



CPD

Working Paper

131

Role of Media in Delivering the SDGs *A Mapping Exercise on Bangladesh*

Debapriya Bhattacharya
Towfiqul Islam Khan
Mostafa Amir Sabbih



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Publisher

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First Published March 2020

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this paper are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the CPD, Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh, The Asia Foundation or the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Tk. 80

USD 6

ISSN 2225-8175 (Online)

ISSN 2225-8035 (Print)

Citation: Bhattacharya, D., Khan, T. I. and Sabbih, M. A. (2020). *Role of Media in Delivering the SDGs: A Mapping Exercise on Bangladesh*. CPD Working Paper 131. Dhaka: Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) was established in 1993 as a civil society initiative to promote an ongoing dialogue between the principle partners in the decision-making and implementing process. Over the past more than 25 years, the Centre has emerged as a globally reputed independent think tank, with local roots and global reach. With a view to influencing policies, CPD deploys both research and dialogue which draw synergy from one another.

A key area of CPD's activism is to organise dialogues to address developmental policy issues that are critical to national, regional and global interests, with a view to seeking constructive solutions from major stakeholders. CPD involves all important cross-sections of the society in its dialogue process, including public representatives, government officials, business leaders, activists of grassroots organisations, academics, development partners and other relevant interest groups.

The other key area of CPD's activities is to undertake research programmes on current and strategic issues. Major research themes are: macroeconomic performance analysis; poverty and inequality; agriculture; trade; regional cooperation and global integration; infrastructure; employment, and enterprise development; climate change and environment; development governance; policies and institutions, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As part of its global networking initiatives, CPD hosts the secretariat of the *LDC IV Monitor*—an independent global partnership for monitoring the outcome of the Fourth UN Conference on the LDCs. CPD was also the initial convener and founding host of the *Southern Voice on Post-MDGs*, a network of 50 think tanks from Africa, Asia and Latin America, which seeks to contribute to the ongoing global discourse on the SDGs. CPD was the Secretariat of Southern Voice during January 2013–June 2019. At present, CPD hosts the office of the Chair of the network. At the national level, CPD hosts the Secretariat of the *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh*—a civil society initiative that include more than 100 Partner organisations, founded with an objective to contribute to the delivery of the SDGs and enhance accountability in its implementation process.

Dissemination of information and knowledge on critical developmental issues is another important component of CPD's activities. Pursuant to this, CPD maintains an active publication programme, both in Bangla and in English. As part of its dissemination programme, CPD has been bringing out **CPD Working Paper Series** on a regular basis. Research work in progress, background papers of dialogues, investigative reports and results of perception surveys which relate to issues of high public interest are published under this series.

The present paper titled **Role of Media in Delivering the SDGs: A Mapping Exercise on Bangladesh** has been prepared by *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, Distinguished Fellow, CPD and Convenor, Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh <deb.bhattacharya@cpd.org.bd>; *Mr Towfiqul Islam Khan*, Senior Research Fellow, CPD <towfiq@cpd.org.bd>; and *Mr Mostafa Amir Sabbih*, Senior Research Associate, CPD <sabbih@cpd.org.bd>

The study was undertaken as part of a project titled "Embedding SDGs in the Emerging Public Debates: A Proposal for Bridging the Existing Participation Gaps and Institutional Capacity Deficits of the Non-State Actors." The project was implemented by CPD, in collaboration with the *Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh*, and with support from The Asia Foundation – Bangladesh and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). *Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya*, Distinguished Fellow, CPD and Convenor, Citizen's Platform has led the initiative as the Project Director.

Series Editor: *Dr Fahmida Khatun*, Executive Director, CPD

Authors' Acknowledgements

The authors would like to acknowledge the support from Red n Green Research in collecting data on SDGs related contents published in selected print and online media. The authors are also thankful to all the media professionals for their inputs who participated in the expert group meetings and interviews conducted under this study.

Among the non-state actors in Bangladesh, media has a critical role to play in ensuring the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The present paper identifies five key roles of media in contributing to the SDGs delivery. These include: channeling information flow, ensuring proper monitoring and accountability, acting as an enabler of a 'culture of peace', upholding marginalised voices and facilitating the localisation of SDGs. Based on a mapping exercise on selected national and sub-national Bangla, English and online newspapers, this paper finds that among the five identified roles, the media in Bangladesh at present is primarily playing the role of channeling information flow. Media is also playing a watchdog role in a limited scale, while their participation in the SDGs accountability process is almost non-existent. This paper concludes with highlighting some challenges faced by media in Bangladesh and providing recommendations to address those.

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Acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
NGO	Non-government Organisation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
USD	United States dollar

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has stressed the need for ensuring public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements (United Nations, 2015). Media is one of the critical actors for ensuring public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms. Media can act as a communication, transparency and accountability channel for all stakeholders. Media in all its forms can play a significant role in the delivery of a development agenda through ensuring that citizens are well informed. In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), media is an integral part of the ecosystem with regard to raising awareness and sensitising people about the goals, targets and their relevance and highlighting efforts at the national and local levels (Abdulai, Kagumire and Geoghegan, 2018). It can serve as catalyst for citizens' empowerment through informing and educating them. Besides, media can help citizens to hold government and authorities to account through providing a platform for public debate and discussion. Independent and community media, as well as social media are also critical to operationalise the 'leave no one behind' commitment of the SDGs through giving a voice to those who are often not heard. In this backdrop, it is essential to ensure the engagement of media in key processes pertaining to policymaking, and the governance of social and economic affairs.

Alongside the government agencies, the non-state actors in Bangladesh including non-government organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations (CSOs) and private sector have already put forward their commitments to contribute to this end. Among the non-state actors, media in Bangladesh plays a critical role in ensuring accountability in the governance system. However, across the government as well as public domain there is scant appreciation of the extent of media engagements. In many cases, the government and other stakeholders do not or cannot portray their intention properly in front of the society through media and the reverse is also true. The media, on many occasions, fails to grasp the main messages or arguments of the development discourse leading to misreporting, under reporting and even blackout of news. In connection to this, the proposed study seeks to assess the current state of media engagement in SDG discourse.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The primary objective of the study is to understand the current role of media and strengthen its role in implementing the SDGs in Bangladesh. To this end, the current study aims to: set a framework capturing the potential role of the media in SDGs delivery based on literature review; assess the type of news, analysis, articles and editorials etc. on SDGs published in the media; analyse whether the published contents are primary or secondary or follow-up in nature as well as the languages used; identify the level of coverage of different goals or SDG areas by media; explore the extent of SDG coverage in local media; and find the extent of media coverage of different SDGs-related events organised by different actors.

1.3 Methodology

The study analysed available secondary information relating to the role of media in the implementation of the SDGs at the country level. A detailed review of literature and policy documents, both at national and global levels, was undertaken. The study includes a mapping exercise covering SDGs-

related contents (which explicitly mentioned SDGs) published in selected print and online media in Bangladesh between July 2015 to December 2018. Despite having a critical role, the electronic media could not be covered under the present mapping exercise. The mapping exercise covered 15 national (Dhaka-based) newspapers (of which 5 are in English and 3 are online), and 10 newspapers from outside Dhaka (covering Barishal, Bagura, Chattogram, Jashore, Khulna, Mymensingh, Sylhet and Rajshahi). The data has been collected through online searches as well as manual searches particularly where online versions are either absent or inadequate. Besides the mapping exercise, key informant interviews were conducted with several media professionals including from outside the capital. Two expert group meetings were also organised with a total of 27 media gatekeepers to validate early findings and identify issues for future discussions.

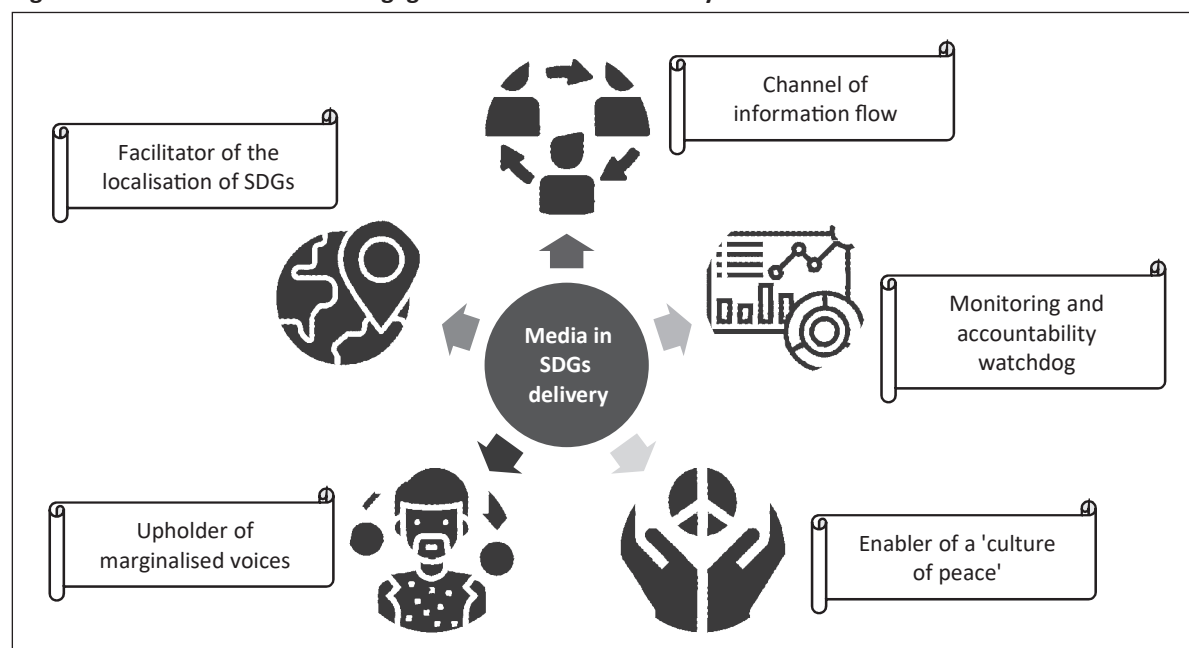
1.4 Layout of the paper

This paper is organised as follows. Following this introduction, in Section 2, the paper establishes a conceptual framework through detailed literature review. In Section 3, the paper outlines how media in Bangladesh is currently involved with the SDGs. The paper concludes through summarising the findings, identifying the gaps and challenges faced by media with regard to their engagement with the SDGs process and providing recommendations for enhanced role of media for the successful delivery of SDGs in Bangladesh.

2. MEDIA IN SDGs DELIVERY: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A healthy society is built on the pillars of inclusive, just and strong institutions. However, these institutions are not adequate by themselves and need to be monitored regularly to perform effectively. Citizens' participation is key to hold governments accountable and exert influence over decisions that affect people's lives. Meanwhile, our responses are determined by what we know or do not know. In addition, what is reported and how it is reported has a role in shaping the policy and development

Figure 1: Framework for media engagement in the SDGs delivery



Source: Authors' elaboration.

agenda of the state, and has implications for the millions of people whose lives are affected (Titus, 2017). The aforesaid statement reinforces and acknowledges the importance of the mass media as key drivers for disseminating information and ensuring citizens' participation. The media is a pre-condition for meaningful progress and implementation on the 2030 Agenda. Available literatures suggest that media can play the following important roles in the delivery of SDGs in a country (Figure 1).

2.1 Media as a channel of information flow

In order to measure the progress of SDGs, a huge amount of information will be generated. The media and other information providers, including those on the internet will sample and adapt this chunk of information in the form of news, articles, talk shows, videos, animation and so on (Grizzle, 2015). The media is a critically important instrument to create awareness about the SDGs. A free and independent media can inform and influence public opinion about government policy (TAP Network, n.d.). It can be done through providing access to information (SDG target 16.10) to the citizens. Public interest journalism provides citizens with access to information through specific media contents on key aspects of public life that affect their well-being and involvement (Titus, 2017). In addition to acting as a channel of information flow, independent, pluralist media subsequently contributes in building well-informed, critical and resilient citizens. Thus, instead of simply inform, media's goal should be to transform the thought process of citizens and empower them to shape their own development, and to participate, advocate and monitor for the successful delivery of the SDGs.

While disseminating information and messages, the media should be exact and precise about the selection of language in accordance with the audience. The media should use everyday language, avoid jargons and acronyms in order to deliver effective key messages for general public use in relation to the SDGs. A good strategy is to provide specific messages and avoid overflow of information, refer only to simple statistics, and give the message a human and local face (e.g. a real-life story). Besides, the media should look for fresh news in which to frame the SDGs and push the stories forward. For example, at Women Deliver, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation pledged United States dollar (USD) 80 million to improve gender data to help generate information on gender disparities, such as unpaid work and asset ownership (McCullough, 2016). Suddenly, this pledge becomes big news since there is a consensus among experts that achieving gender equality (SDG 5), ties to all 17 SDGs, and it is indispensable to expand gender data if we want a baseline around gender equality.

2.2 Media as a monitoring and accountability watchdog

Good governance is a pre-requisite to attain sustainable development in a nation. It is more likely that a government will be open to transparency and accountability if there is an enabling environment in the country for free speech, access to information and media freedom. It also denotes that citizens find it conducive to hold their government accountable, and can participate to ensure that their needs are met through the government. A free, pluralistic, professional and independent media, are fundamental to facilitate good and effective governance and promote responsive government in a nation (UNESCO, 2015). The media can perform the watchdog role of holding government more accountable and expose the abuses of power and resources through utilising new media technologies combined with insightful investigative journalism.

The media can promote accountability in government actions through monitoring the performance of public institutions, exposing any misconduct, providing feedbacks and advocating for change

(Cole *et al.*, 2008). With regard to the overall accountability for the 2030 Agenda, the media can provide a platform to discuss and debate pertinent issues related to the SDGs. They can spread information on the status of progress and challenges in relation to the SDGs, highlight the human story behind the data and numbers, and put pressure on governments to take necessary action to effectively implement the SDGs. They can present information to wider citizens as to what decision-makers and government actors are doing, or are not doing against what they should have done or have committed. Furthermore, awareness and expectations for credible, inclusive and participatory follow-up and review consultations with regard to the SDGs can also be raised using media (Amnesty International, 2016).

With an ultimate objective to influence social, institutional and political change, the media principally uses ‘publication and dissemination of reports’ as a monitoring tool. Identifying inadequacies and weaknesses in the functioning of public institutions and uncovering these shortcomings to the public is likely to create pressure on those institutions to deliver better services to the citizenry (Cole *et al.*, 2008). For example, a media outlet may choose to monitor the human rights commitments of the police towards a minority group (SDG 16), and publish periodic reports about the situation so as to draw the attention of relevant stakeholders and decision-makers on the issue. Ultimately, the whole purpose of this process is to promote the human rights and strengthen the protection to the members of a ‘left behind’ group (core pledges of the 2030 Agenda). In order to monitor effectiveness, the media must conduct it following a rigorous and systematic methodology, gather information objectively and establish respectability.

2.3 Media as the enabler of a ‘culture of peace’

Peace is an important element of SDG 16 and the media can be a potential contributor to a ‘culture of peace’ in a country. The United Nations (1998) defines a ‘culture of peace’ as “a set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life that reject violence and prevent by tackling the root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations”. Working towards ensuring equality between men and women and fostering democratic participation are two essential elements within the United Nations (UN) conception of mainstreaming this ‘culture of peace’ (French, 2015). The uses of social media provide examples of the ways in which a ‘culture of peace’ has been enabled. To date social media has provided platforms for gender issues, enhanced access for women and aided greater democracy and diversity of voices (French, 2015). For example, the first-hand independent analysis by human rights activist Rosebell in her blog on women rights’ violations in Uganda has created awareness and communication of these issues, particularly with younger people (UNHR, 2011). Furthermore, it is noted in the background paper of the Global Media Forum 2014 that women are increasingly provided with a voice for self-determination and self-expression by the newer digital and social media platforms (UNESCO, 2014). Social media are also providing an effective platform for practicing and promoting women’s rights in some countries. However, countries do not have similar kind of access to technologies and some countries may be susceptible to ‘digital divides’. Therefore, bridging this ‘digital divide’ is a precondition towards building a ‘culture of peace’ in this regard.

2.4 Media as the upholder of marginalised voices

The media can ensure that citizens’ voices and needs in relation to government policies and actions are heard by providing a platform for public debate and dialogue (TAP Network, n.d.). The outreach

of both traditional and new forms of media can play an instrumental role in involving people in SDGs follow-up and review processes, who otherwise might not be able to participate (UNDG, 2017). It can also enhance the participation of those who can engage, and potentially uncover issues that otherwise might be overlooked (UNDG, 2017). For example, media often under-report poverty as an issue and, when they report, they do not give people who are facing poverty adequate space to explain what it really means to them. Media can engage such segment of the population through mainstreaming the alternative story and getting these poor and marginalised seen and valued. To this end, community radio can be a unique and effective tool to meet the information needs of the marginalised groups (Khaskuu, 2015). Community radio can assist local communities to make their voices heard and reinforces consultations and the ability of the communities to take action.

2.5 Media facilitating the localisation of SDGs

Issues such as poverty alleviation and gender equality are often reported by international agencies such as the UN on a global platform. This can make the topics of little interests to the readers, viewers or listeners due to being seemingly abstract and rather remote in nature (Thomas, 2014). Meanwhile, a peripheral topic can be brought to light and to the focus through covering an important story which has international interest. Journalists should always look-out for contemporary, locally focused perspectives to make stories interesting to the readers, viewers or listeners (Thomas, 2014). There is no denying the fact that the situation will vary depending on the context. A country or region may have enjoyed rapid economic growth while having a high proportion of people living in poverty. Some countries may face acute gender based discrimination. News that is local and relevant and personalised resonates with local audiences (Titus, 2017).

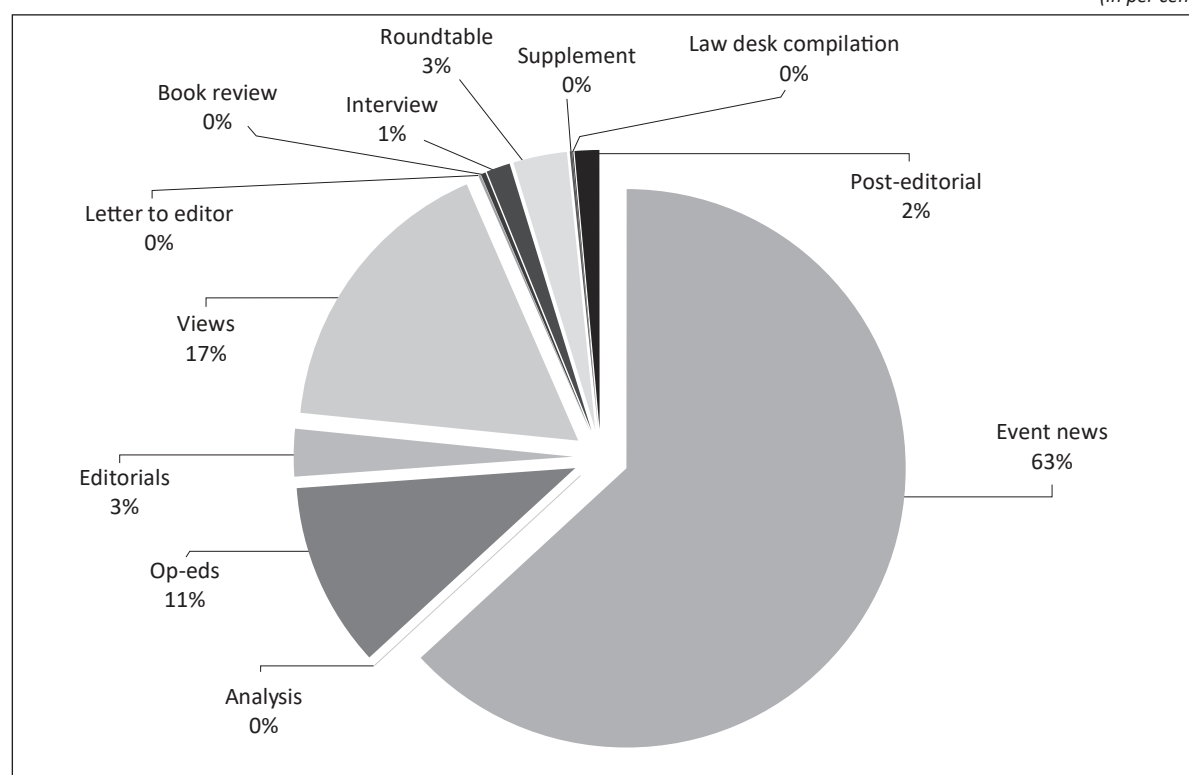
The mainstream media often do not serve the local communities as the media outlets based in the towns do not reach the remote villages. The public broadcaster does not have branches in the unions and their reports from those areas are occasional. Thus, the local population remain more informed about national issues than their local problems and challenges. In this scenario, community radios can act as a bridge between local decision-makers and local community groups (Khaskuu, 2015). Cellphone is another media or communication tool using which citizen journalism can be promoted. Simple text messages from cellphones can be used as a powerful tool through which farmers, indigenous people and locals can fight for their rights on land/forests, to monitor and report civil servant wrongdoings and highlight other social problems (Surjadi, 2015). In such way, media using various tools may facilitate realising the SDGs localisation process.

3. MEDIA IN THE SDGs DELIVERY IN BANGLADESH

The study includes a mapping exercise covering SDGs related contents (which explicitly mentioned SDG) published in selected print and online media from July 2015 to December 2018. Overall, mentions of SDGs are very sweeping, without diving deep. The mapping exercise brings forth the following key issues:

3.1 Media channelling SDGs-related information flow

The media has the key role to ensure that it absorbs the information on SDGs generated from variety of sources and channel them in a reader friendly way to its citizens through its different contents on a continuous basis. In Bangladesh, since its inception in 2015, the SDGs were covered in a total of 2,093

Figure 2: Content-wise share of all SDG-related reports*(in per cent)*

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

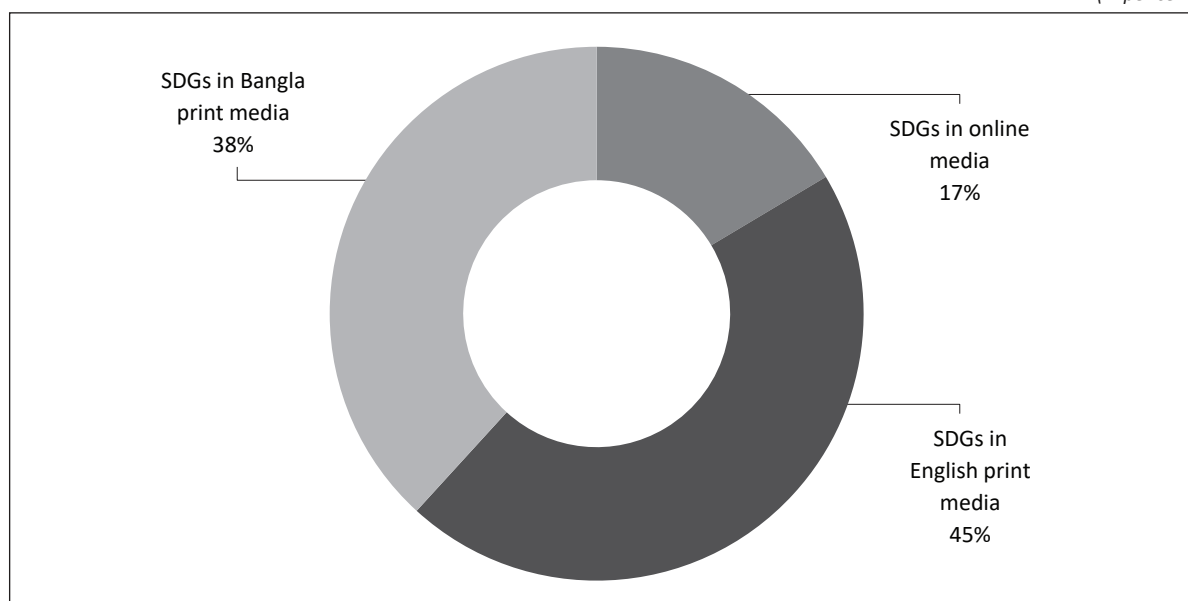
event news, op-eds, editorials, views, letters to the editor, book reviews, interviews, roundtables, supplements, law desk compilations and post-editorials till 2018. More than half (63 per cent) of the published contents are event news (Figure 2). The second largest contributor is views/opinions (17 per cent) followed by op-eds (11 per cent). Editorials on SDGs are not common accounting to only 3 per cent of total coverage. Meanwhile, Op-eds are generally written by external experts. Surprisingly, no independent analysis or feature story was found on SDGs (Annex Table 1). Among the news contents, the mentions of SDGs were mostly from the speakers' quotes.

Among the three categories of media under our assessment, SDGs were covered more in the English print media (45 per cent) as compared to Bangla print media (38 per cent) and online media (17 per cent) (Figure 3). Further, primarily event news and occasionally views on SDGs are featured in online media. Unlike the other two categories, both event news and views of SDGs covered by online media dropped by a large margin in 2018 compared to other years (Annex Table 1.1).

The published contents on SDG issues has been increasing quite rapidly and increased by nearly nine times (919) in 2018 as compared to 2015 (149) (Figure 4). While this increasing trend was followed by both English and Bangla print media, it recorded a substantial drop in case of online media after 2017. As of 2018, English print media was leading particularly with regard to featuring SDGs through op-eds and views/opinions (Annex Table 1.2, Annex Table 1.3).

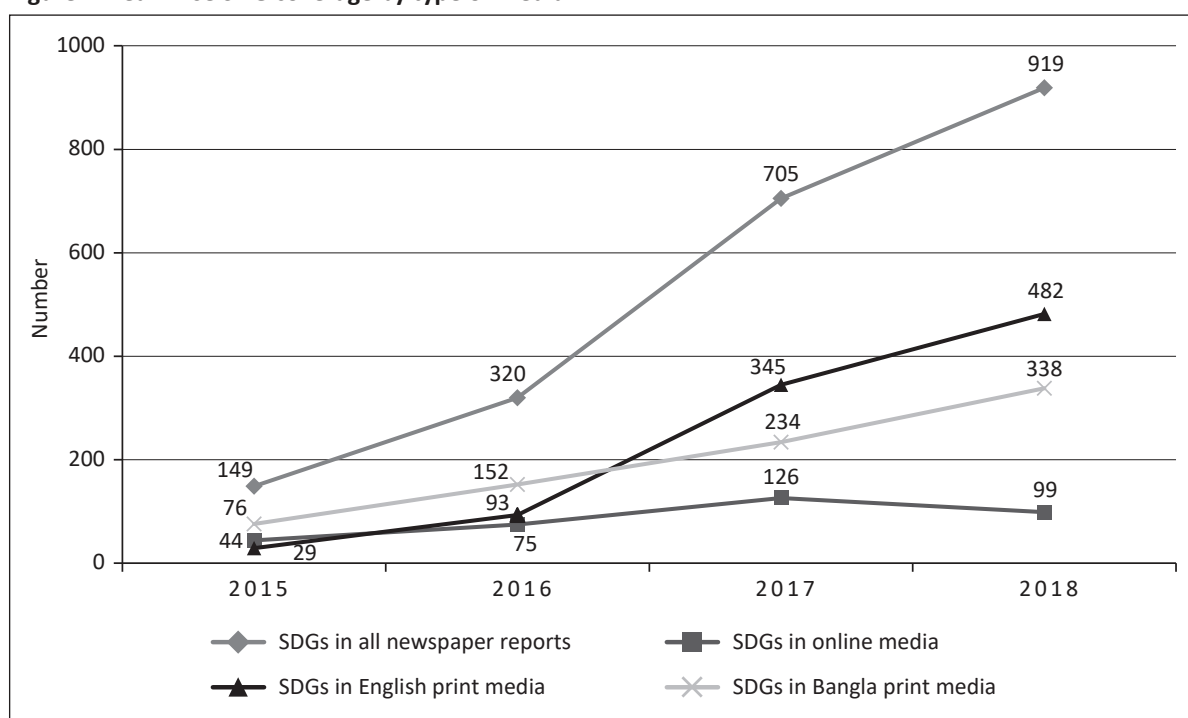
Figure 3: Share of all SDG-related reports by type of media

(in per cent)



Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

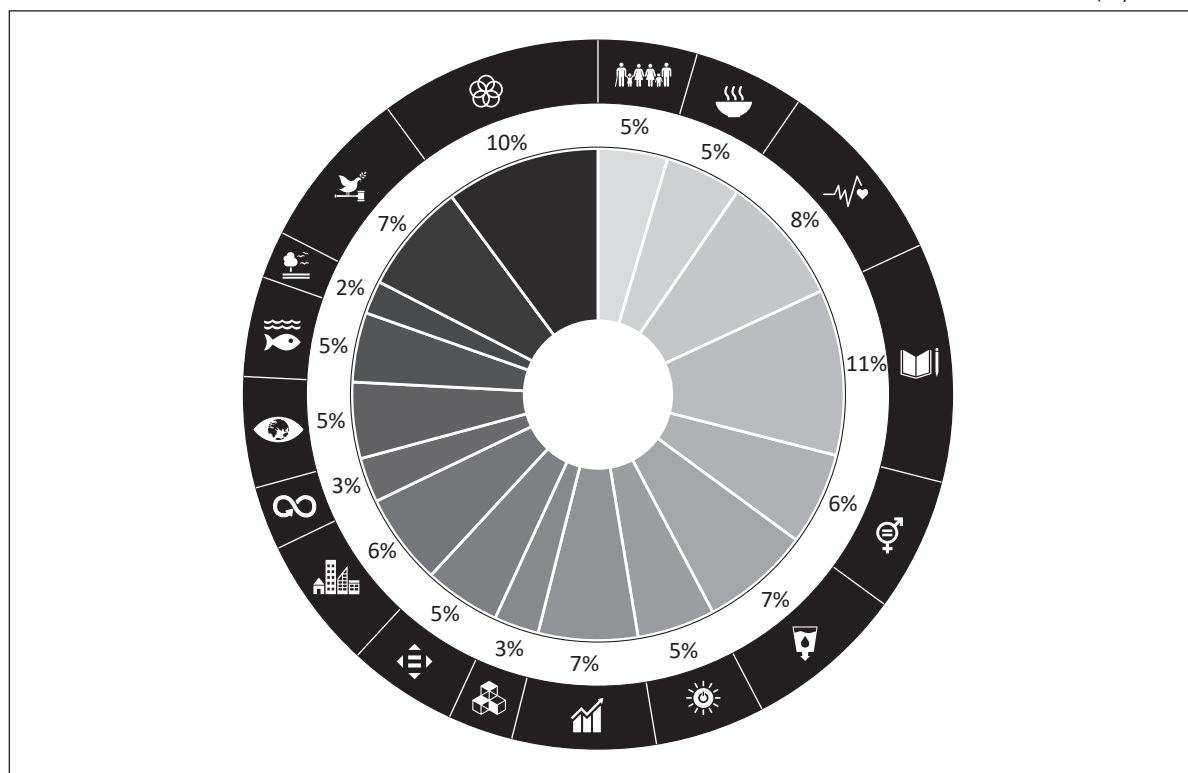
Figure 4: Year-wise SDG coverage by type of media



Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

3.2 Media involvement in the monitoring of different goals

The mapping exercise shows that among the SDGs, Goal 4 (Quality education) - 11 per cent, Goal 17 (Partnerships for the goals) - 10 per cent, and Goal 3 (Good health and well-being) - 8 per cent featured more prominently in all types of media during 2015-2018 period (Figure 5). In contrast, Goal

Figure 5: Goal-wise share of SDGs coverage*(in per cent)*

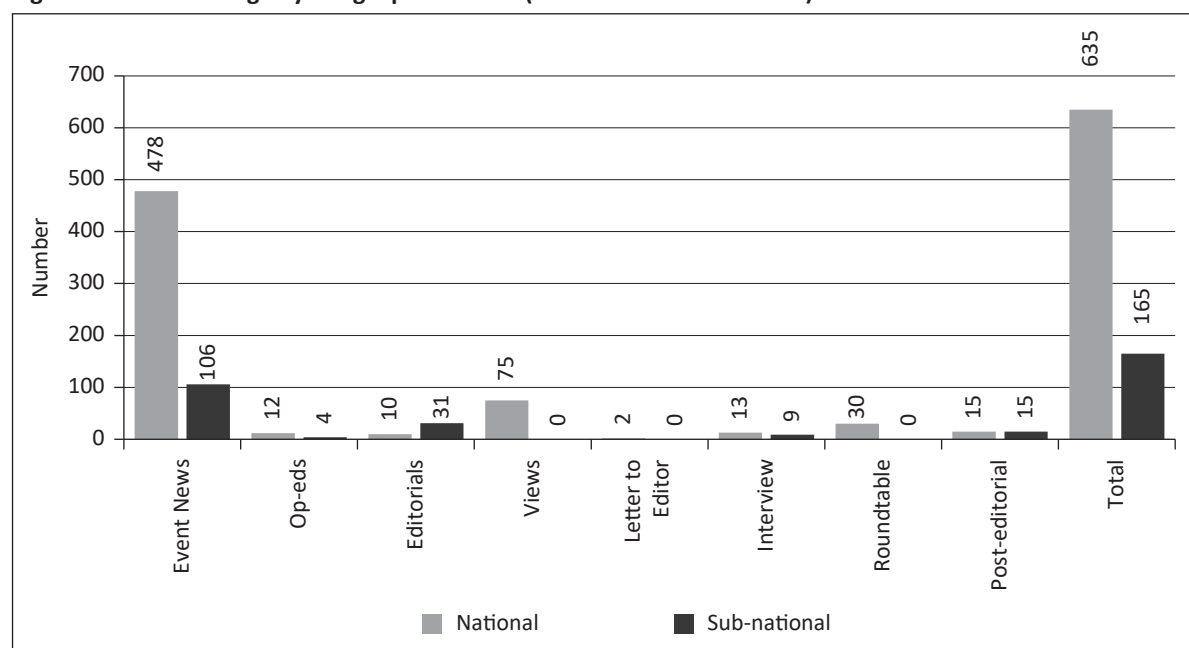
Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

9 (Industry, innovation and the infrastructure), Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production) and Goal 15 (Life on land) recorded much lower coverage (Annex Table 2). This is also consistent with the national priority with regard to goals for Bangladesh in the early years.

Some variations can be observed by type of media and by years. For example, Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation) was the most featured goal in online media (Annex Table 2.1). Meanwhile Goal 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) was featured highly by both English and national Bangla print media though with a drop in 2018 (Annex Table 2.2, Annex Table 2.3 and Annex Table 2.3.1). Among the sub-national media reports, apart from Goal 4, Goal 2 (Zero hunger) and Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth) were featured mostly (Annex Table 2.3.2). This reflects the prominence of issues such as agriculture, skills, employment generation and training, access to credits in the local level events and dialogues most of which are organised by NGOs and CSOs.

3.3 Local media engagement in SDGs

As has been discussed earlier, local media involvement in SDGs is critically important in upholding marginalised voices and facilitate the process of SDGs localisation. Coverage of SDGs by sub-national newspapers is substantially lower than national media houses. During 2015-2018 period, SDGs were featured nearly four times higher (635) in national Bangla print media as compared to sub-national Bangla print media (165) through various type of contents (Figure 6). While, national media led in covering SDGs in majority of the contents, sub-national newspapers were way ahead in featuring SDGs through editorials which jumped dramatically in 2018 (Annex Table 1.3.1, Annex Table 1.3.2).

Figure 6: SDGs coverage by Bangla print media (National vs. sub-national)

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Sub-national newspapers also featured equal number of post-editorials (15) to national newspapers during the aforementioned period.

Out of eight districts that were covered under the mapping exercise, local media of only four districts namely Bagura, Chattogram, Khulna and Sylhet featured SDGs-related contents in their newspapers during the aforesaid period (Annex Table 1.3.2.1, Annex Table 1.3.2.2, Annex Table 1.3.2.3 and Annex Table 1.3.2.4). Among the districts, newspapers in Chattogram topped (92) with regard to featuring SDGs-related content followed by Sylhet (46), Bagura (27) and Khulna (10) (Table 1). Meanwhile, for both Bagura and Khulna, SDGs-related contents started being covered only from 2018. Content-wise, SDGs were primarily featured in event news, editorials and post-editorials. Sylhet was found to be the only district where op-eds were written in the local newspapers on SDGs (Annex Table 1.3.2.1).

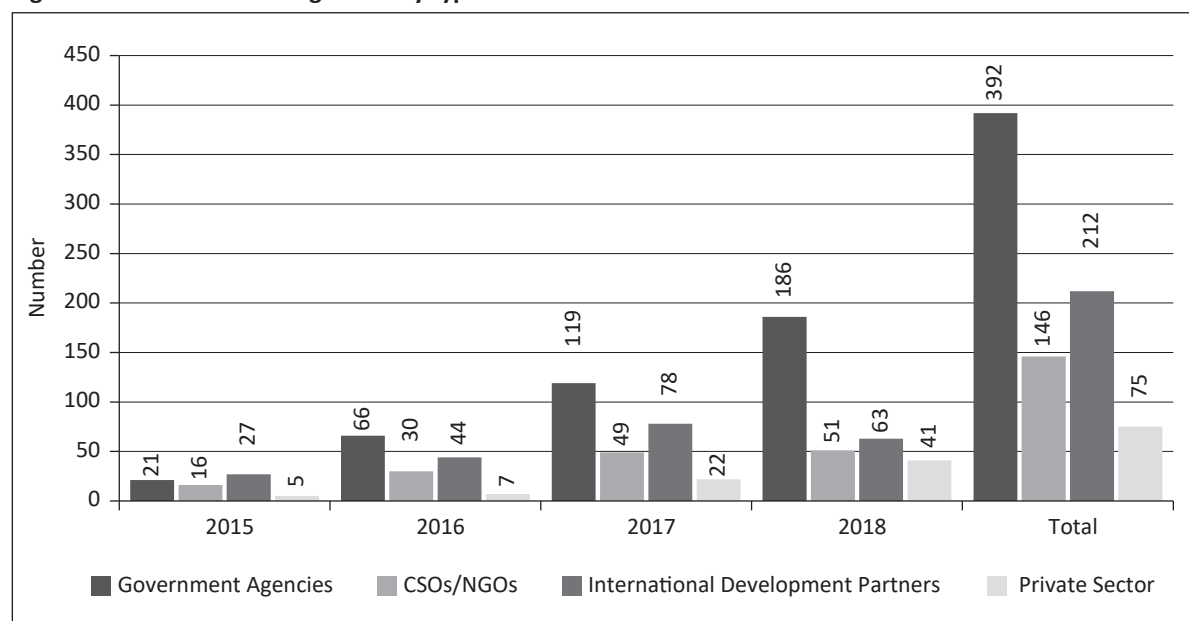
Table 1: District-wise coverage of SDGs by media

District	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Sylhet	0	7	15	24	46
Chattogram	0	9	37	46	92
Bagura	0	0	0	27	27
Khulna	0	0	0	10	10

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

3.4 Media partnering with different stakeholders in promoting the SDGs

During the reviewed period, government agencies organised highest number of events on SDGs (392) followed by development partners (212), CSOs/NGOs (146) and private sectors (75) (Figure 7). Quite naturally, SDGs-related events were mainly organised by development partners in 2015 and early 2016. Then the national government agencies and CSOs started inheriting the agenda more which

Figure 7: Events on SDGs organised by type of stakeholders

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

also reflected in the increased number of events organised by them on SDGs. Events organised by the private sector is very negligible on SDGs. The private sector organised substantially more events in 2017 and 2018 compared to 2015 and 2016 reflecting that their involvement gained momentum a little later than the other actors (Annex Table 3.4). We are also able to observe a common pattern with regard to coverage of SDGs-related events by certain type of media. For example, majority (43 per cent and 42 per cent respectively) of the events organised by government agencies and international development partners on SDGs were covered by Bangla print media (national) (Annex Table 3.1, Annex Table 3.3). Meanwhile, more than half of the events organised by CSOs were covered by online media (Annex Table 3.2). Consequently, English print media covered majority of the events (43 per cent) organised by the private sector during the aforementioned period (Annex Table 3.4).

4. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, GAPS AND CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Summary of findings

Based on the mapping exercise and primary discussions with the media gatekeepers, following conclusions can be drawn.

First, despite a significant increase in the number of media coverage on SDGs since 2015, the media in Bangladesh have been playing a passive role in channeling SDGs-related information to the citizens. Conceptually, their ideal role would have to absorb, process and analyse the ocean of information related to the SDGs before passing it to the citizens. Instead, featuring event news was found to be the most prominent way through which the media were engaged in spreading SDGs-related information. No independent analysis or feature story was found on SDGs by the media. Further, the remarks and comments on SDGs were mostly from the speakers' quotes among different contents.

Second, although not regularly, the media through its coverage of different goals, played some sort of watchdog role of the SDGs. News related to SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 17 and in some instances SDG 16 were

featured in most cases. However, there was very little instances where investigative monitoring of the performance of public institutions involved in the implementation, exposing of any misconduct, providing of feedbacks and advocating for change of actions relating to SDGs implementation were covered. Thus, it could not adequately promote accountability in government actions for the better delivery of those goals.

Third, media's involvement in upholding marginalised voices and facilitating the process of SDGs localisation was found to be quite subdued in the early years in Bangladesh. Coverage of SDGs by sub-national newspapers was found to be substantially lower than national media houses. Further, only half of the eight districts under the mapping featured SDGs-related contents in their newspapers. Also, sub-national media reports were mainly concentrated on featuring Goal 2, 4 and 8 which reflect the vibrancy of issues such as agriculture, employment generation and skill development trainings, access to credits in the local level events which are mostly organised by NGOs and CSOs. There was also no particular evidence of media playing the bridging role between local decision-makers and local community groups through covering community stories and views/opinions of the marginalised people.

Fourth, the media in Bangladesh have been moderately successful in building partnership with different stakeholders in promoting SDGs through covering their events. While, Bangla print media have been concentrated on featuring events organised by government agencies and development partners, online media mostly featured events by CSOs/NGOs. There were either not much events by the private sector on SDGs or their events did not get much attention in the media houses. The very few events that were organised by the private sector in the later period were mainly featured by the English media.

Fifth, the use of social media in improving organisational transparency, accountability, service delivery and decision making with regard to the SDGs is relatively new in Bangladesh. The government organisations and citizens are increasingly using social media especially Facebook for different purposes. A study by Azad *et al.* (n.d.) revealed that government organisations used Facebook page and groups with the aim to communicate with the public in a new way; develop internal communication and encourage service innovation, knowledge sharing and problem solution. There was a positive change in the productivity of organisational integration and behaviour pattern as there was no constraint of the office hour. Officers were often found on Facebook outside their office hours to answer public queries, give directions to their subordinates and take immediate action to public demands. For example, responding to a public request posted in the Facebook group of *Barisal Problems and Prospects*, the deputy commissioner (DC) of Barisal district ordered the Barisal City Corporation to take immediate steps to recover the Jail canal of Barisal district from the encroachers demolishing illegal structures (Azad *et al.*, n.d.). This is a successful illustration of the use of 'new media' (social media) in ensuring effectiveness and promoting accountability in SDGs-related service delivery.

4.2 Gaps and challenges

During the interactions with media personnel under the study, a general observation was made that media should have been engaged more effectively with the activities of other non-state actors with its early initiatives. Though the CSOs have organised a number of events involving the media, the frequency of such events should be increased. It was discussed that there are rooms for improved

understandings of media gatekeepers in terms of understanding various issues of SDGs for appropriate delegation of assignment and improving coverage. The following gaps and challenges were highlighted at the meetings and also found from secondary literature.

4.2.1 Print and Online Media

- i. There is no SDG specialisation at media houses. It will not be necessary to create so as almost all the relevant issues are spread within the existing sections. However, the media personnel from all sections of a media house need to be aware as regards the SDGs in a more meaningful manner.
- ii. Journalists are already covering many significant issues related to various goals of SDGs, but due to lack of a detail understanding, relating their reports with SDG context are not well established.
- iii. As of now, the media coverages are mainly segmented in three categories - informative, watchdog and analytical. These types of news do not necessarily reflect the impact of SDGs on the life of a common citizen.
- iv. Lack of adequate capacity of the media houses at the sub-national level failed to hold local implementing agencies and policymakers accountable utilising SDGs as an accountable mechanism.
- v. Lack of information and data is one of the major limitations for the journalists to prepare appropriate and timely news and analysis.

4.2.2 Social Media

- i. The number of social media, particularly Facebook users in citizens and government organisations has been increasing. Here, the lack of awareness about government Facebook page and its contents among mass people is a key challenge.
- ii. Other risks and challenges include privacy, account management, audience behaviour, and ICT infrastructure.
- iii. Slow internet connectivity and expensive internet bandwidth are often a barrier particularly in the rural areas.

4.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings from the mapping exercise and the identified gaps and challenges, following recommendations can be given.

4.3.1 Print and Online Media

Engaging media more in SDGs accountability framework of Bangladesh

- i. It will require an improved understanding of the news reporters on various issues related to SDGs. To this end, other non-state actors including CSOs may engage media in more collaborative manner.
- ii. The SDGs can be used as an accountability tool, also as a global reference, while making any news on various issues related to development and social challenges. In this case, various thematic capacity development initiatives can be taken for reporters to improve their knowledge on SDGs and embedding the goals and targets into their news stories.
- iii. The media gatekeepers need to be more conscious while sending reporters to cover specific issues related to the SDGs.

- iv. The language and lexicon of SDGs-related research and analysis should be more communicative and easy-to-understand for common people to receive more media attention.
- v. The reporting style may need to be revisited to bring-up a 'life-story' on how the delivery of SDGs are improving the status of marginalised people across the country. This is a responsibility for the media house, and, at the same time, the CSOs should continue their advocacy with media gatekeepers towards ensuring the voice of marginalised communities are placed in media coverage appropriately.
- vi. An initiative needs to be undertaken on reviewing the SDGs in textbooks for improving awareness and understanding on SDGs.

Capacity development for journalists

Media houses and associations should organise in-house capacity development workshops, trainings to improve understanding of their relevant staffs on SDGs. Accordingly, other non-state actors including CSOs can organise capacity development events for media officials on various thematic issues, in partnership with appropriate stakeholders. Various capacity development initiatives can be taken to improve knowledge and understanding on SDGs of the news reporters, such as:

Thematic/issue-based workshops for journalists

- i. Technical training for media houses for SDGs-related investigative reporting
- ii. Local level media campaign where a pool of journalists from national offices can attend and cover various activities on SDG delivery at local level
- iii. Specific capacity development activities for the journalists at local level to help them generating local evidences
- iv. SDG fellowships for journalists; and,
- v. SDG award on best reporting (received mixed reactions from journalists).

Enhancing access to data and information for journalists

- i. The CSOs can establish a mechanism for media to share data and information on SDGs.
- ii. There can be a pool of media personnel connected/associated with the CSOs where updates and information on SDGs will be shared. For example, CSOs can form groups for journalists to share SDG updates and resources using electronic communication channels including email and social media which will also be helpful for the journalists to pick up updates and trends on SDGs.

4.3.2 Social Media

- i. Government should take initiative to promote public service-related social media pages or groups partnering with mass media, so that citizens can get the desired information and services. CSOs and NGOs can also collaborate to this end in raising awareness.
- ii. Conferences and seminars can be organised to showcase the global and national 'good practices' of using social media in ensuring accountability in the service delivery.
- iii. Workshops about the guidelines, methods and tools of using social media for SDGs delivery among the youth can be organised by both government and non-state actors.
- iv. Government should take initiative to improve internet speed and reduce internet bandwidth price so that rural marginal people can use social media to raise their SDGs-related issues.

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ANNEXES

Annex Table 1: SDGs in all newspaper reports

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Event News	98	222	431	571	1322
Analysis	-	-	-	-	0
Op-eds	19	15	101	89	224
Editorials	3	3	10	41	57
Views/Opinion	16	55	131	151	353
Letter to Editor	-	-	1	2	3
Book review	-	-	1	5	6
Interview	7	3	10	9	29
Roundtable	3	15	13	34	65
Supplement	-	2	1	-	3
Law Desk Compilation	-	-	1	-	1
Post-editorial	3	5	5	17	30
Total	149	320	705	919	2093

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 1.1: SDGs in Online media

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Event News	37	74	122	98	331
Analysis	-	-	-	-	0
Op-eds	-	-	-	-	0
Editorials	-	-	-	-	0
Interview	2	-	-	-	11
Views/Opinion	5	1	4	1	0
Letter to Editor	-	-	-	-	0
Book review	-	-	-	-	2
Interview	-	-	-	-	0
Roundtable	-	-	-	-	0
Supplement	-	-	-	-	0
Law Desk Compilation	-	-	-	-	331
Post-editorial	-	-	-	-	0
Total	44	75	126	99	344

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 1.2: SDGs in English media

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Event News	8	24	131	244	407
Analysis	-	-	-	-	0
Op-eds	14	14	99	81	208
Editorials	-	1	5	10	16
Views/Opinion	5	45	101	116	267

(Annex Table 1.2 contd.)

(Annex Table 1.2 contd.)

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Letter to Editor	-	-	1	-	1
Book review	-	-	1	5	6
Interview	1	1	1	2	5
Roundtable	1	6	4	24	35
Supplement	-	2	1	-	3
Law Desk Compilation	-	-	1	-	1
Post-editorial	-	-	-	-	0
Total	29	93	345	482	949

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 1.3: SDGs in Bangla print media

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Event News	53	124	178	229	584
Analysis	-	-	-	-	0
Op-eds	5	1	2	8	16
Editorials	3	2	5	31	41
Views/Opinion	6	9	26	34	75
Letter to Editor	-	-	-	2	2
Book review	-	-	-	-	0
Interview	4	2	9	7	22
Roundtable	2	9	9	10	30
Supplement	-	-	-	-	0
Law Desk Compilation	-	-	-	-	0
Post-editorial	3	5	5	17	30
Total	76	152	234	338	800

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 1.3.1: SDGs in Bangla print media (National)

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Event News	53	110	149	166	478
Analysis	-	-	-	-	0
Op-eds	5	1	1	5	12
Editorials	3	1	-	6	10
Views/Opinion	6	9	26	34	75
Letter to Editor	-	-	-	2	2
Book review	-	-	-	-	0
Interview	4	2	4	3	13
Roundtable	2	9	9	10	30
Supplement	-	-	-	-	0
Law Desk Compilation	-	-	-	-	0
Post-editorial	3	4	3	5	15
Total	76	136	192	231	635

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 1.3.2: SDGs in Bangla print media (Sub-national/outside Dhaka)

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Event News	-	14	29	63	106
Analysis	-	-	-	-	0
Op-eds	-	-	1	3	4
Editorials	-	1	5	25	31
Views/Opinion	-	-	-	-	0
Letter to Editor	-	-	-	-	0
Book review	-	-	-	-	0
Interview	-	-	5	4	9
Roundtable	-	-	-	-	0
Supplement	-	-	-	-	0
Law Desk Compilation	-	-	-	-	0
Post-editorial	-	1	2	12	15
Total	0	16	42	107	165

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 1.3.2.1: SDGs in Bangla print media (District-wise) Sylhet

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Event News	-	6	9	14	29
Analysis	-	-	-	-	0
Op-eds	-	-	1	3	4
Editorials	-	-	3	2	5
Views/Opinion	-	-	-	-	0
Letter to Editor	-	-	-	-	0
Book review	-	-	-	-	0
Interview	-	-	-	-	0
Roundtable	-	-	-	-	0
Supplement	-	-	-	-	0
Law Desk Compilation	-	-	-	-	0
Post-editorial	-	1	2	5	8
Total	0	7	15	24	46

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 1.3.2.2: SDGs in Bangla print media (District-wise) Chattogram

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Event News	-	8	30	32	70
Analysis	-	-	-	-	0
Op-eds	-	-	-	-	0
Editorials	-	1	2	10	13
Views/Opinion	-	-	-	-	0
Letter to Editor	-	-	-	-	0
Book review	-	-	-	-	0
Interview	-	-	5	4	9
Roundtable	-	-	-	-	0

(Annex Table 1.3.2.2 contd.)

(Annex Table 1.3.2.2 contd.)

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Supplement	-	-	-	-	0
Law Desk Compilation	-	-	-	-	0
Post-editorial	-	-	-	-	0
Total	0	9	37	46	92

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 1.3.2.3: SDGs in Bangla print media (District-wise) Bagura

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Event News	-	-	-	10	10
Analysis	-	-	-	-	0
Op-eds	-	-	-	-	0
Editorials	-	-	-	10	10
Views/Opinion	-	-	-	-	0
Letter to Editor	-	-	-	-	0
Book review	-	-	-	-	0
Interview	-	-	-	-	0
Roundtable	-	-	-	-	0
Supplement	-	-	-	-	0
Law Desk Compilation	-	-	-	-	0
Post-editorial	-	-	-	7	7
Total	0	0	0	27	27

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 1.3.2.4: SDGs in Bangla print media (District-wise) Khulna

Type of Content	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Event News	-	-	-	7	7
Analysis	-	-	-	-	0
Op-eds	-	-	-	-	0
Editorials	-	-	-	3	3
Views/Opinion	-	-	-	-	0
Letter to Editor	-	-	-	-	0
Book review	-	-	-	-	0
Interview	-	-	-	-	0
Roundtable	-	-	-	-	0
Supplement	-	-	-	-	0
Law Desk Compilation	-	-	-	-	0
Post-editorial	-	-	-	-	0
Total	0	0	0	10	10

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 2: Goal-wise SDGs coverage in all newspapers

Goal	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Goal 1	2	6	19	15	42
Goal 2	2	2	19	23	46
Goal 3	3	13	34	28	78
Goal 4	4	13	44	39	100
Goal 5	5	8	19	24	56
Goal 6	3	16	26	21	66
Goal 7	2	2	23	20	47
Goal 8	4	7	23	26	60
Goal 9	3	3	7	14	27
Goal 10	5	7	14	20	46
Goal 11	5	5	22	23	55
Goal 12	2	4	8	13	27
Goal 13	5	3	17	21	46
Goal 14	3	4	18	17	42
Goal 15	2	2	7	9	20
Goal 16	4	13	27	23	67
Goal 17	12	5	39	37	93
Total	66	113	366	373	918

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 2.1: Goal-wise SDGs coverage in online media

Goal	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Goal 1	-	-	-	1	1
Goal 2	-	-	-	1	1
Goal 3	-	3	2	1	6
Goal 4	-	-	6	2	8
Goal 5	3	-	-	2	5
Goal 6	-	6	5	2	13
Goal 7	-	-	-	1	1
Goal 8	-	-	-	1	1
Goal 9	-	-	-	-	0
Goal 10	-	-	1	-	1
Goal 11	-	-	-	-	0
Goal 12	-	-	-	-	0
Goal 13	1	-	-	-	1
Goal 14	1	1	2	-	4
Goal 15	-	-	-	-	0
Goal 16	2	-	1	-	3
Goal 17	7	1	-	2	10
Total	14	11	17	13	55

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 2.2: Goal-wise SDGs coverage in English media

Goal	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Goal 1	-	2	13	12	27
Goal 2	-	2	14	11	27
Goal 3	-	4	24	24	52
Goal 4	1	8	23	20	52
Goal 5	-	3	13	19	35
Goal 6	1	3	18	13	35
Goal 7	-	1	19	16	36
Goal 8	2	5	18	17	42
Goal 9	1	2	3	11	17
Goal 10	2	3	11	16	32
Goal 11	3	3	16	20	42
Goal 12	-	2	4	10	16
Goal 13	2	2	14	15	33
Goal 14	-	1	11	14	26
Goal 15	-	1	2	7	10
Goal 16	-	6	19	20	45
Goal 17	1	2	34	29	66
Total	13	50	256	274	593

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 2.3: Goal-wise SDGs coverage in Bangla print media

Goal	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Goal 1	2	2	7	2	13
Goal 2	2	0	6	10	18
Goal 3	2	2	8	6	18
Goal 4	3	2	16	18	39
Goal 5	2	2	6	5	15
Goal 6	2	7	3	6	18
Goal 7	2	1	4	3	10
Goal 8	2	0	7	7	16
Goal 9	2	1	4	3	10
Goal 10	3	3	4	3	13
Goal 11	2	2	6	2	12
Goal 12	2	2	4	3	11
Goal 13	2	1	3	6	12
Goal 14	2	2	5	3	12
Goal 15	2	1	5	2	10
Goal 16	3	6	8	3	20
Goal 17	4	2	7	5	18
Total	39	36	103	87	265

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 2.3.1: Goal-wise SDGs coverage in Bangla print media (National)

Goal	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Goal 1	2	2	5	2	11
Goal 2	2	0	5	3	10
Goal 3	2	1	5	3	11
Goal 4	4	1	8	6	19
Goal 5	2	3	5	3	13
Goal 6	2	6	3	4	15
Goal 7	2	1	4	3	10
Goal 8	2	0	5	6	13
Goal 9	2	1	5	2	10
Goal 10	4	2	5	4	15
Goal 11	2	1	4	2	9
Goal 12	2	2	3	3	10
Goal 13	2	1	3	3	9
Goal 14	2	2	5	2	11
Goal 15	2	1	3	2	8
Goal 16	3	6	6	3	18
Goal 17	4	2	7	6	19
Total	41	32	81	57	211

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 2.3.2: Goal-wise SDGs coverage in Bangla print media (Subnational/outside Dhaka)

Goal	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Goal 1	-	-	2	-	2
Goal 2	-	-	-	8	8
Goal 3	-	1	1	3	5
Goal 4	-	1	4	12	17
Goal 5	-	-	-	2	2
Goal 6	-	1	-	2	3
Goal 7	-	-	1	-	1
Goal 8	-	1	2	3	6
Goal 9	-	-	-	1	1
Goal 10	-	1	-	1	2
Goal 11	-	1	2	1	4
Goal 12	-	-	1	-	1
Goal 13	-	-	1	3	4
Goal 14	-	-	-	1	1
Goal 15	-	-	2	-	2
Goal 16	-	-	1	-	1
Goal 17	-	-	-	-	0
Total	0	6	17	37	60

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 3.1: Media coverage of SDGs-related events organised by government agencies

Type of media	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Online media	8	24	40	33	105
English media	1	4	27	50	82
Bangla media (National)	12	34	43	79	168
Bangla media (Sub-national)	-	4	9	24	37
Total	21	66	119	186	392

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 3.2: Media coverage of SDGs-related events organised by CSOs/NGOs

Type of media	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Online media	5	17	26	28	76
English media	-	2	11	14	27
Bangla media (National)	11	9	10	6	36
Bangla media (Sub-national)	-	2	2	3	7
Total	16	30	49	51	146

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 3.3: Media coverage of SDGs-related events organised by international development partners

Type of media	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Online media	13	14	26	16	69
English media	3	3	19	16	41
Bangla media (National)	11	23	31	23	88
Bangla media (Sub-national)	-	4	2	8	14
Total	27	44	78	63	212

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

Annex Table 3.4: Media coverage of SDGs-related events organised by private sector

Type of media	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Online media	1	2	5	6	14
English media	-	-	7	25	32
Bangla media (National)	4	5	9	9	27
Bangla media (Sub-national)	-	-	1	1	2
Total	5	7	22	41	75

Source: Authors' calculations using the media mapping exercise.

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