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## Framing India in Bangladeshi Media: A Content Analysis of E-Newspaper

**Abstract :** The media plays an important role in every aspect of our lives. However, in the times of political change framing of information becomes more crucial in shaping the views of any country regarding another. The framing of media can also impact diplomatic relations. This study, therefore, aims to analyse how India is framed in Bangladeshi media during the time of political unrest. The theoretical framework chosen for this study is framing theory. This theory explains how the media highlights certain aspects of information to shape the perception of people. The rise of digital media has also changed the news consumption patterns of people. Therefore, the data for this study were collected from the e-paper 'The Daily Star', one of the leading English e-newspapers of Bangladesh. The time period selected for this one month i.e. 1st September-30th September. Using content analysis, a total of 95 articles are reviewed and categorised into five generic frames- 'human interest, conflict, attribution of responsibility, economic consequence, and morality'. The findings of the study show a balanced reporting by Bangladeshi media during the selected period. This study contributes to a better

understanding of how neighbouring countries are framed during the time of political change.

**Keywords-** E-Newspaper, Framing, Bangladesh, India, The Daily Star.

**Introduction :** India and Bangladesh share a long history of political, cultural, and economic ties with each other. The bilateral relationship between these countries started from the year 1971. India played an important role in the freedom of Bangladesh (Chowdhury & Jashim Uddin, 2024). However, over the years, the conflict between these countries started with illegal migration from Bangladesh to Indian states (Mayilva ganan, 2019). The tension between these two countries further escalated over water sharing from the Ganga and Teesta rivers. Despite these challenges, the relationship between these countries started to improve under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh (TANEJA, 2025). The signing of the Land Boundary Agreement in 2015 between India and Bangladesh helped in resolving border disputes between these two countries (Rahman, 2015). Since then, the relationship between these countries has grown stronger with regular visits. However, recent transitions of political power have changed the political and diplomatic relations between these countries. The fall of Sheikh Hasina has affected the existing dynamics between these countries.

Studies have highlighted that framing of media is affected by several factors including political interests, government policies ownership structures (Danso, 2025). Therefore, with the change of power in Bangladesh, it is important to understand how the media is framing India following the political unrest.

In recent years, the growth of digital media has increased. Its features like interactivity, accessibility, and global reach have made it more powerful among the masses. This has also led change in the news consumption behaviour of people. According to a report by Reuters Institute (2024) over 71% Indians are consuming news online. The report also stated that over 79% of respondents use a mobile phone for news consumption. This highlights the significance of digital news platforms in framing news articles and influencing public opinion.

With the growing reach of digital media and the political shift in Bangladesh, it becomes crucial to examine how e-news portals are portraying India. By analysing news articles, this research aims to explore the role of media especially e-portals are framing and shaping public narratives regarding the neighbouring country.

**Literature review :** Framing of any information, especially news articles, significantly influences the viewers or the consumers of these news articles. Anthropologist Gregory Bateson first

introduced the concept of framing (Arowolo, 2017). He defined a psychological frame as a “spatial and temporary bounding of a set of interactive messages” that operates as a form of meta-communication. Framing helps us understand the meaning of the events happening around us (Hallahan, 2008).

Lecheler and De Vreese (2018) defined that “framing of any information influences the behaviour, thinking, and

perception of people about that information”. Hallahan (2008) categorised framing into seven models: “Framing of Situation,” “Framing of Attributes,” “Framing of Risk,” “Framing of Actions,” “Framing of Issues,” “Framing of Responsibility,” and “Framing of News.” However, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) identified five such frames that are frequently used in press reports: conflict, human interest/ personalisation, economic consequence, morality, and attribution to responsibility.

Frames	Explanation
Conflict	“Issues related to conflict between people, government, countries are reported in this frame.”
Human Interest	“Issues related to personal experiences of certain people are reported in this frame.”
Economic Consequence	“Issues related to economic aspect of the story are reported in this frame.”
Morality	“Issues related to moral or religious context of the story are reported in this frame.”

Table1- Generic Frames and their Explanation

Attribution to Responsibility	“This frame is used assign responsibility for any problem.”
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These frames have been used by the media in different beats of news including political news and health emergencies, to highlight a certain angle of a story.

Over the past few decades, academic research has highlighted that there has been a difference in the framing of news by media from different countries. A study by Rawan et al. (2019)

presented similar findings related to media framing across different countries. It highlighted that newspapers from the US, China, India, and Pakistan framed news articles related to the Sino-Pak issue in different ways. The findings showed that the objectivity of news organisations in each country varied based on several factors.

Several studies have highlighted that geopolitical proximity also influences the framing of news information in the media. Ahmed et al. (2018) examined the impact of geopolitical proximity on coverage of social conflict in Singapore. The study highlighted that traditional media gave more attention to a conflict occurring in a neighbouring country.

The framing of media is also influenced by the cultural and political factors of the country. Maslog et al. (2006) examined the framing of the Iraq War in newspapers of Asian countries. The study found differences in coverage of war in five countries. The study underlined that the framing of conflict differs based on national and religious context. In the Muslim-dominated country, peace Journalism was more prominent in the coverage of war news. However, the articles from non-Muslim countries were more aggressive and utilised conflict frames.

In South Asia, studies have shown that Bangladeshi media often favour elites from that country. Akhter and Islam

(2019) analysed the framing of the 2018 general elections. The study found that newspapers frequently used conflict and responsibility frames. The study also highlighted differences in tone and emphasis across different media outlets. It revealed the influence of politics and editorial decisions on the coverage and framing of news. This study also underlined the presence of bias within Bangladeshi media.

**Research Gap :** The literature review provides insight regarding framing in the media industry. It also provides an understanding of framing techniques and frames used by the media during election coverage and international conflict. However, there is a noticeable gap in the examination of a neighbouring country during a politically sensitive period. The literature related to coverage and framing of India in Bangladeshi media is also limited. This study aims to fill the gap by analysing the coverage of India in the e-news paper of Bangladesh after the resignation of Sheikh Hasina.

**Significance of The Study :** India and Bangladesh share a long history and cultural and economic ties. With the growing presence of India in the Global South, it becomes important to understand how a neighbouring country like Bangladesh is framing India during a politically sensitive period. Media framing during these sensitive times influences public opinion and political narratives.

Therefore it is important to understand the framing of Bangladeshi media during this period. The findings of this study will also shed light on the media's role in shaping cross-border perceptions, especially in times of political change.

### **Research Objective**

- To determine the number of articles related to India in a Bangladeshi e-newspaper.
- To identify the prominent frames used for India in the selected news articles.

### **Research Question**

- How many news articles related to India appeared in a Bangladeshi e-newspaper?
- What are the prominent frames used to represent India in the selected news articles?

**Theoretical Framework :** Framing theory explains the phenomenon through which people form an opinion about different issues, topics or information. In communication studies, framing refers to the use of techniques or media to draw the attention of the people to a certain aspect of an event. This helps in providing meaning to any information. It is a part of Agenda Setting Theory (Arowolo, 2017). This theory will help us understand how the media of Bangladesh shapes public opinion regarding India on digital platforms. This theory will also allow us to identify the dominant frames used by neighbouring media for India.

**Research Methodology :** This section outlines the research design and methods employed in conducting the study.

**Data Collection :** This study uses a content analysis approach to identify the number of articles and the types of frames used in a Bangladeshi e-newspaper.

**Universe and Sample :** The universe of the study includes all e-newspapers published in Bangladesh. However, the sample for this study is limited to one e-news portal — The Daily Star. This e-news portal is one of the most widely read English-language news portals in Bangladesh. Since the longest-serving prime minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina resigned in August 2024. Hence, September 2024 was chosen for data collection. The time frame for data collection is one month, from 1st September 2024 to 30th September 2024. However, due to technical issues, the daily newspapers were not accessed. Therefore, this analysis is based on the editions that were accessed i.e. 21 days

**Findings :** The analysis of the data showed that India was frequently reported in Bangladeshi media. A total of 95 articles were published related to India during September 2024. These articles appeared daily on different pages of the e-paper including the front page, international news, editorial, sports, and entertainment. However, the number of articles published on the daily e-paper

varied each day ranging from 1 to 10. The most number of articles was published on 23rd September 2024 and the least number of articles was appeared for three consecutive days. The consistent and wide coverage of India indicates that, despite domestic political unrest, India remained a central topic in Bangladeshi discourse. The placement of news articles in different sections of newspaper also highlights the importance of India in Bangladeshi media.

To analyse the frames of the news articles, five generic frames give by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) were used. The frames are- conflict, human interest, economic consequence, morality, and attribution to responsibility.

**Human interest Frame :** The most commonly used frame in coverage of India was Human Interest. Out of 95 articles, 36 of articles used human interest frames. The news articles under this category were more focused on people, culture or sports. Some of the examples of headlines are - "Pant's inspiring return A testament to resilience" or "Apple appoints Indian-origin Kevan Parekh as new CFO". The prevalent use of this frame shows that the media in Bangladesh is presented the softer and relatable image of India.

#### **Conflict Frame :**

The second commonly used frame in the coverage of India was the Conflict frame. The number of articles used conflict

■ Human interest ■ Morality ■ Attribution to responsibility ■ Conflict ■ Economic Consequence

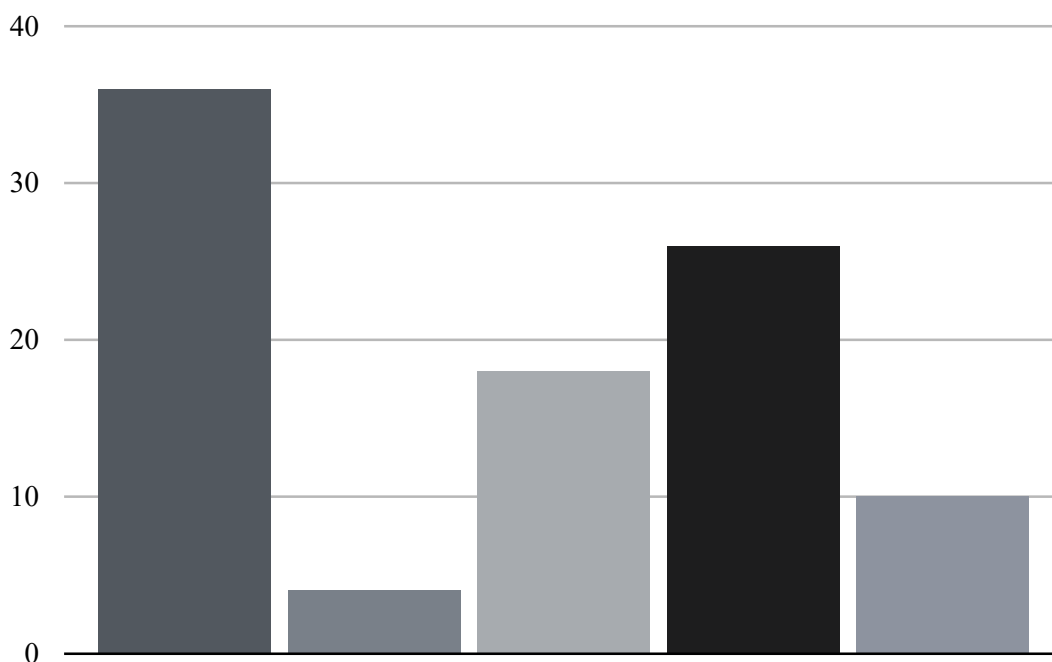


Table 2- Number of articles in each frame

frame was 27. The stories under this frame focused on the tension on the border and the disagreement between the countries. This frame was also utilised to cover some of the internal conflicts of India. However, headlines like “India can’t take Bangladesh for granted anymore” or “When will border killings by BSF killings?” or “Border killings a barrier to good ties with India says foreign adviser” highlight the use of strong language in these stories.

#### **Attribution to Responsibility Frame :**

This frame was employed in 18 articles. Articles under this frame hold responsible individuals or governments for any event or problem. For instance headlines like “India can’t take Bangladesh for granted anymore” or “BORDER KILLINGS Probe each, punish the responsible Dhaka tells Delhi in protest note” bring attention to responsible actors in a conflict and hold them responsible for the conflict.

**Economic Consequence Frame :** The economic consequence frame was used in 10 articles. All the articles related to trades, investment, export and import, and business ties between these two countries fall under this frame. Some examples of headlines are “3,000 tonnes of hilsa export to India okayed” or “How should Bangladesh deal with Adani’s \$800m outstanding bill?”.

**Morality Frame :** The least used frame in the coverage of India was morality. The total number of articles under this frame is 4. This frame was mostly used for editorial or opinion articles.

**Discussion :** Framing of news articles

plays a significant role in shaping how people understand and form an opinion about any information (Mass Communication Theory, 2014). The rise of digital media and online media has also influenced the news consumption patterns of people. In recent times most people are consuming news online (Kumar & Jayaraj, 2019). Therefore it becomes important to understand how India is framed in the e-portal of its neighbouring country.

The findings of the study showed that a significant number of articles were published in one month. These findings indicate that even during the time of distress, the media of Bangladesh covered India intensively. The findings align with the study of Fetzer and Garg (2025) which highlighted that the coverage of neighbouring countries increases during the time of crisis.

The prominence of human interest and conflict frames in coverage of India highlights the complex relationship between Bangladesh and India. The finding sheds light on the dual stance of Bangladeshi media regarding India. The use of these frames reflects that Bangladeshi media is trying to create a balance between positive and critical reporting. The findings align with the study of Islam (2017). This study also showed a prominence of human interest and conflict frame during the coverage of the Rohingya Crisis.

**Conclusion :** The study analysed the coverage of India in Bangladesh. The

results showed prominence of articles related to India. The study also found that most of the articles were related to human interest as well as political or border tension between these two countries.

The framing of India highlights the complex relationship between these two countries. It shows how e-portals of neighbouring countries shape public opinion by framing information in certain ways. This study also contributes to the field of media framing by neighbouring countries in South Asia.

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