the tone: positive, negative, and neutral. And finally, source diversity: immigrants, government officials, NGOs, civil society, climate experts, and international organizations.

Table 1

Sample Codebook

Variable	Definition	Categories	Example Indicators
Frame Type	The framing technique used by the media to present the issue.	Humanitarian: Focus on human suffering or welfare.	Victims are suffering due to the crisis
		Resilience/Adaptation: Focus on recovery and adaptation efforts.	Efforts to rebuild communities after the disaster.
		Security Threat: Focus on national security, safety, or public order as a result of the issue.	The situation poses a national security threat
		Policy/Governance: Focus on government policies, governance, and policy responses.	Government response to the crisis
Tone	The overall tone or attitude conveyed in the article.	Negative: Pessimistic or critical perspective.	The situation seems hopeless
		Neutral: Objective or neutral tone without strong positive or negative slant.	The situation is complex and evolving

Variable	Definition	Categories	Example Indicators
		Positive: Optimistic or favorable perspective.	There are signs of recovery and hope
Source Type	The category of the source quoted in the article.	Migrants/Displaced: Affected individuals such as migrants or displaced persons.	Testimony of displaced families
		Government Officials: Official sources from government representatives.	A statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
		NGOs/Civil Society: Non-governmental organizations or civil society actors.	Report from an international humanitarian group
		Climate Experts: Experts in climate science or related fields.	An interview with a leading climate scientist
		International Agencies: Global or intergovernmental organizations.	A report from the United Nations

To assess inter-rater reliability, two independent coders were trained in the coding scheme and independently coded a randomly selected 15% of the articles. Inter-rater reliability was assessed using Cohen's kappa (κ), with coefficients ranging from .79 to .85, indicating substantial to almost perfect agreement between the coders.

Findings

Framing of the News

Research question 1 identified the news frame used by Bangladeshi and international media. It demonstrates a significant framing difference in media coverage between national and international media in how they frame the issue of climate-induced migration.

Table 2
Framing-distribution

Frame type	Bangladeshi media (n=60)	International media (n=20)	Media x^2 (df = 3)	P-value
Humanitarian	36 (60%)	7 (35%)	5.12	0.023*
Resilience/Adaptation	14 (23%)	2 (10%)	2.20	0.138
Security threat	6 (10%)	8 (40%)	9.60	0.002**
Policy/Governance	4 (7%)	3 (15%)	1.14	0.285

The dominant frame of Bangladeshi media is humanitarian (60%), portraying migration mainly in terms of displacement, loss, and damage, and the urgent need for financial aid. In contrast, international media adopt this frame less frequently (35%), and the difference between the two media is statistically significant ($p<0.05$), as shown in Table 2. International media emphasized the security threats frame (40%), while Bangladeshi media used it comparatively less (10%), linking migration to risks of instability and conflict ($p<0.01$). The resilience/adaptation frame appeared in 23% of Bangladeshi media coverage and 10% of international media coverage. However, differences in the prevalence of the policy/governance and resilience/adaptation frames were not statistically significant ($p >.05$) in both cases, suggesting the observed differences did not provide sufficient statistical evidence of divergence between the two media contexts for these frames.

Tone of Coverage

Research question 2 examined the tone of media coverage, and the results reveal a striking similarity between Bangladeshi and international media outlets. The climate-forced migration issue is negatively portrayed across both datasets (73% in Bangladesh and 75% in international media), focusing on crisis, loss, and vulnerability.

Table 3
Tone of Articles used by two Media

Tone	Bangladeshi media (n=60)	International media (n=20)	Media χ^2 (df=2)	P-value
Negative	44 (73%)	15 (75%)	0.03	0.862
Neutral	12 (20%)	3 (15%)	0.29	0.589
Positive	4 (7%)	2 (10%)	0.16	0.690

We found fewer news articles that reflect neutrality. In Bangladeshi media, 20% of news articles were neutral, and in international media, 15% were neutral. Interestingly, the results indicate a rare positive framing. Only 7% of national media articles and 10% of international media articles highlight the positive framing. So, with regard to the tone of articles, there is no statistically significant difference between the two media (*p>0.05*), as shown in Table 3. Both media present climate migration through a pessimistic lens, with risks and suffering taking center stage rather than opportunities.

Source Diversity

The results of the source analysis address research question 3 and demonstrate a significant difference between Bangladesh and international media in how climate migration is reported. The majority of the outlets of Bangladeshi media heavily rely on the voices of migrants and displaced persons (40%).

Table 4

Sources Quoted by Media

Source type	Bangladeshi media (n=60)	International media (n=20)	Media χ^2 (df=4)	P-value
Migrants/displaced	24 (40%)	2 (10%)	5.36	0.0206*
Government officials	30 (50%)	7 (35%)	1.10	0.2952
NGOs/civil society	18 (30%)	13 (65%)	5.97	0.0146*
Climate experts	12 (20%)	11 (55%)	6.55	0.0105*
International agencies	10 (17%)	12 (60%)	10.04	0.0015**
Overall (5×2)	-	-	15.10	0.0045

Note. Percentages represent the share of articles that quoted each type of source. The totals exceed 100% because some articles include multiple sources.

In contrast, international media cite NGOs, climate experts, and international agencies far more frequently (65%, 55%, 60 %, respectively), as shown in Table 4. However, both media cite government officials as sources, although the difference between them is not statistically significant. The association between source type and media origin, based on the aggregate chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 15.10$, df = 4, p = 0.0045), indicates a strong

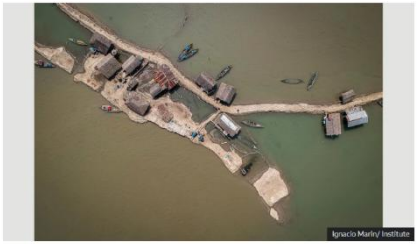
relationship: Bangladeshi media rely on local voices, whereas international media are centered on experts.

Visual Representation

Research question 4 asked how Bangladeshi and international media visually represent climate-induced migration. Incidentally, the visual coverage in the media also reflects this distinction between national and international news coverage of climate-induced migration. Empathetic portraits, showing groups of families, children, and community meetings and events, are the dominant visual type in Bangladeshi outlets, as shown in Figure 1. This conclusion demonstrates that the Bangladeshi media covers more human suffering and resistance. They also connect emotionally with local audiences by bringing to life images of victims of climate change. This type of human-centric framing is consistent with local journalistic practices that emphasize the social and humanitarian aspects of climate change.

Figure 1.

Comparative Visual Framing of BBC (Left) and Prothom Alo (Right)



The pressure to switch to aquaculture is leading to conflict between farmers and fishermen (Credit: Ignacio Marín/ Institute)



Water enters locality after overflowing the low embankments due to the cyclone Remal induced water surge in the river. The local people are repairing the embankments as ebb begins in the river. The picture was taken from Shakharia river embankment in Koyra upazila of Khulna on Monday afternoon. *Prothom Alo file photo*

Figure 2.

Comparative Visual Framing of Al-Jazeera (Left) and The Daily Star (Right)





On the other hand, international media primarily use images of environmental destruction (flooded landscapes, eroded coastlines, and maps depicting sea-level rise), which represent the majority of all imagery as shown in Figure 2. This imagery portrays migration as an environmental crisis rather than a community-focused one. This framing widens the distance between the audience and those who are truly suffering.

Discussion

This paper investigated the framing of climate-induced migration from Bangladesh in national and international media; both patterns of framing, diversity of sources, and visual representations differed significantly. Results indicate that in Bangladesh, the humanitarian frame (60%) is typically favored when running climate stories, serving as a dominant frame for migration and often referenced in messages on displacement, loss and damage, and the need for financial support. This affective frame communicates a proximal concern, portraying the suffering of disadvantaged populations and reflecting an agenda that may emphasize human displays of suffering. Yet, this dominant frame in Bangladeshi media is consistent with what has been documented elsewhere about the local media's role in narrating the affordances and instrumentality in relation to lived experiences, studied vulnerability, and resilience (Das, 2019). By contrast, international media use security threats as a dominant frame in their coverage more often (40%), framing migration as synonymous with risk, instability, and conflict. The variation in framing between national and international media suggests that audiences and global politics influence media coverage. The framing between national and international media underscores how target audiences and the geopolitical agenda shape reporting. It is evident that national media often focus on local impact; in contrast, international media frequently frame the issues, especially in the Global North, through the lens of regional security, migration control, and state governance (Hartmann, 2010). Nonetheless, Entman's (1993) idea corroborates the results, showing how media frames encode problems and their solutions in line with cultural-political ideas.

Simultaneously, the results of the source analysis demonstrate a significant disparity between national and international media. The majority of the outlets in Bangladeshi media heavily rely on the voices of migrants and displaced persons (40%). In contrast, international media pays much more heed to NGOs, climate experts, and international agencies (65%, 55%,

60%, respectively). This finding is comparable to previous studies emphasizing that local media depend on local voices rather than international media's reliance on experts or officials to assess the credibility of the story (Eberl et al., 2018; Howarth & Painter, 2016). But the negative tone of climate migration reporting is common across the national and international media, with Bangladeshi media portraying 73% negativity and international news portraying 75% negativity. The framing of climate migration as negative implies that there is no line to be drawn and that it becomes a problem only when migrants encounter more tangible barriers, such as border policies in the United States of America and Mexico (Ortega Velázquez, 2023). This negative framing of climate migration as a problem mentality can often lead to narratives that exemplify weakness rather than resilience and problem-solving (Nisbet, 2009). In such climate communication, scientists maintain that the media, in general, tend to use 'frightening' and negative stories rather than focusing on problem-solving issues (O'Neill et al., 2015; Boyce & Lewis, 2009). This is how the media is perpetuating the stereotype of a 'climate victim.' This stereotype is obscuring people's capacity to adjust and the policy solutions.

The distinction between the two types of media is evident in visual presentation as well. Bangladeshi news sources attempt to evoke human-crisis imagery through illustration. It also occurs in the national media, as these media track down event-based news; their daily coverage spreads through human-centered images (Islam , 2020). But the international media visualize only the geopolitical and environmental issues, showing, instead of highlighting bleak visuals in terms of a smooth area, an eroded coastline, a problematic zone on the map, rather than a human one. This visual semiotics underscores how images function as potent framing devices that support or resist textual narratives (Dancygier, 2023). This is the kind of variation that can shape perceptions of who and what suffer most from climate change. In general, the media play a major role in framing climate-induced migration in Bangladesh. The research also reveals some silent spaces in both national and international media regarding how climate migration from Bangladesh is framed.

Conclusion and Limitations

This study offers a comparative analysis of how the national and international media cover climate-induced migration in Bangladesh. It helps

readers to understand how the frame, choice of sources, tone, and visual representation mediate the discourse. The study identifies differences in the way both types of media frame the climate migration issue. The significant difference between Bangladeshi and international media is that humanitarian narratives in Bangladesh are portrayed by local voices as key players, whereas international news sources focus on security threats and rely on experts and organizations. But both types of narratives overwhelmingly present climate migration in a negative light, as a crisis rather than an opportunity.

The results emphasize the importance of media framing in understanding media discourse on climate change and migration. Framing enlightens the public as well as defines policy disputes, and thus it shapes public understanding. Humanitarian frames can prompt human sympathy and generate financial and material aid, but they may portray migrants as victims. Security framing by the same international media might draw attention to the migrant population but may also portray people with rights as threats. So, fair and balanced framing needs to be offered by both types of media. For future studies, researchers would investigate such questions further when analyzing a broader period and incorporating more regional and global media to determine whether these trends endure or change in alternative political contexts.

The study has some limitations that need to be addressed. First, the sample is rather small: 80 articles from both national and international media, and the findings might not be generalizable. A larger sample size should be able to cover more frame types. Second, the research was conducted manually, using a coding technique that could introduce subjectivity into the inspection of frames. Archived items of BBC reports were limited during the research period. As a result**,** it may be possible to collect comparable high-reach content, thereby improving the comparability of international framing across key outlets. And finally, the narrow window of analysis (2021-2024) might be insufficient for a deeper understanding of framing strategy dynamics. Despite some limitations, the study offers a useful comparative analysis of national and international media coverage of climate-induced migration.

Ethics Statement

The authors adhered to all ethical standards while conducting the study.

AI Statement

The authors used generative AI to refine the manuscript's language.

Conflict of Interest

There is no potential conflict of interest in this study.

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