

**ROLE OF MEDIA IN COMBATING PUBLIC SECTOR  
CORRUPTION IN BANGLADESH**

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*Dedicated to .....*

**My Son  
Ishraq Tareq**

## Abstract

Over the last one and half decades, media have been receiving increasing amount of attention as an ‘alternate watchdog’ that often get more public attention than the audit community, transparency, anti-corruption bodies and think tanks in addressing public corruption. The media is interested in ‘horror stories’ uncovered through investigative journalism – which have great ‘media value’ in combating corruption. Along with the global trend it is timely and appropriate to trace what impact media have been bringing on fiscal transparency and accountability of public sector corruption in Bangladesh.

This is an exploratory study with a combination of quantitative and qualitative method applied for the collection of data through questionnaire survey, interviews, case studies and content analysis. The study shows that historically media could not play a noticeable role in combating public sector corruption although the first effort of press establishment was linked to disclose the corruption of colonial administration. Strict control pursued by the colonial administration seriously undermined media’s freedom to address corruption. Besides, denial of information, financial limitation and low literacy rate also affected media’s function. Nevertheless, with the changes of time media are playing a significant role in addressing corruption issues, especially after the restoration of parliamentary democracy in 1991. The empirical findings illuminate that present-day media is highlighting a good number of reports on public sector corruption, which have both tangible and intangible impacts. But the overall media role is yet to reach at satisfactory level; as respondents expressed their reservation with media’s performance and impact on corruption. Five independent variables namely ‘reporting incident’, ‘reporting quality’ ‘media freedom’, ‘access to information’ and ‘accountability & credibility’ were examined that reveals all are more or less liable for such dissatisfaction.

The overall position of ‘media freedom’ in Bangladesh is satisfactory, but its influence is relatively low in fighting corruption. Despite good ‘reporting incident’, ‘reporting quality, remained poor and most reports can not touch the upper stratum of public corruption. Finally, in comparison to electronic media, print media is performing better in combating public sector corruption.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ACC	Anti-Corruption Commission
AP	Associated Press
APS	Assistant Personal Secretary
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BC	Before Christian
BGB	Boarder Guard of Bangladesh
BTV	Bangladesh Television
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMLA	Chief Martial Law Administrator
CPA	Central Public Administration
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
EC	Election Commission
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
IPI	International Press Institute
JATRI	Journalism Training & Research Initiative
MCA	Member of Constitute Assembly
MOI	Ministry of Information
MW	Mega Watt
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NSI	National Security Intelligence

OSD	Officer on Special Duty
PIB	Press Institute of Bangladesh
PC	Press Council
RAB	Rapid Action Battalion
RHD	Roads and Highway Department
RTI	Right to Information
SPJ	Society of Professional Journalists
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STV	Satellite Television
TI	Transparency International
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
TAPEE	Transparency, Accountability, Prevention, Education and Enforcement
TV	Television
TVRO	Television Receive Only Dish
UNDP	United Nation Development Program
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1 Introduction**

Media play a critical role in Bangladesh as one of the main watchdogs of the nation on corruption. The notion of press media as a ‘fourth estate’, or as a powerful watchdog is more than 200 years old (Coronel 2008). By drawing attention to behavior that is usually perceived as acceptable and exposing unacceptable behavior as corrupt; media have the potentiality to raise public awareness, activate anti-corruption values, and generate outside pressure from the public against corruption (Rose-Ackerman 1999). Objective and qualitative reporting of media on corruption can perform a significant role in pressuring the government to act in the public interest.

In a recent article, Rick Stapenhurst (2000) maintained that media reporting on corruption can have two distinct types of impacts: tangible and intangible. Tangible impact is the visible and identifiable outcomes of reporting occur when media investigate and expose incidents of corruption; for instance, the launching of investigation by Anti-Corruption Commission. On the other hand, intangible impact of media reporting is not immediately obvious. Such effect is basically the creation of anti-corruption symphony in the society where corruption can be checked. In this respect, media can promote a democratic culture by exposing government activities, thereby raising public awareness about corrupt behavior and practices, and by educating the public about the causes, consequences and its potential cures. In fact, both the effects of media on corruption can generate public opposition to corruption. The effectiveness of media in combating corruption however depends on a number of critical factors that are found to be confined to the political, economic, and legal environment of a country in which the media operate. The key factors are: media freedom of expression, access to information, professional and ethical standard of journalists or credibility, ownership and competition (Vogl 1999; Djankov 2000; Stapenhurst 2000; Ahrend 2002; Brunetti & Weder 2003; Suphachalasai 2005). This thesis is an attempt to examine the tangible and intangible impacts of media reporting on corruption and the factors affecting that performance in Bangladesh context.

## **1.2 Background**

Corruption is a very complex worldwide phenomenon. It exists in all countries in the public and private sectors, as well as in non-profit and charitable organizations. It has many forms,

types and dimensions that may vary in different contexts. However, one universally accepted definition of corruption is given by the Transparency International (TI), i.e. “Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. It hurts everyone who depends on the integrity of people in a position of authority” (TI website). UNDP (2008) lists a number of corruptive illegal behaviors such as bribery, extortion, influence peddling, nepotism, fraud, speed money and embezzlement.

Some sources claim that corruption in public sector has been an age-old institution in the territory of Bangladesh. The heritage of corruption in Bangladesh originated from ancient time. The evidence of corruption in 4th century B.C. can be found in Kautilya’s Arthashastra. Kautilya, the Chief Minister of Maurya dynasty reveals in his book forty types of embezzlement committed by public servants and ways to control such corruption. He quoted that ‘Just as it is impossible not to taste honey or poison that one may find at the tip of one’s tongue, so it is impossible for one dealing with government funds not to taste at least a little bit, of the King’s wealth’ (Cited in Haq et al. 2009, p.23). Again, corruption got impetus since the colonial period when officials at different level of politic-administrative hierarchy were increasingly involved with it (Khan 1999). After independence, the corruption have engulfed the entire society (Khan) and it has been recognized as a national challenge ever since. And this indication is found in the Constitution. The Constitution of Bangladesh in 1972 (Article 20-2) maintained that “the State shall endeavour to create conditions in which, as a general principle, person shall not be able to enjoy unearned income” (GOB 2006). Despite the constitutional provision in place, corruption has been rampant in almost every quarters of the society.

Corruption is now prevalent in almost all areas of government activities in Bangladesh from policy makers to field level functionaries. Politicians, regulators, law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors and inspectors are all potential targets for public sector bribery. Although there is a lack of time series data on estimates of corruption in Bangladesh, the Corruption Perception Index published by Transparency International (TI) unfolded the actual scenario. Both political and administrative corruption have been considered in TI index. It ranked Bangladesh as the world top most corrupt country for the five consecutive years from 2001 to 2005. Since then, public sector corruption has become a much talked and serious issue in Bangladesh. Consequently, these days a national consensus has emerged about the need to fight against it with highest urgency and priority.

Media are one of the principal means for fighting corruption. There is a direct link between corruption and the lack of accountability. One way to make county's affairs more accountable is to promote efficient and proactive mass media. But how well media can perform the role of a watchdog on corruption actually depends on a number of aforementioned factors. Although our Constitution (Article 39-1) guaranteed freedom of the press from the very beginning, the necessity of media freedom in Bangladesh was truly realized since late 1990 when it got dynamism in its democratization process. Immediately after resigning of dictator government in late 1990, some restrictive press related laws were relaxed and with the return of elected government media liberalization and privatization policy were adopted. The successive democratic regimes generally respected the freedom of the press (Islam 2007). As a result, currently Bangladesh has a vast number of only privately owned newspapers and considerable number of private electronic media that now play a unique role and enjoy a considerable freedom to carry diverse views compatible with a democratic order. Most significantly, *Right to Information Act-2009* has given legal right on access to information. In spite of some legal limitations, Bangladesh today is fortunate to enjoy a considerable freedom and diversified media environment that is essential in fighting corruption and promoting democracy. This research is an initiative to bring out the existing condition of media in addressing public sector corruption in Bangladesh.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Combating corruption presents a daunting challenge for a country like Bangladesh as it is diverse, systemic and embedded institutionally. Hence, it cannot be countered effectively without the combined efforts of the various anti-corruption bodies, government, the private sector, the media and civil society. But except media, other anti-corruption bodies are not seen much active in the fight against corruption in Bangladesh. Media are playing increasing role that deserve much credit in addressing corruption issues in Bangladesh. Hence, it is the state responsibility to create a more democratic environment for the media so that they can independently and effectively address public sector corruption.

Despite many endeavors, still there are laws affecting the freedom of media in Bangladesh. Laws like *Criminal Defamation*, *The Emergency Power Rules 2007*, *The Special Power Act 1974*, *The Contempt of Court Ordinance* restrict journalists' ability to perform their duty effectively. Lastly, government has drafted broadcasting policy of Bangladesh which contains

some clause that will further restrict the function of media (GOB 2011). Freedom of press is important, but it is worrying when the press exploits that freedom, especially when there is no real accountability for the media. Therefore, media accountability is another important issue for effective functioning of media on corruption. But professionalism and ethical standard of journalists, which are the essence of accountability, are not getting much consideration in our country. Bangladesh Press Council is the organ formally in charge of ensuring only print media accountability, with electronic media outlets outside of its jurisdiction.

Again, the Press Council is not active (IPI 2009). Most alarmingly, journalist safety and impunity in crimes against journalists is a serious threat for media to combat corruption. Eighteen journalists were killed in Bangladesh since 1998. Some were killed for investigating or exposing illegal activities, while others allegedly died at the hands of the security apparatus, in particular the Rapid Action Battalion-RAB (IPI 2009; CPJ 2012). According to a report of CPJ -the Committee to Protect Journalists (2012), some of them were murdered as a result of their corruption investigations. Some additional factors standing as barriers of media performance in Bangladesh are: people with money, who are not professional journalists, are now becoming editors of news outlets; unlimited infusion of capital in the media sector; political considerations in issuing licenses; influence of money and power; political involvement and biasness of the editors, publishers and journalists; sensational and motivated news; political affiliation; market-driven and profit-oriented motive. In the circumstances, it requires in-depth research to address all these barriers for effective functioning of media on corruption. However, any direct and in-depth research is yet to be done in this regard in Bangladesh. In light of above views, present research has been designed to analyze how and to what extent Bangladesh media are able to exercise their role on corruption so that possible improvement can be suggested and chalked out.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Research Problem**

Corruption in public sector is endemic in Bangladesh. It poses a risk to economic development and can be considered as the number one national enemy for the progress of this state. Many empirical findings suggest that free and independent media is very vital in fighting corruption. But in Bangladesh context, there is no comprehensive and direct research in this connection. Media sector now in Bangladesh is strong enough and enjoys considerable freedom. Besides, historically Bangladesh media have played a very significant role in every

national event. Therefore, to utilize the media's full strength in fighting corruption enemy, it is indispensable to know the prevailing condition of media in a very comprehensive manner in addressing public sector corruption. And, this research is such an endeavor.

### **1.5 Research questions**

1. What are the impacts of media reporting in combating public sector corruption?
2. What factors affect media's role in combating public sector corruption?

### **1.6 Scope and objectives of the research**

Corruption is now widespread in Bangladesh. It has swallowed up all arenas and at all levels of public sector, private sector, political party as well as NGO's. However, due to resource constraint the research will cover only the public sector corruption considering administrative and political corruption. Public life in today's Bangladesh is dominated with concerns about corruption and the inability of public sector to tackle it effectively. The corruption in effect undermines the credibility and effectiveness of the public sector. These days, ordinary people in Bangladesh simply view corruption as 'a way of life'. Ultimately, there is no alternative but to reduce public sector corruption for the county's progression.

Media are very effective tool, which can play a significant role in controlling public sector corruption. It is widely maintained that both print and electronic media in Bangladesh is now vibrant enough to contribute in this regard, and thus it is inevitably important to know the extent of media's contribution in addressing public sector corruption. In this research, both print and electronic media's roles in combating corruption have been seen. However, state owned media, community radio and private FM radio were not included in this research as these are playing no role or very limited role in combating public sector corruption.

### **1.7 The objectives**

#### **General objective**

1. To assess the effectiveness of media in combating public sector corruption in Bangladesh.



## **Specific objectives**

1. To elucidate the tangible and intangible impacts of media reporting on public sector corruption.
2. To analyze the factors affecting media's role in combating public sector corruption.

## **1.8 Methodology**

Research methodology is the way how we conduct our research. According to Aminuzzaman (1991, p. 33), "research method is a planned and systematic approach of investigation that denotes the detail framework of the unit of analysis, data gathering techniques, sampling focus and interpretation strategy and analysis plan". This section aims to illustrate the methodology of this study.

Evaluating the role of media in combating corruption is mostly a qualitative judgment. However, to discover the true nature of the problem quantitatively, it demands some sorts of quantitative assessment. Hence, both qualitative and quantitative approaches have adopted to get the answers of research questions as well as meet the objectives of research. In order to collect data content analysis, interview, case study and questionnaire survey methods were applied.

Through content analysis, all relevant information and data were collected from various books, journals, print and electronic media outlets, articles, documents, published and unpublished reports available, online contents etc. For collecting qualitative information on the issue, some key personnel like electronic and print media's editor and reporter, Chairman of Anti-corruption Commission, Executive Director of TIB, media specialist, civil servant and iconic personnel of civil society were interviewed. Case Study was used to bring out the in-depth information regarding the media's investigative reporting addressing the single unit of corruption as well as corruption case within the media. Moreover, questionnaire survey was conducted to collect primary data about the role of media in combating corruption with a questionnaire survey technique. Since the research is a combination of quantitative and qualitative approach, both open and close ended questionnaire (mixed) were chosen.

The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was brought together through interview, questionnaire and case study and secondary data were collected through content analysis. Two sets of questionnaire were used, one for the media personnel

and the other for the readers/viewers/listeners from various professions. For questionnaire survey, purposive sampling method was applied in order to ensure the right person to serve the purpose of this thesis. About interview, it was in-depth in nature. In terms of case study, four cases of corruption unearthed by the media were taken and their consequences were seen. In addition, one corruption case was taken to unfold the corruption of journalists.

Altogether 80 respondents were chosen. For questionnaire survey, sample size was 70 persons, of which 40 subjects were from both print and electronic media and 30 from general category which covers civil servant, private sector employee, NGO worker, business people, teacher, student and lawyer. The rest 10 subjects were taken for interview. The composition of respondents has been mentioned in Appendix I and Appendix II. The data collected through various methods were cross checked with each other and with the secondary sources for validation. The collected data were processed and analyzed using statistical tools and techniques. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel have been used for analyzing the data.

In terms of limitation, in some cases however, researcher had only to depend on data based on perception. Due to time constraint, it was not possible to count the corruption incidents coverage by the media for a certain period. Public sector is very vast in Bangladesh. Despite the fact, the researcher was unable to consider 'single unit of analysis' (any specific ministry or public department) to examine media's role in combating corruption; rather media's role has been seen on overall public sector corruption.

# **Chapter Two: Theoretical Discussion**

## **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the existing relevant literature and theories about the media's role in combating corruption. The aim of this chapter is to build up an analytical framework for the study by developing a concept and a theoretical understanding of media's potential and responsibility in respective subject. By searching of all media related theories, only Social Responsibility theory, Watchdog theory and Agenda Setting theory have been found relevant to the study. On the other hand, no specific, direct or comprehensive research work has been found on media's role in addressing corruption in Bangladesh. Only very limited and discreet studies have been done in this regard. However, many similar and detailed studies have been found in some other parts of the world.

## **2.2 Literature Review**

Ali, I. S. (2006) analyzed the role and impact of media coverage on various aspects of governance in Bangladesh. Regarding corruption, it reveals corruption reporting is an increasing phenomenon of media which is mainly limited to mid-level public administration, specific government procurement and banking/financial mismanagement stories. However, most of this coverage fails to uncover the systemic causes of institutionalized corruption as well as the involvement of high level bureaucrats, politicians and their associates in it. The factors identified for the failure of media to adequately address corruption and other governance failures, are: the lack of a right to information; media's limited professional capacity and resources; media's pervasive partisanship and domination by business interests; and poor internal governance. Despite the limited impact of media on corruption, the findings advocate media's credit for creating public awareness regarding corruption and a demand for successive governments to recognize and address this core governance problem. This research focused media's role and impact on many governance issues where corruption is a part of it. In-depth or elaborated exploration in addressing corruption has been overlooked here. Besides, the research was qualitative in nature based on only interview and secondary literature which was unable to link up the media's role in fighting corruption quantitatively. Moreover, this study did not touch many important issues like nature and standard of media reporting on corruption; journalist safety and impunity; judicial

harassment; media accountability and credibility; incidents of reporting on corruption; media and bureaucrats/politician relation etc. which are some crucial determinants for media effectiveness in curbing corruption. Most importantly, *Right to Information Act* now is in place which was diagnosed as one of the most important factors for the failure of media to adequately address corruption in the study. Furthermore, as the time passes on, media sector in Bangladesh is expanding and becoming more vibrant which requires further and in-depth research in examining media's performance in fighting a major governance problem corruption. Nevertheless, this study has provided some good insights which has helped to analyze the present findings to some extent.

Anam (2002) conducted a study titled 'media and development in Bangladesh' where he showed few success stories of media in exposing public sector corruption. He argued that media have contributed in unearthing the corruption of financial sector thereby strengthening the financial governance. Similarly, he made some examples of corruption and media's success role in other field like environmental issues, illegal allocation of residential plots etc.

Professionalism and ethical standard of journalists are the fundamental aspects of media accountability. Journalists with high professionalism and ethical standards can play a more effective role in combating corruption. The Journalism Training & Research Initiative - JATRI (2011) conducted a survey on ethics and standards among 335 Dhaka based journalists. Their findings revealed ethical standards are poor in Bangladeshi journalists and they advised an ethics and standards guidebook is essential to improve the standards of journalism. Although media accountability is equally important as media freedom, it is not much focused by the researchers, academicians or media professionals in Bangladesh. Therefore, besides ethical standard all other aspects of media accountability need to be addressed.

Day (2000) defined ethics as the excepted values or moral norms of a society's notions about what is right or wrong. In journalism aspect, the ethics is seen as a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues, founded and presented in truth for public enlightenment and serve as a precursor of justice (SPJ 2005 cited in Edmon 2005). It means to serve the public well media must be free from distorting pressure exerted by political or economic forces, and must continue to obtain, keep and increase freedom in order to be trusted and protected by the general public and gain the support of the readers, listeners, viewers to which accountability is to be rendered (IPI 2005 cited in Edmond 2005)

Haq et. al. (2007) in their book on *Transparency, Openness and Ethics in Public Governance* focused fundamental aspects of institutional corruption in details. They also emphasized the prospective of media in addressing corruption. Earlier, Haq in his groundbreaking publication titled *Drugs in South Asia: from the opium trade to present day* focused on drug trafficking in South Asian region from historical perspective. In his work, the author demonstrated corrupt practices promised by the colonial authority in defense of their drug trade. The author came across many incidents of drug related corruption where the western media was the main source of information (Haq 2000).

Stapenhurst (2000) examined the role of media in curbing corruption in different country contexts. His findings have showed that the media can expose corrupt officials, prompt investigations by official bodies, reinforce the work and legitimacy of both parliaments and their anti-corruption bodies. Media can also pressure for change to laws and regulations that create a climate favorable to corruption. The researcher observed some critical factors too and found that access to information, press freedom, professional and ethical cadre of investigative journalists, media ownership and protection of journalists who investigate corruption, are some preconditions for effective functioning of media in reducing corruption. Similar observation was also made by Byrne et. al. (2010). Their study stated that the quality and effectiveness of media performance in terms of corruption are affected by some critical factors including media freedom to access, verify, and publish accurate information; independent media ownership and the ability to access nonpartisan sources of financing; competition; credibility; and outreach. Thus, media can contribute very significantly in fighting corruption if above mentioned critical factors become favorable to media

*USAID Anti-Corruption Working Group* (2005) developed an Anti-corruption Strategy for assessing and strengthening the anticorruption environment in the Europe and Eurasia region. This anticorruption framework is popularly known as TAPEE. It provides five diagnostic dimensions to consider when diagnosing corruption problems and selecting interventions. These dimensions are transparency, accountability, prevention, education and enforcement. Interestingly, media have potential to improve all these dimensions of anti-corruption strategy.

The empirical literature has focused on the relationship between media and corruption. Suphachalasai (2005) investigated the relationship between a bureaucratic corruption and mass media industry, and its implications to corruption. His findings delineate that different

degrees of media freedom and competition affect production and employment decisions of media firms, and this in turn affects the effectiveness of media in monitoring corruption. Competition and freedom in media arena also have an influence on bureaucratic structure and consequently on corruption. The degree of competition in media market plays a significant role in controlling corruption. Freedom of media also reduces corruption. Media competition was found to be a more important tool to combat corruption than press freedom. The study on the linkage of press freedom and corruption was also carried out by Brunetti and Weder (2003) and Ahrend (2002). They relate freedom of press and corruption in cross country analysis. Both works stated that press freedom is associated with lower levels of corruption. Another study on the role of the media in combating corruption was done by Tobias Dahlström (2008) that asserts not only the importance of press freedom but also highlights the necessity of good informational infrastructure in anti-corruption effort. His empirical finding suggested that press freedom can work effectively on corruption only when informational infrastructure is well developed. Hence, good informational infrastructure is a precondition for media freedom to contribute a positive impact on corruption.

Media ownership is an enormously potential factor that greatly affects the role of media in curbing corruption. Fritz (2005) stated public service media are usually less effective than the private media in addressing corruption. Public media in general, is less independence from the state as there is a direct connection with the state/government. Such linkage of public media with government interfere the media's ability to investigate corruption within the government and state sector. World Bank Group also collected similar evidence from 97 countries that imply state-owned media is less effective than private media in monitoring government activities (World Development Report 2002). Similarly, Djankov *et. al.* (2001) found that state ownership of newspapers is negatively correlated with good government. Their findings showed that level of corruption is associated with state ownership of newspapers. Related research was also done by Besley and Prat (2001). They focused on the effects of media ownership patterns on press freedom and corruption. Their finding says that higher state ownership indicates less press freedom. They also found negative correlation of foreign ownership of media with corruption. Therefore, the degree of freedom of different media systems is different which ultimately determine to what extent a particular media system is effective in curbing public sector corruption.

Nogara (2009) studied on the Role of Uganda's media in fighting corruption during the "no-party" system of President Yoweri K. Museveni. The author explored how well Uganda's

media performed a watchdog role on corruption during Museveni's "no-party" rule (1986 - 2006). Media in Uganda enjoyed considerable freedom since Museveni came to power in 1986. He found that in an environment of evolving power structure and a changing media landscape, media faced both challenges and opportunities to utilize such freedom in the said role. The result of his study suggests that, although media won important battles to promote accountability in public offices, the regime's complex power structure consistently challenged their role as an instrument of public accountability.

Independent Journalism Center (2008) assessed the way in which the Moldovan media cover corruption-related issues and the mismanagement of public funds as well as anti-corruption steps undertaken by different entities. Overall, 716 articles published or broadcast from July 1 to September 30, 2008 by the 16 media outlets were monitored. Some significant findings of the study are: First, anti-corruption steps undertaken by Central Public Administration (CPA) received relatively modest coverage that did not provide information to the public regarding the impact of the programs on making anti-corruption efforts more efficient. Second, most corruption-related reports referred to CPA representatives who were covered mainly in articles containing statements/allegations of corruption. Third, media did not provide significant evidence in articles on controversies issues. Fourth, the number of investigative reports was insufficient and the quality of the investigations was poor. Only print media published three articles with investigative elements. Fifth, Radio Moldova did not air any negative news on CPA; instead it broadcasted 4 positive and 16 neutral stories indicating the editorial policy in favor of the ruling party pursued by the state broadcaster. Sixth, editors did not insist to cover corruption-related issues professionally. In cases of allegations of corruption, the main source remained the person making the allegation. All these findings indicate that the manner Moldovan media covered corruption issues was less effective.

The 200 years old notion of media as a 'fourth estate', as a powerful watchdog is central to theoretical literature on mass media. The watchdog role of the media is essential if citizens want to hold public officials accountable for their actions. Ibrahim (2007) investigated 'watchdog' role of the media in particularly dealing with issues like: Social Responsibility Theory, present trends of media agenda setting, and how media perform their role in the society and how they help opinion to make wise and informed decisions. His study proved that although there is a small decline of public's beliefs in the mass media, they still remain the 'fourth estate' that more or less, realizes its responsibilities toward society.

Coronel (2008) in his study on ‘The Media as Watchdog’ found that the watchdog role of media monitoring government and exposing its excesses has gained new traction in many parts of the world. Globalization, the fall of authoritarian and socialist regimes, and the deregulation of the media worldwide have fuelled a renovate interest in —as well as a surge in efforts by various actors to support “watch dogging” by the media.

**Concept generated from literature:** Revealing the above literature review we can say that most of the works emphasized the role of media as a watchdog institution in exposing corruption. Some of these work considered media as a fourth estate after legislative, judiciary and executive. It is found that media reporting on corruption has both tangible and intangible impact. Media freedom is an important factor in combating corruption as study shows freedom is associated with lower levels of corruption. State media usually have less freedom and thereby they are less effective than the private media in addressing corruption. Media ownership can also restrict freedom that greatly affects media’s role. Journalistic professionalism and ethics are two important aspects of media in combating corruption. In addition, accountability and credibility of media is important determinant in addressing corruption. The condition of access to information is another vital determinant factor in terms of proper functioning of media. Moreover, competition in media market, informational infrastructure and outreach play significant role in controlling corruption. One more point that is important is the number of incidents of corruption coverage by media. Finally, performance of media in combating corruption largely depends on the number and quality of investigative reporting.

### **2.3 Relevant Theories**

Since the intention of this research is to assess the role of media in fighting public sector corruption, effectiveness of media in terms of corruption prevention (intangible effect) and indirect enforcement (tangible effect) is the main concern. This effectiveness is probably to be affected by a number of factors. In order to find out these factors, a number of relevant theories have been consulted. It is generally perceived that the role of the media in any society is fundamentally covered in the four traditional theories of the press, formulated by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm. These theories were originally published in a book titled “Four Theories of the Press” in 1956. Theories are namely Authoritarian Theory, Libertarian Theory, Social Responsibility Theory and Totalitarian



Theory of the press (Siebert et. al. 1963 cited in Skjerdal 2001). With a view to developing an analytical framework for the study, the following theories have been taken into consideration.

### **The Social Responsibility Theory**

The social responsibility model was developed in the United States by the Hutchins Commission in the 1940s (Hutchins Commission 1947 cited in Skjerdal 2001). Siebert (1963 cited in Skjerdal 2001) writing in the American tradition, acknowledged the said commission on the freedom of the press for the advent of the social responsibility model. The model grew out of a dissatisfaction with the libertarian press for disjointing media messages from their context and giving people what they wanted for their personal gain rather than what they needed for their societal commitment. The commission called for a 'socially responsible' press. It demands that the press must be socially responsible to the society in which it operates. Demanded here, is an agenda-setting role for both the government and the people. The press is tasked by this theory to provide information and create an arena for debate and discussion on issues of public interest and concern like corruption. The press is also needed to be free to act as a watchdog for the protection of the rights of the governed and to hold the government accountable as well as to pursue the cardinal roles of educating, informing and entertaining the public.

The social responsibility model, as outlined by McQuail (1994), emphasizes that the media have obligations to society. The news media should be truthful, accurate, fair and objective in its reporting which are needed for ensuring the media accountability and in building credibility towards the citizen. According to this theory, government has also right to intervene in the public interest under some circumstances. Nevertheless, the social responsibility model encourages the press to be critical towards government in order to hold it accountable. Philosophically, social responsibility ethics assume that the human being is a composition of its particular cultural background and preferences, and the human free will does not guarantee ultimate good for everyone. The liberty concept in social responsibility is rooted in society, not only in the autonomous human being. The most significant aspect of this theory is both the press and the government have a nation-building function, thus cooperation between the two institutions is sometimes desirable and necessary.

Thus, the social responsibility theory essentially asserts the freedom of press and at the same time, it allows government intervention for broader public interest. Hence, the notion of press

freedom and accountability which are two important factors for determining media's role in fighting corruption is well documented in this theory. Moreover, professionalism and journalistic ethics, which are the essence of self-regulatory accountability, have also been emphasized. Furthermore, this theory stresses the quality of reporting for effective functioning of media.

### **Watchdog Theory of Press**

*History of the Press's Watchdog Role:* Watchdog is one of the oldest basic principles of journalism, originated with Edmund Burke's 17th century announcement that the press had become a Third Estate in England's Parliament. In the 18th century, a number of letters (Cato's letters) written in England that pushed the idea of free press, were reprinted and read widely in colonial America, influencing the American Revolution. Cato's letters expressed the press's obligation and right to engage in political criticism, condemn public measures that harm the people, and expose corruption of government officials. The letters led to the American idea of the press as 'fourth estate,' a watchdog of government on behalf of the people (Weiderman 2009).

The idea of watchdog theory of press has its roots in the above history of press's watchdog concept and in the Libertarian theory of a free press when 17th century philosopher John Milton asserted that competition between choices would eventually bring about the best possible order, both for the individual and society at large. This 'free will' principle applies to the press as well (Siebert et. al. 1956 cited in Skjerdal 2001). The watchdog theory of the press states that the press serves as a "fourth branch of government" which acting as a watchdog, should scrutinize and observe government agencies and report on their activities (Hale 1977). The theory asserts that a free press will allow the media to independently criticize and evaluate the government and other institutions to ensure that they do not become corrupt or overstep their power (Lichtenberg 1990). In fact, the press's watchdog role is to monitor the conduct of government officials to make them accountable to their activities which is vital in reducing corruption as well as of nourishing democracy (Francke 1995).

Therefore, media as watchdog (investigative journalism) have a responsibility to help guard the public interest, ensuring the accountability of public sector by highlighting cases of corruption and thereby enforcing actions by the authority against the corrupt officials. The

idea of press freedom is also highlighted to perform such watchdog function according to the theory.

### **Agenda Setting Theory of Media**

Agenda setting theory is a derivative theory of press. Its idea is seen in the social responsibility theory of press. Agenda-setting theory was introduced in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in their ground breaking study of the role of the media in 1968 presidential campaign in Chapel Hill, North Carolina (McCombs et. al. 1972). Agenda-setting theory describes that the news media have influences on public opinions by setting the agenda in public discussion. The theory shows how the media affect public opinion, not necessarily by supporting one view over another, but by emphasizing certain issues in the public sphere. According to this theory, the news does not tell people what to believe, but it does tell what issues and debates are worthy of public attention (Kosicki 1993). Agenda-setting theory's main postulate is salience transfer. Salience transfer is the ability of the news media to transfer issues of importance from their news media agendas to public agendas. This ability to influence the salience of topics on the public agenda has come to be called the agenda setting role of the news media (Mccombs 2004). The theory also explores how an issue comes to the attention of policy makers (Scheufele 2000). As agenda setters, the media have a responsibility to raise awareness of pervasive social problems like corruption, helping to turn public attention to matters of common interest, to inform governing officials about social needs and development challenges (Norris 2010, p. 15).

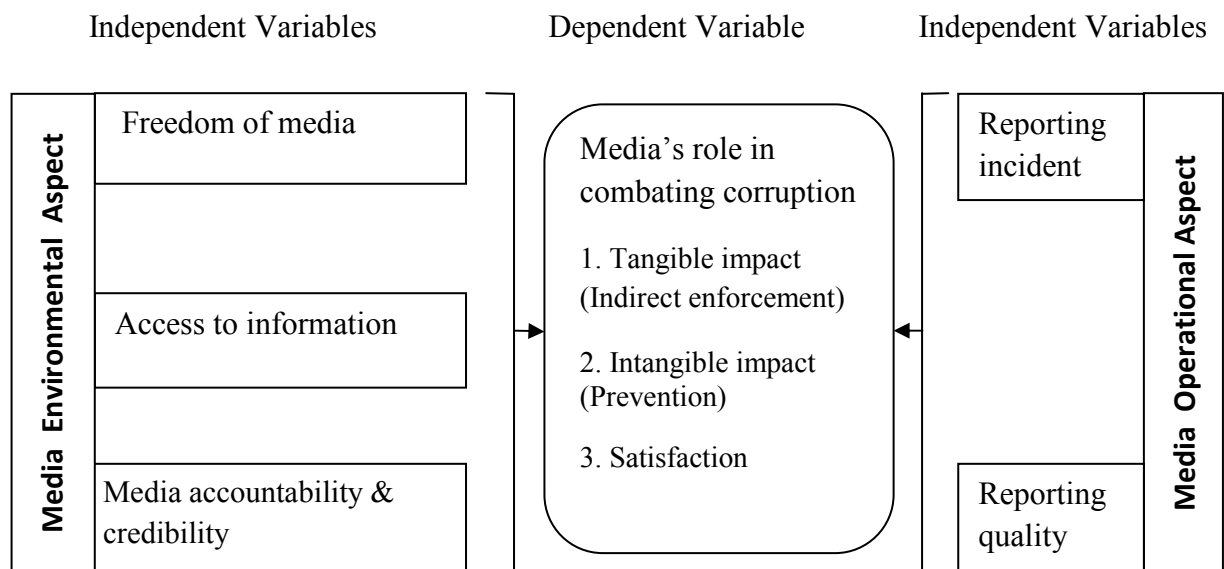
Hence, media as agenda setters have an immense and well documented influence to set nation's agenda by focusing public attention on key public issues. In this respect, media can draw public attention about government corruption and thereby creating pressure to government as well as inform governing officials thought about and taking necessary steps in preventing corruption.

The preceding discussion shows that no individual and concrete theory has been found to be used as a framework for the study. But the concept of media freedom, media accountability & credibility, reporting quality have been found well explained in the above mentioned theories. In addition, how media as watchdog and agenda setters can create indirect enforcement and prevention against social problem like corruption is orchestrated in the consulted theories.

## 2.4. Analytical Framework

In accordance with the above theories and the concept developed from the review of literature, an analytical framework has been developed containing five independent variables that likely affect the only dependable variable ‘*media’s role in combating corruption*’. The independent variables are *Freedom of media*, *Access to information*, *Accountability & Credibility*, *Reporting incident* and *Reporting quality*. These independent variables have been categorized from two different aspects: media environmental aspect and media operational aspect.

### Analytical Framework:



**Fig. 2.1 Analytical Framework for measuring the role of media in combating public corruption**

### 2.4.1 Dependent Variable

**Media’s role in combating corruption:** Media can be defined as the means of communication that include both print and electronic media. Role of media in combating corruption means how and to what extent media reporting create tangible impact (indirect enforcement) and intangible impact (prevention) in fighting corruption. Corruption is understood by the uses of entrusted power for personal gain, which is considered as unethical. In this study, three indicators for this dependent variable were set to know the status of media’s role in combating public sector corruption. The indicators are: (i) *Tangible impact* (indirect enforcement): It means the action that is undertaken by the appropriate authority after reporting the allegation of corruption by the media. (ii) *Intangible impact* (prevention):

It denotes building up an anti-corruption environment through public awareness and support against corruption after media reporting. (iii) *Satisfaction*: It implies the level of satisfaction about reporting impacts and performance of media in combating corruption.

**Table: 2.1: Indicators for the dependent variable**

Dependent variable	Indicators
Media’s role in combating corruption	Tangible impact: Launching of investigations; Departmental proceedings; Judicial proceedings; Scrapping of a law or policy
	Intangible impact: Awareness; Sense of transparency & accountability; Education; Empowerment
	Satisfaction: Level of satisfaction on media performance and impact in combating corruption

#### 2.4.2 Independent Variables

Independent variables are chosen from two different angles: a) media operational aspect and b) media environmental aspect.

**a) Media Operational Aspect:** Operational aspect means, how media perform their roles in addressing corruption and what impacts are happened that contributing in fighting corruption. It contains the following independent variable: (i) **Reporting incident**: it denotes the occurrence of media reporting on public sector corruption. Generally, if media bring more corruption incident to the public it will contribute more in combating corruption. (ii) **Reporting quality**: it suggests the standard of media reporting in terms of objectivity and effectiveness. Reporting quality also largely depends on the nature of reporting. Reporting nature means the character of media reporting whether it is investigative, awareness building and agenda setting or just simply descriptive or informing.

**b) Media Environmental Aspect:** Environmental aspect means the condition of media atmosphere where they operate whether it is congenial for conducting their duties effectively on corruption. It includes three independent variables that greatly affect the effectiveness of media’s role in combating corruption: (i) **Freedom of media**: it means the independence of

media from government as well as the autonomy of journalists and media professionals within the media organization. Media freedom of expression is indispensable to investigate and report cases of corruption of public sectors in an independent, ethical and effective manner. Thus, the effectiveness of media in combating corruption is greatly dependent on the degree of freedom of media. (ii) **Access to information**: this can be defined as the ability of the citizen to obtain information in the possession of the state. Information flows may facilitate media to carry out their watchdog role on government and thereby increase the accountability of public officials. Citizens usually receive the corruption related information through the media, which serve as the intermediaries that collect information and make it available to the public. So, access to information is a very crucial factor that facilitates the media's role in fighting corruption. (iii) **Media accountability & credibility**: It can be defined as voluntary or involuntary processes by which the media answer directly or indirectly to their society for the quality and/or consequences of reporting. Self-discipline, self-consciousness of media workers, professionalism, the code of ethics that members of the profession accept are critical elements of media accountability. Journalists need to earn credibility (public trust and confidence) by demonstrating their accountability. Thus, the effectiveness of media in addressing corruption is largely dependent on the accountability & credibility of media.

**Table 2.2: Indicators for the Independent Variables**

Independent Variables	Indicators
Reporting incident	Incident: frequency of reporting
Reporting quality	Standard of report; natures of report (investigative; awareness building; agenda setting); self-censorship; economic influence
Freedom of media	Laws-regulations; political pressure; owner's interference; Journalistic safety & impunity; internal freedom (editorial pressure); journalist harassments
Access to Information	Laws- regulations; culture of secrecy, voluntary disclosure by government; demand of information; personal involvement in corruption; relationship of media & public officials, whistle blowing
Media accountability & Credibility	Self-regulation; code of conduct; professionalism & ethics; Press Council; public trust; corruption within media

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In search of existing literature on the subject, very few, discrete and superficial research have been found to be undertaken in Bangladesh perspective in respective case. By converse, a lot of in-depth research is conducted internationally. It is important to note that cited literatures provide a good concept and scope for this research. Regarding theory, though specific and single theory was not found to design a theoretical framework of the research, few before mentioned relevant theories have constructed the theoretical foundation of this research. Thus, based on the existing literatures and aforementioned theories, the ‘analytical framework’ is developed for the study.

## **Chapter 3: Historical Narratives of Media Role**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to look into the historical role played by media in combating public sector corruption in pre-independence (1780-1970) period as well as from independence to pre-democratic period (1970-1990). It is pertinent to mention that during colonial rule, officials at all levels of East-India Company made huge money through their personal business. Robert Clive as a Bengal governor of his first term made a personal earning of £40,000. When British parliament made an inquiry into the company's practices in India, Robert Clive was accused of acquiring personal wealth of £23,4000 in connection with bribery and corruption (Bowen 2007). To evade this humiliation, Clive committed suicide. In examining media's role in historical period, the subsequent section unfolds a story about the first effort of newspaper publication for combating corruption in colonial administration.

### **3.2 Earliest Media Exposition**

The first initiative of newspaper publication in the Indian Sub-Continent was inextricably linked to the exposing of public sector corruption. A recent compilation by the Press Institute of Bangladesh indicates that this initiative was taken in 1767 by a Dutch man named Willium Bolts who was a purchase officer of the British East India Company. After joining in colonial administration Bolts was devoted mainly in personal business where he successfully extended his own business especially in the three states namely Bangla, Bihar and Orissa equally. He ignored all efforts of company's control for such business activities. Besides, Company suspected his connection with Indian Noab in political conspiracy as well as in the engagement of illegal business with Dutch business men. Bolts finally resigned Company job when Company denied supporting his corruption and crime. After being accused of corruption, Bolts wanted to leak the story of all company officials those were involved in corruption. Keeping the desire in mind to expose corruption of other Company officials, Bolts applied to the company for seeking permission of the publication of newspaper. But company directors did not consider his application. Moreover, company made all necessary arrangements for sending him England so that he cannot get any chance to take further



initiative in this respect. Right at that moment (in September 1767), a notice in the name of Willium Bolts was seen in Kolkata Council Hall and some other important places (PIB 2003).

#### **Bolt's notice on printing press**

*Bolts take this method of informing the public that the want of a printing press in this city being of a great disadvantage in business and making extremely difficult to communicate such intelligence to the community as is of importance to every British subject, he is ready to give the best encouragement to any person or persons who are versed in the business of printing, to manage a press, the types and utensils of which he can produce. In the mean time, he begs leave to inform the public that having in manuscript things to communicate which most intimately concern every individual, any person who may be induced by curiosity or other more laudable motives, will be permitted at Mr. Bolts house to read or take copies of the same. A person will give due attendance at the hours of from ten to twelve any morning. (PIB 2003)*

To their utter surprise company officials observed this 'special notice' among all other general notices and advertisements, because, everybody knew that the ex-official of East India Company Willium Bolts was leaving India very soon and all formalities of his departure were also finalized. In that situation, Bolts's call for establishing a printing press within a very short span of time was an unbelievable news to his colleagues. Finally, when Company authority sent him back to England forcefully to avoid any further risk, the first initiative of newspaper publication for combating corruption came to an end in colonial India.

### **3.3 Genesis of media development**

**Press in Colonial India:** After Bolts's attempt, press in Bengal was brought out by the English twelve years later. The first newspaper of Bengal is the *Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser*, produced by James Augustus Hicky in 1780. The paper was soon seized to be critical on Warren Hastings, his wife and the English judges. The editor, William Duane, also experienced a forceful expatriation for such reporting. Company had reservation on press, mainly because they were not interested to be criticized on company's role. Probably, they were bit scared whether press make company's misdeed or corruption to the public. In view of that fact, Lord Wellesley put a strong press censorship in Bengal in 1799

which was in place even at the time of Lord Hastings. Thus, from the very beginning the freedom of press was restricted in colonial India.

The first Bangla weekly, the *Bengal Gazette*, by Harachandra Ray, came out in May/June 1818. At the same period, the Baptist missionaries of Serampore published magazine and newspaper in Bangla. In April 1818, the first monthly Bangla magazine *Dig-darshan* and one month later, the weekly newspaper *Samachar Darpan* were published by this missionary. From then on, many newspapers and magazines in Bangla were started to publish from Kolkata. Among these, *Sambad Kaumudi* (1821), *Sangbad Prabhakar* (1831); *Samachar Sabharajendra* (1831) etc. were some notable print media. But there is no evidence that at that time of Bengali newspaper/magazines published from Kolkata played role in addressing corruption issues. Bangla publications then basically attempted at social reforms and dissemination of knowledge. In fact, it was quite impossible for press to be critical on government due to the strong press censorship mechanism imposed by Lord Wellesley as well as a *Bengal Resolutions* mentioning a mandatory clause of obtaining a license for printing issued by Governor general John Adam in 1823. At that time, Indian, Persian and European editors united to force Lord William Benetinct to liberalize the existing press laws. Later on, Sir Charles Metcalfe canceled the Regulations of 1823 and passed the Act of 1835 under which the editor, printer and publisher were to give only a declaration about the place of the publication rather than obtaining license. This liberalization of press law gave birth many newspapers and magazines, but these were mostly silent over corruption issues.

Maintaining an indifferent posture on colonial corruption newspaper publication started in East Bengal (Bangladesh) since 1847. In 19<sup>th</sup> century (from 1847 to 1905), in total 83 newspapers and 169 magazines were published in East Bengal. But, the circulation of newspapers was limited due to the lack of finance, patronizations and poor literacy. During 19<sup>th</sup> century, newspapers published from East Bengal were not neutral, but drifted into some form of communal issues of interest. Almost all the newspapers supported one fraction of the community or the other. Nevertheless, newspaper played significant role in social reforms, educational expansion, dissemination of knowledge and communal harmony. Many newspapers published in Bengal were related to the Brahmo movement which mainly aimed at social reforms and educational expansion. Only few newspapers were critical to the British rule and civil service. Later, when Revolt of 1857 sparked some presses were blamed for it. *Rangpur Bartabaha* was the first newspaper published from Rangpur in 1847. The weekly

*Rangpur Bartabaha* publicized progressive views and started writing against local officials. Therefore, Lord Ellenborough restrained the officials from unveiling any official secrets that restrict the press to access government information. The first English newspaper, the *Dhaka News*, was published from Dhaka in 1856. The other two influential newspapers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that lasted for a long time and greatly contributed to the development of the educated society in East Bengal are the *Dhaka Prakash* and the *Bengal Times*. These two newspapers lasted long as they were not critical to the government.

In 1850s, the rising of Wahabi movement, Titumir anti-colonial struggle, Faraizi movement, the Santal rebellion and the Revolt of 1857 were the signal of bubbling dissatisfaction in the sub-continent. The newspapers, instead of supporting with these, warned the government of the coming danger. But when the Revolt broke out the newspapers, many presses including East Bengal press were criticized for their role. In order to suppress the news about revolt and the atrocities of the British army, Lord Canning reintroduced the restrictive provisions of the *Bengal Resolutions of 1823* and regulated the circulation of printed books and papers. The *Rangpur Bartabaha* was then closed along with other Indian newspapers. The law was however withdrawn in 1858. The time between 1861 and 1870 a number of Dhaka centric newspaper and magazines emerged with the effort of middle class intellectuals who tried to develop literature and initiate social reforms. Later on, from 1871 to 1890, an increasing number of newspapers and magazines reached the countryside. But, the number of publications went down in 1890's because of the weakening of Brahmo movement as well as the educated Bengali middle-class became rather inactive. Thus, there is no evidence that in 19<sup>th</sup> century presses published in East Bengal played role in addressing corruption. This was actually due to repressive laws on press. Whenever any newspaper tried to criticize or write anything unpleasant to the government became closed forcefully that restrained the press from writing anything about public corruption.

During the first three quarters of 20<sup>th</sup> century, media were found to be more involved with political events. As a consequence, more and more restrictive press laws were enacted. The Partition of Bengal announced in 1905 disappointed the Bengali Hindu community. However, though initially Muslim was bit confused about the partition, finally, they were in favor of the partition (Haq 2005). Due to the dissatisfaction, the Hindus organized agitation that manifested a Swadeshi Movement to boycott the import of British manufactured goods. At the beginning the agitation was peaceful and constitutional, eventually adopted the

technique of boycott and terrorism. In consequence, the *Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act* was passed in 1908. Under this Act a number of newspapers caring to terrorist activities were closed. The *Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1913* and the *Defense of India Regulations* were applied to prevent any agitation and criticism. The first English daily of East Bengal the *Herald* which was published in 1916 from Dhaka and the first Bangla daily the *Jyoti* printing from Chittagong in 1921, had been closed for its connection with the Non-cooperation Movement. In 1923 *Official Secret Act* was enacted that prevented press in getting information. The time between 1923 and 1939 the *Jagoron* of Kusthia, the *Deshar Bani* of Noakhali, the *Barisal Hitaishi*, the *Bagurar Katha*, and the *Faridpur Hitaishini* received the anger of the British ruler for being critical towards them. The mass unrest in 1945 and 1946 encouraged the press to be more vocal and open against the British colonial rule. (Banglapedia 2003; PIB 2003; Mamun 1985).

To sum up, we can say that, from the very inception freedom of press was constricted in colonial India. As a result, presses those wanted to criticize government's activities were ban including other harassments. Nevertheless, print media gradually developed considerably and played role mainly in social development. Majority of the press in East Bengal also played supportive role at some points of time in all political movements conducted against British colonial regime. There is well proof of colonial government corruption. But, it was very difficult for press to bring out their corruption for various reasons like lack of freedom, financial constraint, literacy barrier, unable to access government information are notable.

**Press in Inter State Pakistan:** After the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947, two separate states India and Pakistan were emerged. Pakistan had two wings: West Pakistan and East Pakistan (present Bangladesh). East Pakistan started publication of two dailies (*Purba Pakistan* and the *Paigam*) and a weekly (*Zindagi*). Later on, another daily, the *Pakistan Observer* in English was started to be published in 1948 and the daily *Azad* and the *Morning News* were shifted from Calcutta to Dhaka. Two other most important newspapers in Bangladesh, the *Sangbad* and the *Ittefaq* began publication in 1950 and 1955 respectively. In 1948, when Mohammed Ali Jinnah declared Urdu as only the state language of Pakistan, the *Azad* challenged editorially. The *Pakistan Observer* was closed on 13 February 1952 for supporting the language movement. Some other papers namely the *Millat*, the *Insaf* and the *Amar Desh*, the weekly *Sainik* of Dhaka and the weekly *Chashi* of Mymensingh also supported the movement. However, The *Morning News* and *Sangbad* were censured for pro-

Urdu role and the pro-government sympathy. Thereafter, the *Ittefaq* played significant role in raising the issue of East-West economic discrepancy and claimed complete regional autonomy for East Pakistan.

In October 1958 when General Mohammad Ayub Khan came into power, the press became under strict martial law regulations that continued till June 1962. At that time, the *Ittefaq*, the *Pakistan Observer* and the *Sangbad* were blacklisted for covering political turmoil. When Awami League demanded the full autonomy of East Pakistan in 1966 under a Six-point Programme, most papers supported. In this connection, the editor of the *Ittefaq* (Tofazzal Hossain) was arrested and forced to close his paper. The *Ittefaq* again came back in February 1969 and along with other papers joined the Anti-Ayub movement that started after the arrest of Awami League chief Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1967 with the allegation of Agottala Conspiracy. Finally, President Ayub Khan handed over power to General Agha Mohammad Yahya Khan for the intensity of the movement. The newspapers of East Pakistan widely covered the events of Awami League's victory in 1970 general elections of Pakistan and the delaying of handing over power to the elected representatives and Bangabondhu's historic 7<sup>th</sup> March Address. After that a harsh military regulations on press was introduced on 1 March 1971 that had provision of any prejudicial reports punishable with rigorous imprisonment of 10 years. All the papers defied such military regulations. Later on, East Pakistan press remained confined from the army onslaught on 25 March 1971 to the appearance of independent Bangladesh on 16 December 1971. (Banglapedia 2003; PIB 2003). Therefore, it is found that in spite of huge government repression press in Pakistan period played great role in every national political event. But again, what role media played in combating public sector corruption is not found in available literature in this regard.

### **Post Independence Media (1971-1990)**

After nine months long of liberation war, Bangladesh became independent on 16 December 1971. The time around the advent of Bangladesh as independent state saw the birth of many new papers and magazines. Some prominent papers like *Banglar Bani* (1971), *Ganakantha Samaj* (1972), *Janapada* (1973), *Bangabarta* (1973) are published in Dhaka (Dacca) while some others such as *Andolan* (1973), *People's View* (1970), *Dainik Michiil* (1972), *Dainik Swadhinata* (1972) published in Chittagong; and *Daily Janabarta*, *Dainik Prabha* and *Tribune* in Khulna (Press Reference 2007). At the initial stage of independent Bangladesh, press enjoyed considerable freedom. A review of newspapers in that period reveals that press

immediately after liberation started to play a great role in bringing the incidents of public sector corruption to the public knowledge. The then newspapers made the coverage of corruption at all levels from petty to grand corruption or from administrative to political corruption. People knew the corruption involved in the nationalization process of industries; patronage distribution; administrative recruitment; bureaucracy; relief distribution through the newspapers. One example of corruption scandal regarding the administrator recruitment in private commercial organization has been given below:

*There was no need to recruit any administrator in some commercial organizations. Despite the fact, ministers, MCAs warned the owners that the government would take the control of those companies by recruiting administrators. As a consequence, the owners became afraid of and gave huge bribe to protect their companies from government control. But finally when these companies were nationalized, the owners were seriously deceived which in turn led them to expose the story of bribery. These incidents had happened in three textile mills and two Jute mills. (Haq Katha 12 May 1972)*

A lot of incidents about the recruitment of unqualified and corrupt people as administrators in commercial companies and their corruption tale came to the newspapers. In this connection, some investigative reports were also found in the papers. One of such investigative reports has been placed below as a case.

### **Case study 3. 1**

#### **Stealing Cow from Officer mess**

One administrator of Chittagong Hafiz Jute Mill and Textile Mill was previously expelled from Chittagong A.K. Khan Jute Mill and Alhaj Mill of Momenshahi due to his enormous corruption as well as disqualification in terms of education and experience. However, he had been again recruited in Chittagong Hafiz Jute Mill and Textile Mill. Soon after joining he started to grasp company's property and also involved in nepotism, colossal corruption and bribery. He sold many tons of iron, lead, cement and other company's instrument at a cheaper rate and thereafter, he spent Tk. 25,256 so far (until reporting date) for buying furniture of his own residence. It is pertinent to mention that he sold lead per pound only Tk.0.90 where as its actual price was Tk.30 per pound. Most interestingly, he also took over the cow of the officer's mess for milking it free of cost. (Haq Katha 12 May 1972)

Newspapers also brought out the corruption occurred at the high level of bureaucracy. One such example is:

**‘Trade conflict with socialist nations’**

*The corrupt bureaucrats of Jute Mill Corporation charged 23% more price to make trade exchange deficit with the socialist countries. In consequence, despite their desire in buying jute from Bangladesh, they were obliged to go back. By so doing, these bureaucrats made millions of foreign currency. (Haq Katha 1 September 1972)*

Similarly, many reports regarding irregularities, nepotism, embezzlement and bribery associated with relief distribution were brought to public by the press. Following the independence, foreign aid was essential for the war torn Bangladesh to make it self-dependent. But due to such corruption, most of the foreign aid was misused. In this regard, the then prime minister and the founding figure of the nation maintained “*everything has been eaten by the lickers*” (Sangbad 5 January 1973). Press was actually very success about first one and half year after independence in addressing all kinds of public sector corruption. The newspapers made the corruption a major issue in public discussion. Both the government and opposition were also very concern about corruption. That is why, the father of the nation declared “*corruption must be eliminated from the soil of Bangladesh*” (Iftekharuzzaman 2011). Similarly, opposition political parties brought the issue of government corruption in forefront before the county’s first general election held on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1973. In this aspect, one instance of one opposition leader’s speech can be cited here:

*The Organizing Secretary of the then National Awami party Motia Chowdhury in her election campaign said ‘the up-coming 7th March election battle would be the struggle against corruption, nepotism and injustice. (Sangbad 5 January 1973)*

Government Anti-corruption Department also became active in filing many corruption cases against big corrupt government and non-government people. According to the statistics of this department, 10,000 government employees and other private officials and general people were charged for the allegations of corruptions. Anti-corruption bureau also took actions against some high level corrupt officials of nationalized industrial organizations (Sangbad 2 February 1973). After the 7<sup>th</sup> March election the newly elected government took initiative to make the bureaucracy corruption free. During the oath-taking program on 18 March 1973, the then Prime Minister Bongabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman told the corrupt bureaucrats very

harshly that *'I will not warn again and again, after 20<sup>th</sup> March, I will chase Red Horse'*. Accordingly, 18 top-level bureaucrats had been suspended and their illegal properties were also confiscated immediately after his declaration (*Sangbad* 21 March 1973). Most of the paper addressed this issue widely.

Thus, the media played significant role in bringing corruption cases before the government, political parties and general people thereby it became a major political and governance issue at this initial stage of independent Bangladesh. But the scenario started to be changed soon when government replaced the 1961 Pakistani Press Ordinance with the *Printing Presses and Publications (Declaration and Registration) Act* in 1973. This new Act made licensing mandatory for newspaper. The government used the provisions of this act for closing down the weeklies *Mukhapatra, Spokesman, Lalpataka, Haq Katha, Charampatra, Desh bangle, Swadhikar, Swadhinata and Nayajug* (Ahmed 1999). Again, by the introducing of the *Special Powers Act* in 1974 and by bringing in the *Newspapers (Annulment of Declaration) Ordinance of 1975* press freedom was further curbed. The Newspapers Ordinance annulled the publication of all (29 dailies and 138 weeklies and periodicals) newspapers except four. Of the four, *Dainik Bangla* and the *Bangladesh Observer* were already under government ownership. The other two newspapers taken under government control were the daily *Ittefaq* and *Bangladesh Times* (Ahmed 1999; Banglapedia 2003; Press Reference 2007). Therefore, for the introduction of such repressive laws press could not play its due role on corruption. Since the enactment of *Printing Presses and Publications Act* to the end of this regime, press only brought some incidents of petty corruption.

After the tragic assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in August 1975, the new government under President Khondakar Mushtaque Ahmed allowed the owners of newspapers to restart publication. Within months, another military coup collapsed Mushtaque and eventually a new government came to power with General Ziaur Rahman in control (Ahmed 1999). With the full support of Zia, the civilian government headed by President and Chief Martial Law Administrator Sayem placed the press under a tough martial law regime known as Section (15) of the *Martial Law (Seventh Amendment) Regulations, 1976*. The regulations are as follows:

#### **Penalty for criticizing Martial Law**

*Whoever by word, either spoken or written or by signs or visible representation or otherwise criticizes the imposition, operation or continuance of Martial Law or brings of attempts to bring into hatred or contempt or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards the Chief Martial Law Administrator or any other Martial Law authority shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extent to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine.*



Later, in November 1976, Zia became Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) and assumed the presidency. During his tenure, ban on newspapers was withdrawn. But freedom of press was under heavy scrutiny of the government (Choudhury 2011). Some of newspapers returned to government management and others were regulated through constant dictation of official orders.

No noticeable advancement of media's role in combating corruption was found through a random review of newspapers during Zia's regime. There is no denying fact that corruption did not exist in that period. General Ziaur Rahman himself declared many times that corruption has to be removed. As for example, in one women conference he called upon the women to take part in eradicating corruption and injustice (*Gonokantha* 22 January 1980). In addition, he sacked some ministers on corruption charges (Khan 1999). In this respect, Franda (1982) argued that though General Zia was not personally corrupted, corrupt activities were institutionalized. Kochanek (1993) observed that during his tenure corruption and misuse of power resulted in the wastage of almost 40% of the total resources allocated for development. Hence, corruption was there but media could not play its designated role except disclosing petty corruption. This is actually on owing to the presence of repressive laws, Marshal Law (partly) as well as strict dictation/oppression of media by various public actors. One example of journalist harassment has been put in this discussion:

**We will just expense one bullet!**

*The then Sonamganj correspondence of the daily Ittefaq Mr. Abdul Mannan Akji exposed the syndicate of smuggling in his reporting. As a result, a false case was filed against him with the conspiracy of the people affected by the report. It was open secret that a local police officer was directly involved with that conspiracy. The most alarming scene was happened when a meeting was called upon following the newspaper report with the presence of the Sub-division administrator, Sub-division Police officer, BDR Wing Commander and many others government and non-government personnel including journalists. The police officer who was allegedly involved in smuggling before the meeting in indicating the journalists waned that 'you write smuggling news as many as you can, but we will just expense one bullet. (Ittefaq 28 October 1980)*

After the assassination of president Zia, in 1982 General Ershad as the Chief Martial Law Administrator (CMLA) once more curbed freedom of the press and put journalists under

severe control. Section 15 of his Martial Law Regulations made punishment provisions for condemning Martial Law or writing against Martial Law. His regulations are as follows:

### **Penalty for criticizing Martial Law**

*Whoever by word, either spoken or written, or by signs or visible representation or otherwise criticizes the imposition, operation or continuance of Martial Law or brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt or excites or attempt to excite disaffection towards the Chief Martial Law Administrator or any Zonal Martial Law Administrator or any other Martial Law Authority shall be punishable with rigorous imprisonment for a term which may extend to seven years, and shall also be liable to fine.*

President H. M. Ershad kept the press under strict control of government during his 9 years dictatorial rule. During the period (1982 - 1989), around fifty newspapers and periodicals were closed down on grounds of publishing materials critical of the government (Banglapedia 2003). Some examples are, the English-language *Bangladesh Observer* was banned for three months in 1987, and the weekly *Banglar Bani* (Bengal's Message) was banned through much of 1987 and 1988. The weekly *Joyjatra* (Victory March) was banned in February 1988 for publishing "objectionable comments" referring to the possibility of Ershad's resignation. In 1988 the government closed the *Dainik Khabor* (Daily News) for ten weeks under the *Special Powers Act 1974*. In addition, the operations of the British Broadcasting Corporation were banned under the same act from 14 December 1987 to 2 May 1988, and one of its correspondents was jailed. Bangladeshi journalists were unionized, and they sometimes stroked back at government censorship. During the 1988 parliamentary elections, journalists staged a walkout to protest attempts by the government's Press Information Department to restrict news and photographic coverage of election violence and opposition demonstrations.

The continuing struggle between the press and the government regularly kept at least six newspapers on the list of banned publications in the late 1980s ([www.momgabay.com](http://www.momgabay.com)). Following the collapse of Ershad in December 1990, the press in Bangladesh virtually became open. Again, a random survey of newspapers during Ershad government delineates that media performed insufficient role in addressing public sector corruption. Although Ershad regime made Bangladesh a haven of corruption, only some of them were exposed to the newspaper like corruption in tax department, financial institutions, incidents of the stealing of wheat, money and other relief materials and other discreet news of petty

corruption. But the top level huge political and bureaucratic grand corruptions were truly untouched by the media until the collapse of this government. The reasons are the presence of repressive laws, Marshal Law (partly), strict government control as well as harassment of media through various unauthorized means.

Therefore, the above discussion about press between 1971 and 1990 reveals that the restrictive laws and rules imposed on the press from 1973 to 1975 remained in place for the large part until the late 1990. Moreover, military regimes put new restrictions on press freedom through their Marshal Law proclamation as well as by the constant dictation. That is why, the way media started their praiseworthy role in combating corruption at initial stage, the trend was halted very soon and remained till the restoration of democracy in the late 1990. Following the liberation of the country, the broadcasting media (BTV & Betar) came under state control. Every consecutive government operated these broadcasting media as their propaganda machine and this trend is still continuing. Probably, there are some explanations on behalf of government in this respect. But these state owned media are virtually playing no role or very little role in combating public sector corruption.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The above analysis on media's role based on available contents between pre-independent to pre-democratic period (1767–1990) explicates that historically media played very little role in combating government corruption although corruption was in place. Though the first effort of press was for divulging of colonial administration's corruption, it was not success for government constraint. Later on, Company ruler permitted the newspaper publication in Indian subcontinent since 1780 but, they put immense restriction on press freedom through various means. This trend continued throughout the colonial and Pakistan regimes and finally in independent Bangladesh up to 1990 with few respites for a very short span of time. Whenever press tried to be critical to the government, became forcefully closed down. So, before independence, media mostly played role on social reforms; spreading out education and knowledge; communal harmony as well as politics that basically started since 1850s when Anti-British movement started. Press in East Bengal became more involved in politics from the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century that lasted till Pakistan era. Therefore, pre-independent rulers curbed the press freedom extremely by formulating various laws, rules and regulations for their vested interests. After independence, though press enjoyed freedom initially and thereby playing great role in combating corruption, then it was arrested very soon by

introducing restrictive laws. As a consequence, media had to wait another 18 years to get their freedom back and thus performing their duties in fighting against government corruption. It is also noteworthy that beyond freedom, financial limitation, literacy barrier and access to information historically affected the role of media considerably.

# Chapter 4: Media under Democratic Government

## 4.1 Introduction

The current chapter maintains that media is a powerful institution in democracy, but having limited impact over corruption issues in Bangladesh. It supplies the political information that voters stand their decisions on. Media identify problems in the society and serve as a medium for deliberation. They are the important watchdog for democracy that people rely on for uncovering errors and wrongdoings by those who have power (Fog 2004). Bangladesh restored its parliamentary democracy in 1991. Since then a media friendly environment prevails in democratic Bangladesh. This chapter examines the impact of contemporary media reporting on public sector corruption. In delineating media's impact first, it begins with an overview of media development under democratic government. Next, this chapter analyzes the impacts of media outlets on corruption on the basis of empirical evidences. Finally, it includes an assessment on the satisfaction of media's impact/role.

## 4.2 Media Development under Democracy

The scenario of media in Bangladesh started to improve with the restoration of democracy in 1991. Immediately after the fall of Ershad regime in December 1990, the interim government headed by Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed made some amendments to the *Special Powers Act of 1974* and *Printing Presses and Publications Act of 1973* which considerably brought the freedom of press. Clauses 16 (prohibition of prejudicial acts, etc), 17 (proscription of certain documents) and 18 (regulation of publication of certain matters) of the *Special Power Act* curtailed rigorously the freedom of the press as these sections facilitated the government to hassle journalists and close down newspapers (Bhuiyan & Gunaratne 2000 cited in Ahmed 1999). Thus, omitting these clauses of *Special Power Act* in the said amendment widened the liberty of press. Most importantly, this amendment allowed bail for journalists and others arrested under this act. Similarly, some provisions of the *Printing Press and Publications Act* that curbed freedom of the press were amended as well. As a consequence, a lot of newspapers and magazines representing diverse views and opinions were brought out during the 1990s. It is also important that government closed the state-owned *Dainik Bangla*, *Bangladesh Times* and *Weekly Bichitra* in 1997 and abolished the *Times-Bangla Trust*

(Banglapedia 2003). Thereby, government took the total privatization policy of print media since then which is still continuing.

Similarly, the process of liberalization in broadcasting sector came in place since 1991. Before 1990 there was a monopoly service of government in broadcast media in Bangladesh. By contrast, a paradigm shift has occurred after 1990 that shows the liberalization of broadcast media (Suhrawardy 2010). The leasing of BTV facilities to the national and international agencies was the first step effected on 18 November 1991 (GOB 1991). Later on, government permitted foreign Satellite Television (STV) in 1992 with the legalization of *Television Receive Only Dish* (TVRO) that ended the monopoly of Bangladesh Television (BTV) enjoyed for prolonged twenty-eight years from 1964 to 1992 (Wahid 2007). Thereafter, government granted private electronic media ownership since 1997 (Rahman 2009). Hence, the 1990s saw the arrival of *ATN Bangla*, *Channel i* and *Ekushey TV* (Chowdhury 2006 cited in Ali 2006). But only *Ekushe TV* was provided with BTV terrestrial facility although it was closed down in August 2002. Afterward, the *Private Programme Production Policy in BTV 2001* allowed private programmes and films in Bangladesh Television which also fostered private initiatives in the state-run electronic media (GOB 2001). Government also liberalized radio broadcasting by allowing private companies to set up radio stations under the *Private Radio Establishment and Operation Policy 2006* (GOB 2006). Finally, the establishment of community radio under the *Community Radio Policy 2008* has further diversified the broadcasting sector in Bangladesh (GOB 2008). At present, apart from state owned electronic media, there are 27 private satellite TV channel, 11 private FM radio and 24 community radio as well as 314 daily newspapers in Bangladesh (Table 4.1).

**Table: 4.1 List of electronic and print media in Bangladesh**

Type of media	No.	Comment
State owned electronic media	4	3 Television; 1 Radio
Private television	27	19 operational; 2 closed; 6 will be on air soon
Private radio	11	6 operational; 5 will be on air soon
Community radio	24	14 operational; 10 will be on air soon
Print media (daily newspaper)	314	116 Dhaka based; 198 local
Total	333	Except weekly, fortnightly, monthly & quarterly print media

(Source: Ministry of Information 7 June 2012)

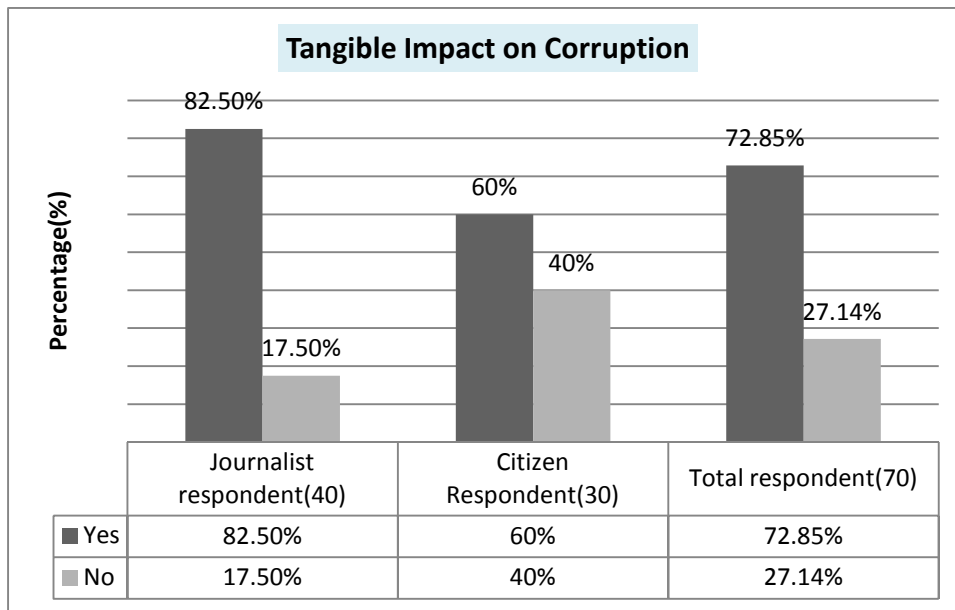
Therefore, the relaxation of restrictive laws and gradual adoption of liberalization and privatization policy in the media arena since the restoration of democracy has ultimately created today's vibrant media industry in Bangladesh. This recent boom in the industry has created and maintained a very important bubble for debate or discussion whether and to what extent this democratic institution is playing role in combating the most hazardous governance problem corruption. The following sections will explore to give the answer of such queries based on empirical findings.

### **4.3 Impact on corruption**

Almost all the respondents interviewed stated that some sorts of impact are happening after media reporting on public sector corruption currently in Bangladesh. To summarize the opinions of interviewees, media are making products such as information, views, opinions etc. against public sector corruption. But these products have to be bought. What impact media can create on corruption is not only depending on media but also depends on all other supporting institutions like respective department, ACC, law enforcing agency etc. and most importantly depends on the political leadership whether they pay attention to the media report. But it also very important whether media create impression on the public so that the government is ultimately pushed to take measures. The following analysis will unfold what tangible and intangible impacts happening after media reporting on public sector corruption.

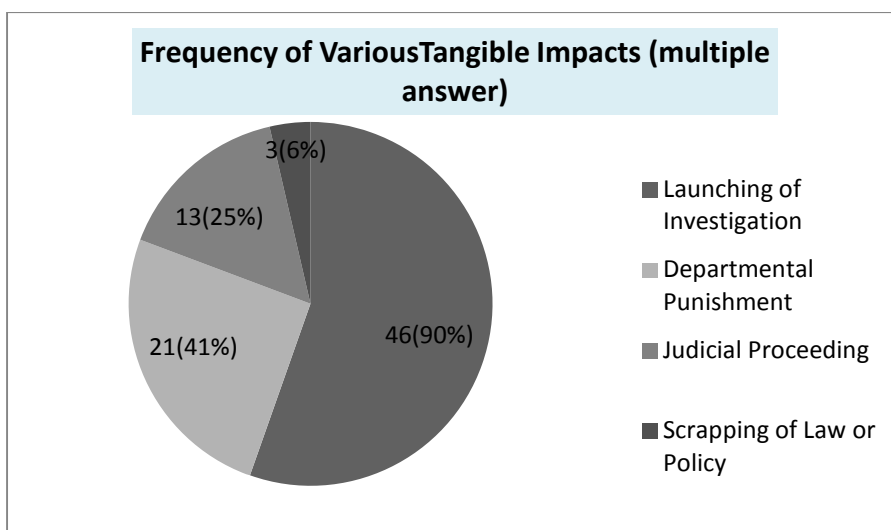
#### **4.3.1. Tangible Impact**

Majority of the respondents (73%) of questionnaire survey thought that there is tangible impact of media coverage on corruption. The journalist category belongs to the higher number in comparison to the general people. The corresponding percentages of journalist and general people are 82.5% and 60% respectively. The detail is depicted in Fig. 4.1. The plausible explanation for such variation of percentages of two categories is: the journalist respondents gave their opinions on the basis of their experience where some kind of statistical consideration was there. In addition, as it is a kind of recognition of media's work, an unconscious publicizing motive probably worked in their inner mind that may contributed to the percentage. On the other hand, due to insufficient 'follow up' reporting (26%; discussed in section 5.3) in many cases people do not know whether any action taken following media report.



**Fig. 4.1: Perception on the tangible impact of media reporting on corruption (n=70)**

A total of 51 (out of 70) respondents who assumed media reporting has tangible impact, diagnosed the following types: ‘launching of investigation’, ‘departmental proceeding’, ‘Judicial proceeding’, ‘scrapping of law or policy’. The total frequency of these impacts opined by both journalist and general respondents depicted in Fig. 4.2 reveals the highest 90% tangible impact of media reporting on corruption is the launching of investigation. Departmental punishment is the second highest impact (41%) where as judicial proceeding (25%) and scrapping of law/policy (6%) score the third and fourth position respectively.



**Fig. 4.2 Frequency of various tangible impacts opined by respondents (n=51)**



**Launching of investigation:** It is a very common impact of media reporting (90% respondent of questionnaire survey opined). One interviewee, Farid Hossain (the Bureau of Chief, *Associated Press*) said, '*Auditor General Office, Anticorruption Commission and other concern government body do many corruption related investigations based on media reporting*'. Whenever, any incidents of corruption exposed by media, concern authority usually make investigation committee to look into the matter. But there is a lot of debate about the quality of such investigation. 'Quality of investigation' summarized form the findings of interviews reveals that in most cases during investigation it is somehow managed and thereby happening no action; investigation is delayed; committee generally do not find any corrupt activities (e.g. Investigation of ACC against the corruption allegation of recent Padma Bridge contract <sup>1</sup>); report is not made public; investigation committee's recommendations are not implemented (e.g. investigation on recent share market scam<sup>2</sup>).

One respondent named Imran Hossain (M. Sc student) wrote in the supplied questionnaire '*investigation starts but never ends; it's nothing but an 'eye wash*'. Regarding delaying of investigation, the editor of *Look* (a monthly magazine) expressed her view by a famous quotation '*Justice delayed, justice denied*'. By this quotation she actually meant when investigation is prolonged, people forget it and finally guilty person(s) remain untouched. Golam Kibria, a media analyst mentioned, '*media is making attention of authority after the incidence of corruption. But when authority is involved with corruption, who will take action against whom*'. It is true that taking action against corrupt people is out of media's jurisdiction. But if media properly follow up the incident of corruption, authority will have less chance to avoid it and simultaneously people will be more concern. Consequently, government will take the matter seriously. Nevertheless, if the government becomes reluctant it will not bring immediate results but does stimulate the rage of people, which in turn leads to the electoral defeat at the ballot box for a government (Stapenhurst 2000). Therefore, in

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<sup>1</sup> The World Bank blocked funds on the project to build Bangladesh's longest Padma bridge in October last year claiming that there were corruption in river dredging, appointment of consultants and selection of pre-qualified contractors in the project. Upon that allegation, the Anticorruption Commission (ACC) made investigation and found no evidence of corruption in the Padma bridge project, contrary to the World Bank's allegations. (Bdnews.com, 11 June 2012)

<sup>2</sup> Following the recent stock market debacle, the government prove committee headed by Ibrahim Khaled (Chairman of Bangladesh Krishi (Agriculture) Bank recommended restructuring of the Security & Exchange Commission (SEC) and taking action against those were responsible for debacle. However, action is not taken against the market manipulators. (*The Daily Star*, 13 December 2011.)

Bangladesh media is bringing the report of corruption and accordingly investigation is also happening but what is the fate or quality of such investigation in most cases people do not know due to the lack of sufficient media follow up (26% follow-up report). One of the investigations made by ACC following an investigative newspaper report with necessary follow-up has been presented here as a case.

#### **Case study 4.1: Doing business with government by breaching law**

On 13 August 2011, the Bengali newspaper the *Prothom Alo* published a report against present ruling party lawmaker Enamul Haque for violating electoral laws by doing business with the government, according to the report. The report says Enamul's business firm, Northern Power Solution Ltd. signed an agreement with Bangladesh Power Development Board for setting up a 50MW-rental power plant in Rajshahi after he became a lawmaker. In the same way, Enamul's other business firm Ena Properties made a deal with the Rajshahi City Corporation to build a multi-storied city centre. However, according to the report, the *Representation of the People's Order 1972* does not allow any lawmaker to do business with the government. If anyone breaches the provision, the person will be disqualified to hold position as a lawmaker. Following the *Prothom Alo* report, the ACC made an investigation that probed the claims against Enamul Haque. Consequently, the ACC sent a letter on 10 April 2012 to the Parliament Secretariat and the Election Commission (EC) to take action against Enamul Haque. In response to the ACC, on May 9, Speaker of the Parliament questioned the ACC's jurisdiction to look into the subject of conflict of interests of lawmakers. Thereafter, the EC at a meeting on 13 May 2012 decided not to proceed with the Anti-Corruption Commission's request to take legal action against Enamul. In this regard, Election Commissioner Mohammad Shahnewaz told reporters "the Election Commission does not have anything to do against Enamul Haque. It is the Parliament that can take step to this effect".

(*Prothom Alo* 25 April 2012, 1 May 2012 and 10 May 2012; *Daily Star* 14 May 2012)

That was an investigative report of *Prothom Alo* newspaper first published on 13 August 2011. After that, they kept an eye on the issue and thereby publishing follow up report. In terms of impact, investigation was conducted by ACC that proved the allegation and sending letter to respective authority to take necessary measures.

**Departmental proceedings:** It is the second highest impact (41%) of media reporting on corruption according to the respondents. Transfer, force resigning, suspension, OSD etc. are some immediate departmental actions usually take place against public officials/politicians after media reporting. There are many instances of departmental actions. Only a few examples and one case study have been presented below:

#### **‘AKM Mosharraf Hossain’s Resignation’**

*In 2005, two prominent Bengali dailies uncovered that the then State Minister for Energy, AKM Mosharraf Hossain, had received a luxurious car as a gift from a Canadian energy company (Niko Resources) which was blamed for the Tengratila Gas Field Explosion in January of the same year. Soon after such reports, the minister had to resign. However, he remained an MP for his party. (Ali 2006)*

#### **‘Action against self-confessed corrupt officials of RHD’**

*Rampant corruption in the RHD (Roads and Highway Department) was exposed during the immediate past caretaker government. 42 RHD officers and employees voluntarily went to the Truth Commission<sup>3</sup>, confessed to their corruption and got clemency by handing over small portions of the ill-gotten money to the government. After assuming power in 2009, the present government made Truth Commission defunct. Simultaneously, a demand came from various quarters to take action against that self-confessed corrupt officials. Instead, many corrupt officers of RHD got promotion to important positions by the ministry. Finally, when the condition of countrywide road networks continued to worsen the former Chief Engineer of RHD Shahab Uddin who voluntarily went to the now-defunct Truth Commission including other self-confessed corrupt officials had to face serious media criticisms. Therefore, Shahab*

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<sup>3</sup>The army-backed interim government set up the Truth and Accountability Commission in 2008 to allow people exemption from prosecution in exchange for confession and surrender of ill-gotten wealth. Later on, when the commission was declared illegal and unconstitutional by the court, the present government made it defunct (BBC, 16 May 2011), <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-13410976>.

Uddin by knowing the upcoming ministerial action and for media criticism resigned on 18 August 2011. Later on, ministry made 17 corrupt RHD officers OSD<sup>4</sup> on 14 September 2011. (*Daily Star* 14- 15 September; 19 August 2011).

#### **Case study 4.2: Former Railway Minister's Resignation**

At around 11:30 pm on 09 April 2012, a railway ministry car pulled over at the main entrance to the BGB (Boarder Guard of Bangladesh) headquarter in the capital and its driver shouted that there were hoarding of bribe money in the car. BGB personnel on guard at the gate searched the car and found Tk.70 lakh. Immediately after the incident, one TV channel broadcasts the news and nearly at the same time all other electronic and print media reporters rushed to the place and started to coverage the news. Mentioning the intelligence sources, the Daily Star reported that Railway General Manager (East) Yusuf Ali Mridha and Dhaka Division Security Commandant Enamul Huq, Railway Minister Suranjit Sengupta's assistant personal secretary (APS) and his driver along with Tk. 70 lakh were going to the minister's Jigatola residence on Monday night. Following the disclosing of this incident by media, Railway Minister Suranjit Sengupta received heavy criticism from various quarters like political leaders, civil society members, and citizens. They demanded independent and neutral investigation to unearth the actual fact and called for the resignation of minister and punishment of the people who were responsible. In response to the demand, Railway Minister had formed two committees to probe the incident. Besides, Omar Faruk Talukder, the APS of railway minister was sacked from service a day after the incident. Simultaneously, media continued to publish/broadcast news about the allegation of corruption involved in the recruitment of 7,500 people to the Bangladesh Rrailway that recently started by the Railway Ministry. A senior railway official on condition of anonymity said to the Daily Star, "Tk 2 lakh to 5 lakh is being taken from each candidate." Upon such allegations the Anti-Corruption Commission also formed a three-member committee to investigate the alleged corruption in the recruitment. Railway General Manager (East) Yusuf Ali Mridha and Dhaka Division Security Commandant Enamul Huq were suspended on 15 April 2012 in an allegation of huge bribery and connection with the mid night scandal. Finally, Suronjit resigned on 16 April 2012 following the suggestion of Prime Minister on 15 April night in her official residence. However, two days later of his resignation government made him a minister without portfolio. It is mentionable that a departmental probe body headed by Bangladesh Railway Director General Abu Taher told the media on 13 May that they did not find any link between the former railway minister and the cash haul in investigation. (*Daily Star* 11, 12, 13, 17 April & 16 May 2012)

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<sup>4</sup> OSD- The designation "officer on special duty" (OSD) is considered a punishment within the bureaucracy as OSDs do not get any responsibility.

From the above examples and case study it is seen that so many tangible impacts like investigation by different actors, sacking, temporary suspension, resignation, OSD etc. had happened following the media report.

**Judicial proceeding:** 25% of total respondents assumed that judicial proceeding happens after media report on public sector corruption. Judicial proceeding is actually, conducted when any one found to be guilty in investigation. The following case will show how judicial proceeding takes place next media investigative report.

#### **Case study 4.3: RAB personnel fired on looted money**

A RAB team (RAB 7) looted two crore seven thousand Tk. on 4 November 2011 with the direction of team leader Lieutenant Colonel Zulfiqur Ali Majumder from Talsara Darbar Sharif (Shrine) located at Anwara Police Station of Chittagong District. After accusation, RAB head office started investigation by their Intelligence Cell. In preliminary investigation, the committee found the involvement of RAB 7 chief Zulfiqur along with five others with the incident of looting. Thereafter, though these officials were sent to their respective department on 23 February 2012, no case was filed against them. In this regard, RAB authority's position was that after getting the final investigation report, they will take legal action. The whole incident came to know when *Prothom Alo* newspaper published an investigative report about the incident on 27 February 2012. According to *Prothom Alo*, after publishing the first report, RAB authority became very concern about it, completed their investigation very quickly and made final report where they recommended filing case against the accused personnel. Then, on 13 March 2012, the car driver of Talsara Darbar, Idris Ali filed a case in Anwara Police Station. But, this incident did not come to the media for long and any case was not also filed against accused RAB team. This is because, initially, the authority of Darbar Sharif thought RAB would return money after knowing the source of that money. They pursued to get the money without any legal action and they got the assurance from RAB members in getting money. Finally, when they did not get money about four months later of the incidence, it was exposed to public by the *Prothom Alo*. Lastly, Bangladesh Army dismissed Zulfiqur's job on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012 and police arrested him on 3<sup>rd</sup> April. He is now under judicial proceedings. (*Prothom Alo* 27 February, 14 March, 4 May 2012)

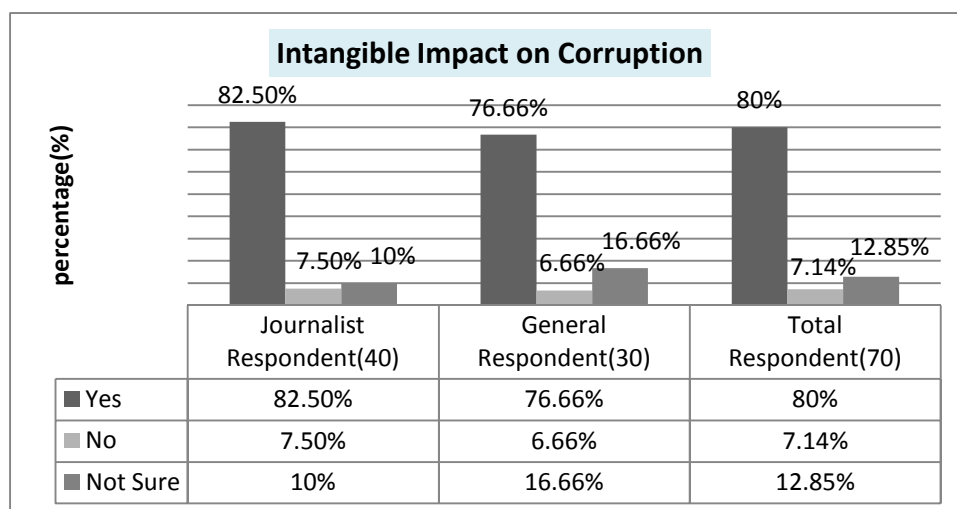
From this case, it is evident that after media reporting, the authority expedites the investigation, gives departmental punishment and started judicial proceedings at the end.

**Scrapping of law/policy:** Only a few respondents (6%) opined media report bring some sort of change in laws/policy in Bangladesh. The example cited below shows the reality.

### ‘Reforming bank laws’

*Print media played great role in exposing bank directors withdrawing money from their own banks under false names and thereby helping stop the illegal business of insider lending. In the early 1990s, the Bangladesh Bank (central bank of Bangladesh) revealed that some top business quarters with a view to establish new private bank enabled the bank directors to take “insider” loans. The central bank by their investigations proved that directors were taking illicit loans under fake names. Finally, 134 bank directors were accused of involvement. Out of 134 directors, 58 were allowed to continue as directors by regularizing their loans, 57 had been removed from their posts and the rest 19 went to court and reversed their removal orders. Newspapers facilitated the central bank to carry out its investigations and constituted the necessary public demands to set up corrective measures and initiate the essential reforms. Eventually the banking law was reformed which allows bank directors to borrow only up to 50 percent of their actual invested. (Anam 2002).*

#### 4.3.2 Intangible Impact

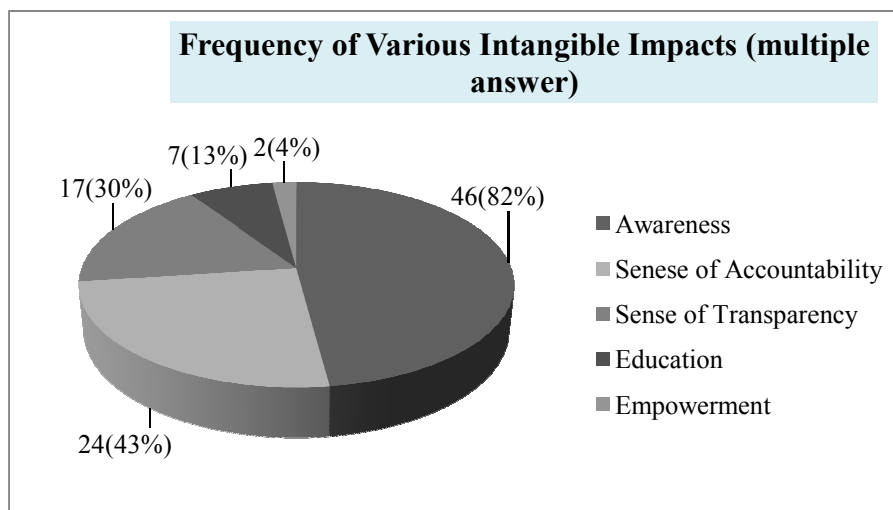


**Fig. 4.3 Perception on the intangible impact of media reporting on corruption (n=70)**

80% respondents of questionnaire survey stated that media reporting has intangible impact while 7% respondents did not think such impact. The rest 13% was not sure about the intangible impact of media reporting on corruption. The perception of journalist and general citizen about the intangible impact is almost similar 82% and 77% respectively. There is no significant difference between the two categories regarding the 'no impact' and 'not sure' perception. The detail is depicted in above Fig. 4.3.

### 1.2.1 Variety of Intangible Impacts

The majority 56 respondents those who perceived media coverage has intangible impact identified 'awareness', 'sense of accountability', 'sense of transparency', 'education' and 'empowerment' as intangible impacts of media reporting. The number of total respondents and their corresponding percentage for each type has been shown by the Fig. 4.4.



**Fig.4.4 Frequency of various intangible impacts opined by respondents (n=56)**

**Awareness:** 46 (82%) respondents out of 56 thought that media are creating awareness to the people about corruption. This finding is validated by the study of Ali (2006) who found that the media has created public awareness about the corruption in Bangladesh and also created a public consensus to demand accountability from the government and other institutions. In addition, all the people interviewed told that media are creating public awareness about public corruption. The Executive Director of TIB, Dr. Iftekharuzzaman said, '*intangible impact like awareness has been created which helping people to take choice*'.

**Sense of accountability and transparency:** If accountability and transparency in public deals are ensured corruption will be checked to a larger extent. Out of 56 respondents 43%

believed media reporting on corruption creating sense of accountability to the politicians and public officials where as the figure for sense of transparency is 30%. If any individual, an institution, or a political party assumes that someone is watchdogging their deeds for which they have to answer, they will be very alert and a sense may develop that I must be accountable and transparent in my work. The main role of media is watchdogging and by so doing, bringing sense of accountability and transparency that plays an indirect or preventive role in combating corruption. This finding is further supported by the observation of Stapenhurst (2000) who illustrated that independent news media can heighten sense of accountability among politicians, public bodies and institutions.

**Education:** One of the cardinal functions of media is to educate people. A few 13% (out of 56) respondents opined that along with other roles media is educating people regarding corruption. Media can teach people about the causes, consequences and cures of public sector corruption through their various programmes or write up. Some of the interviewees also stated that media report to some extent educating people, which have indirect impact in combating corruption. However, one of the interviewee (Chief News Editor of *Channel i TV*) became very critical about media by mentioning '*no education so far, media reports or campaigns are not targeted to educate corrupt people and they target general people who do not need to be educated because they are honest. It's just eye wash for legitimating media owner's vested interest.*'

**Empowerment:** Only 2 respondents out of 56 thought that media empowering people by raising their voice against corruption. Media make a bridge between people and government. Government gets feedback of their activities through media and accordingly government takes corrective measures if necessary. So it's a kind of participation of mass people in government activities mediated by media. When people's voice is heard by the government, it is an empowerment that has an indirect impact on any governance crisis including corruption. Not only people media report on corruption can also empower the anti-corruption institutions. In this respect, the Chairman of ACC Golam Rahman mentioned that '*media has empowered ACC*'. If we analysis his testimonial it will unveil how media empowered ACC. Recently, government took initiative in bringing changes to the *ACC Act of 2004* and thereby placing the *Anti-Corruption Commission (amendment) Bill 2011* in parliament on 28 February 2011. In spite of a number of positive elements in the proposed amendments some provisions like making the ACC obliged to take prior permission from the government before



investigating state officials was considered as the hindrance of independent and effective ACC. Therefore, government had to face a strict resistance both from within the legislators and the civil society as a whole where media played a very positive and active role. In consequence, parliamentary standing committee on law and parliamentary affairs opposed the bill and finally government backtracked from its position. (TIB 2011; *Daily Star* 10 February 2012). In addition, data obtained from interviews and contents analysis found a symbiotic relationship between media and ACC. ACC gets corruption information through media reports and accordingly they conduct investigation if it is under its jurisdiction. At the same time, media get corruption information and investigation updates from ACC and thereafter they report on ACC's activities that build public support for their work. Hence, it is a kind of empowerment and legitimacy of ACC happening by the media.

#### **Interconnection of tangible and intangible impact:**

Tangible and intangible impact of media on corruption can be interchangeable. From the above analysis of ACC law amendment, due to strong campaign of media, government ultimately altered their position which is an tangible impact. At the same time, ACC has been empowered according to the Chairman of ACC. So, here tangible impact has been converted to intangible one. And viceversa, intangible impact can also create tangible effect that was viewed by Dr. Iftekharuzzaman by mentioning '*sometimes intangible impact is converted to tangible one*'. For example, in the last parliamentary election of Bangladesh (December 2008) media campaigned very significantly against corruption. As a result, some form of anti-corruption symphony was created among all sections of people. In effect, all major political parties pledged for creating a corruption free society in their Election Manifestos. For instance, the present ruling party Awami League mentioned in its election manifestos, '*effective action against corruption*' as second of the five top priority issues (Awami League Election Manifestos 2008). Thus, it is a tangible impact of media reporting on corruption that was ultimately derived from intangible effect.

Hence, from all above findings and analysis about the impact of media reporting on corruption explicate that media reporting have both tangible and intangible impact. These two types of impacts can also be interchanged. Now, the question may arise to what extent such impact qualifying media's role in combating public sector corruption. To give a clear cut answer is very difficult in this respect. Because, corruption is everywhere in the public sector from judicial administration, health, land, education, tax collector organizations to police

station which has recently been recognized once more by the present Finance Minister Abul Mal Abdul Muhit (*Daily Star* 20 May 2012). In comparison to the depth of corruption, media are exposing only a small fraction, of which a very few reports are heeding the authority to take appropriate action. That is why, the Chairman of Anticorruption Commission Golam Rahman stated, *'impact till now is mostly limited to public awareness.'* However, the level of respondent's satisfaction about the media's impact and performance in combating corruption analyzed in the following section would unfold the said role of media.

#### **4.4 Satisfaction with the impact and performance of media in addressing corruption**

All respondents were asked to give opinion about their overall satisfaction on media's performance and impact in combating public sector corruption in a 5 point scale where, 1 (one) is highly dissatisfied and 5 (five) is highly satisfied. Among all the respondents, no one was either 'highly satisfied' or 'highly dissatisfied'. The maximum 47% of total respondents were found to be 'neutral' meaning neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. The second highest 34% of total respondents were dissatisfied and the least 19% were satisfied. While compare the satisfaction level of journalist and general respondent notable variation was detected especially in 'satisfied' and 'neutral' categories. In 'neutral' opinion, journalists outnumber the general category considerably. However, the journalist's frequency (10%) in terms of 'satisfied' is 3 times lower than the similar frequency of general respondent (30%). Thus, the journalists are very less satisfied with the role of media in terms of performance and impact. The detail is presented in Table 4.2.

**Table: 4.2 Level of satisfaction on the performance and impact of media in combating corruption**

Respondent	Level of satisfaction				
	Highly satisfied(5)	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly dissatisfied(1)
Journalist (40)	0	4 (10%)	23 (58%)	13 (33%)	0
General (30)	0	9 (30%)	10 (33%)	11 (37%)	0
Total (70)	0	13 (19%)	33 (47%)	24 (34%)	0

The mean scores of satisfaction (Table 4.3) regardless of journalist or general or total respondents are below the 'neutral' meaning respondents are rather dissatisfied with media's

role. The mean score of journalist is significantly smaller than the general respondent, which indicates journalists are relatively more dissatisfied with media's role. Journalists usually know better the potential of media's watchdog role in combating corruption in an ideal condition. So, when they experience more deviations from the ideal role become more frustrated. This may be one explanation, why journalists are more dissatisfied with the media's role in comparison to the general people. On an average, respondents were rather dissatisfied with media's role.

**Table: 4.3 Descriptive statistics of satisfaction on media's overall role in combating corruption**

Satisfaction with the impact and performance of media in combating corruption	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	40 (Journalist)	2.00	4.00	2.7750	.61966
	30 (general)	2.00	4.00	2.9333	.82768
	70 (total)	2.00	4.00	2.8429	.71497

## 4.5 Conclusion

Empirical findings reveal that media reporting on public sector corruption has both tangible and intangible impacts. However, the respondents were bit dissatisfied with that impact and overall performance of media. The selected factors that more likely to affect the role of media were examined to know the reasons of such dissatisfaction. The results and subsequent analysis of that factors presented in the following chapter would explain the causes of such dissatisfaction.

# Chapter 5: Factors Affecting Role of Media

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the factors affecting the role of present-day media in combating public sector corruption. Media's role depends on the environment where they perform job and on the operational facet meaning, how media operate their responsibility. Thus, the factors were chosen from two different point of views: environmental aspect and operational aspect. Operational aspect includes two broad factors namely 'reporting incident' and 'reporting quality' and the latter aspect comprises three broad factors specifically 'media freedom', 'access to information', and 'accountability & credibility' that are to be examined.

## 5.2 Reporting incident

The respondents marked their opinions about the incidents of media reporting on public sector corruption in a 5 point scale (1= never; 2= seldom; 3= often; 4= most often & 5= always). The choices were between 'seldom' and 'always' where the mean scores are 3.1750 and 3.3333 for journalist and general respondents respectively. The findings indicate that the incident of corruption coverage by the media is a bit higher than that of 'often' (moderate). The perception of general citizen is a little bit higher in comparison to journalist's opinion. This is probably, journalist answered from their statistical point of view based on their assignments while the general respondent thought overall incidents of reporting on the basis of their general perception. The result is presented in Table: 5.1.

**Table: 5.1 Descriptive statistics of reporting incident**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reporting incident	40 (Journalist)	2.00	5.00	3.1750	1.00766
	30 (General)	2.00	5.00	3.3333	.84418

In a comparison of electronic and print media journalist's opinions depicted in Fig. 5.1, shows that except 'seldom' in all other cases print media respondents occupy the high frequency which indicate print media report more on corruption. This quantitative finding is

also sustained by the qualitative information gathered through interviews. Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, Editor -in-Chief & CEO, *Boishakhi Television* quoted that '*comparatively traditional print media is in advantageous position than the electronic media in fighting public sector corruption*'. In this context, Ali (2006) in a study mentioned, '*the print media is the leader in corruption reporting, as this is largely unaddressed by the electronic news media*'. In fact, print media in Bangladesh has a very long traditional history. This industry is well established now and enjoys broad freedom (Table 5.5) comparing to electronic media that started journey at the end of 1990s. Nevertheless, electronic media's contribution is not negligible at all. In spite of many limitations, they are addressing corruption issues regularly in television talk show and thereby molding public opinions. When any corruption incident comes to the light by other media/any other source or any action taken against corrupt officials by the authority, electronic media largely focus it. For instance, recently World Bank's allegation of corruption linked to the Padma Bridge construction contract against the former Communication Minister Abul Hossain was heavily discussed in almost all the electronic media which created huge pressure on government. Besides, electronic media are making some good investigation report as mentioned by one respondent of *Ekushe Television*.

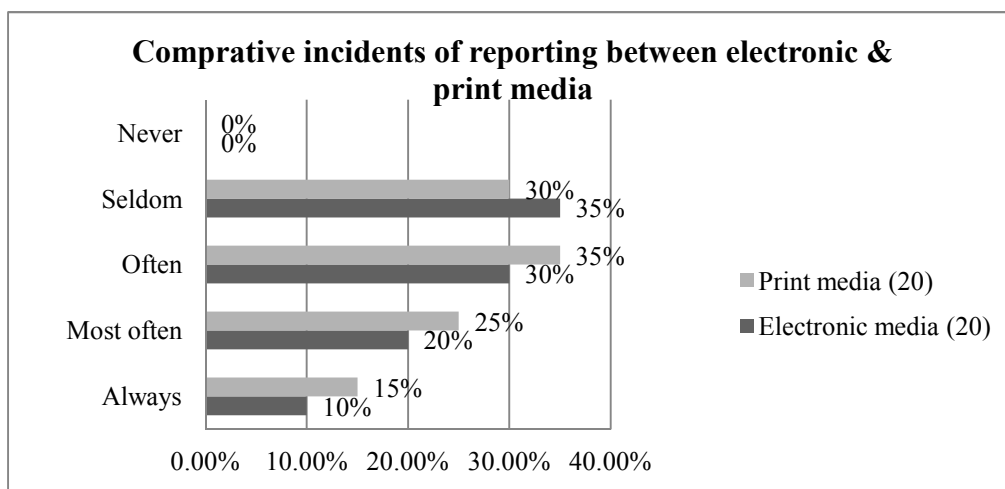


Fig.5.1: Comparative opinions of incidents of reporting between electronic & print media

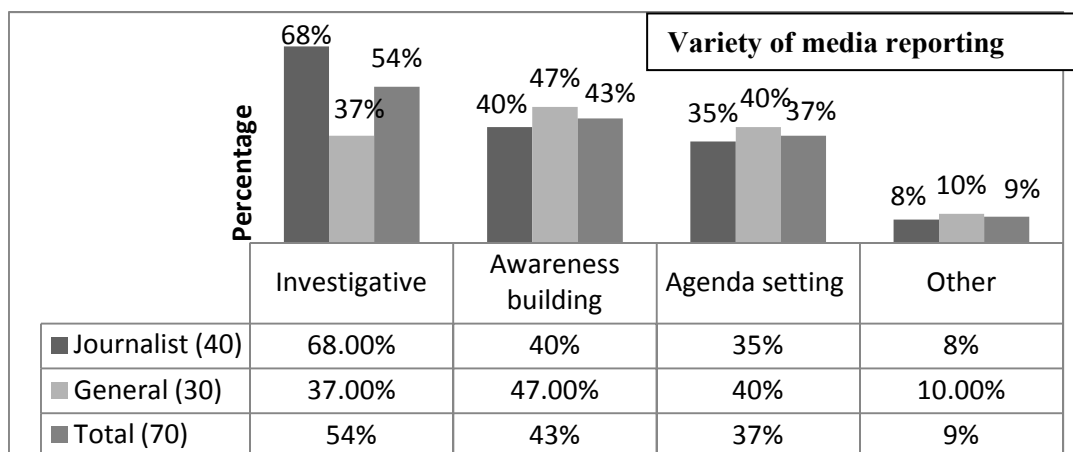
Overall, media is bringing corruption incidents a little bit above 'often' meaning a good number of incidents (more than moderate) coming to the media. But in most cases, media expose corruption at lower level (petty corruption) or service delivery level. Qualitative data collected from primary and secondary sources reveals that majority of corruption cases representing by the media are at the mid to lower levels. Media can little touch corruption at policy level. '*The investigative journalism of media is mainly exposing corruption at lower*

level' stated by Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Golam Rahman. Ali (2006) also found that except in rare cases, mid-level corruption gets reported on, not that of the upper echelons of the bureaucracy or political power. In comparison to the depth of corruption people facing every day, media expose only a little part of it. In this connection, the *Daily Star* Chief Reporter Zulfiquar Ali Manik said, *there is a huge public sector corruption from top to bottom and media is unfolding a good number but comparing to total corruption, it is very little*. All these associated with this independent variable (reporting incident) are possibly partly responsible to be dissatisfied with media instead of the good number of corruption reporting by the media. In addition, quality of report could be an another vital factor which is discussed in the succeeding section.

### 5.3 Reporting quality

The effectiveness of media coverage on corruption largely depends on the quality of reporting. To examine the quality, reporting natures and standard were taken as indicators.

**Reporting nature:** Data obtained from all 70 respondents reveals (Fig. 5.2) 'investigative reporting' is in the top position which is 54%. The other three categories namely 'awareness building', 'agenda setting' and 'other' (educational, descriptive, sensitization etc.) occupy the frequency of 43%, 37% and 9% respectively.



**Fig. 5.2 Opinions of journalist and general respondent on reporting nature (n=40+30=70)**

While comparing data obtained from journalist and general people shown in same Fig. 5.2, exhibits a substantial different picture in the case of investigative reporting. The journalist respondents who address corruption opined that 68% of their corruption reporting is

investigative in nature. The corresponding perception of general people is only 37%. However, in all other cases the scenarios are more or less similar. Again, comparing the opinions of print and electronic media journalists a significant variation was found in the case of awareness building report where electronic media make more awareness building report (50%) than the print media (30%). This variation is because; electronic media faces very high degree of restriction from the management (Fig. 5.3). Therefore, their total reporting incident is relatively low (as mentioned earlier), of which half of the report is awareness building in nature other than hard hitting.

**Standard of reporting:** The respondents evaluated the standard of media reporting in 1 to 5 point scale (1= very low and 5= very high). The result presented in Table 5.2. shows that the mean standard is above the ‘low’ and below the ‘moderate’ standard indicating reporting standard is not up to the mark. Interestingly, the position of general respondent in terms of mean standard is relatively a bit better than that of journalist. This is because, journalist know more their drawbacks rather than the general people.

**Table: 5.2 Descriptive statistics of reporting standard**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reporting standard	30 (General)	1.00	4.00	2.5667	.85836
	40 (Journalist)	1.00	4.00	2.3250	.82275

**Factors affecting the reporting standard:** Data obtained from interviews as well as from some supplementary questions relevant to the indicators of said independent variable placed in the questionnaire validate the findings of reporting standard. Investigating reporting is the essence of media in exposing the true nature of corruption. Although the majority of media reporting on corruption is investigative in nature (Fig. 5.2), the quality of such reporting is not as standard as required. The reasons are:

*First*, making investigative report on public sector corruption in the current democratic context of any third world country like Bangladesh is too hard. In one question, 78% journalist respondents thought investigative reporting is ‘high difficult’ and the rest 22% opined it as ‘moderate difficult’. Investigative journalism can also be time-consuming and expensive (Bulbul 2008). In spite of such character of investigative report, reporters are not provided with sufficient time and other necessary supports from the management. One

investigative reporter of one top daily newspaper expressed his view in that way: ‘management do not want to spend time and money for investigation, they send us to the battle without arms’. Consequently, media can not make proper investigation by their own that degrades reporting quality. In this respect, Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul rightly pointed out that ‘media’s self-investigation is low. Media basically disclose the investigation of state formal agencies’.

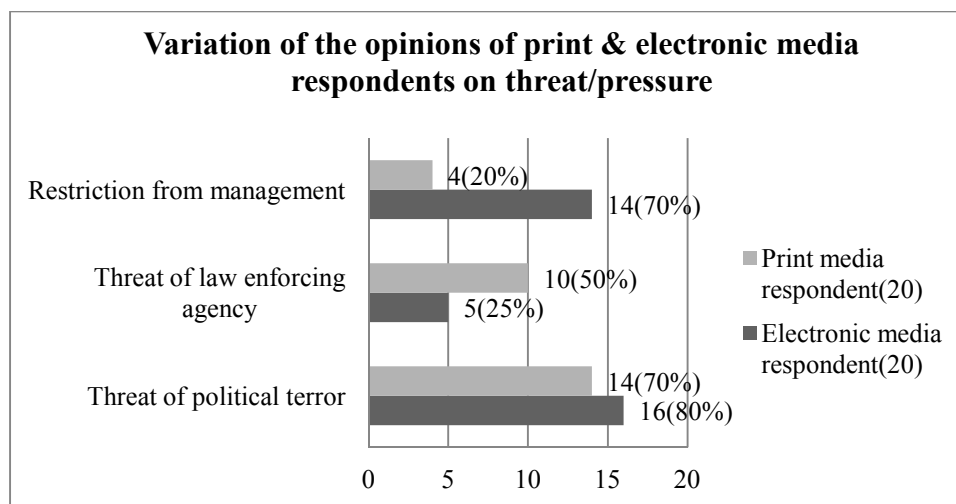
Second, threats/restriction involved in investigative reporting undermines the quality of reporting. Regarding the threat/pressure, views of 40 reporters (journalists) were taken. The results placed in Table 5.3 shows ‘threat of political terror’ is the most alarming one where the frequency is 30 (75%). ‘Pressure from management’ is another problematic factor opined by 45% of respondents. Lastly, 38% respondents answered ‘threat of law enforcing agencies’ which is the most shocking and alarming scenery in the sense as they are supposed to protect media for nourishing democracy.

**Table: 5.3 Journalist’s view on the threats/restriction involved in investigating report**

Threats/pressure	Journalist respondents (n=40)	
	Frequency	Percentage
Threat of political terror	30	75%
Restriction from management	18	45%
Threat of law enforcing agency	15	38%

In comparing the responses of electronic and print media respondents some interesting insights were found which are exposed in the Fig. 5.3. 70% of electronic media respondents experienced the restriction of management where as this picture for print media is only 20% that indicates electronic media faces very high degree of such restriction. Because, the issuing of license for electronic media is completely politicized and so management has to ensure partisan interest which is discussed in detail in the next section. By converse, the opinion of print media journalist regarding ‘threat of law enforcers’ is as twice as electronic media respondents as print media make more hard-hitting report on corruption as mentioned before. In case of ‘threat of political terror’ print media is a bit better position as 70% print media respondents opined which is 10% less than that of electronic media respondents (80%).





**Fig. 5.3 Variations of the answers of print & electronic media respondents on threat/pressure involved in investigating reporting. (n=20+20=40)**

Hence, data obtained from interviews depict that self-censorship<sup>5</sup> has become a predominant phenomenon in corruption reporting due to such threats/restriction of various actors which greatly undermining the reporting quality. In this connection, Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul said ‘*Bangladesh had to pass a long time under military and paramilitary rulers. Due to the interference and harassment by those regimes one form of traditional self-censorship has developed to the journalists. Even, in the democratic period media remain uncomfortable*’. Besides, politicization of media is responsible for self-censored reports. Politically affiliated media or journalists hide or censors the corruption report of the people who have same political orientation. In this regard, the Chief of Staff, *Associated Press*, Farid Hossain said, ‘*a large portion of media is involved with two big political parties. So, self-censored reports are published or broadcast in line with the political connection which greatly undermines the quality of report*’. Self-censorship is also occurred due to economic reason. Media have largely to depend on advertisement for their revenue. As a result, the information gathered through interviews reveals that media become very cautious while writing or broadcasting any report about the corruption of big advertisement providers. In this connection, Farid Hossain again viewed that ‘*even, the newspapers whose standard is above average do not write very simple report against the company who gives big advertisement. For example, the*

<sup>5</sup> Self-censorship in media is the act of censoring journalists own report, out of fear of, or deference to, the sensibilities of others, without overt pressure from any specific party or institution of authority. It occurs, consciously or unconsciously particularly in order to avoid topics that will anger advertisers or politicians or government in order to protect one’s job. (Wikipedia)

*incident of Grammen Phone worker's death in construction work is not published in those papers'.*

*Third, lack of motivation and intention of journalist is another potential factor brought out by the interviews that hampers the quality of investigative report. Regarding this factor the Chief News Editor of Channel i mentioned that 'no quality of investigative report because there is no intention of true investigation'. While collecting data through questionnaire, one reporter of Bangla Vision TV expressed his opinion of investigation by saying, 'I knew one of the high rank Bank official's academic certificates are fake, then I visited his office three times but he escaped me every time and finally, I did not try further to make any investigative report on him, who bother it'.*

*Finally, follow up reporting is very important as people want to know what happens after any corruption incident exposed by the media. It also creates some sorts of pressure to the respective authority for taking necessary action and thereby creating accountability of authority. In this regard, 74% of total respondents opined that media do not follow-up their reporting on corruption. This finding is also validated by the data collected through interview. For instance, Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul said, 'there is no or very little follow up report especially on corruption. If follow up occurs it takes long interval and by this time people forget.' At the initial stage, though the corruption incident becomes the talk of the media, it lasts for a fleeting moment and due to insufficient follow up reporting people can not know the end.*

Regarding awareness building and agenda setting reporting, significant 43% and 37% respondents respectively said that media have such reporting. There is no denying fact that media have already created some sorts of awareness against corruption and brought the issue in public debate and discussion. But the question arose by some interviewees whether media have really targeted to bring awareness to the corrupt officials/politicians or just producing sensitized programs for their own interest. In this context, Chief News Editor of Channel i TV stated, *'95% people in this country are honest. Only 5% those who are corrupt need to be aware, educated and motivated. Can media do anything of this 5% people?'* This question can be countered in this way, if any one does not want to be aware, educated or motivated; it is in fact not the responsibility of media to make him so. In case of agenda setting reporting criticism was like that whether media serving their own interest or political party or any other vested interest group rather than national interest. Again, criticism made on TV talk show

mentioning as ‘mid-night gossiping’. But the detail exploration of the quality of awareness building and agenda setting reporting was not done which is a limitation of this study.

### 5.4 Media Freedom

The freedom of media is indispensable for fighting against corruption. A free media can investigate and expose corruption without being interfered by the government or other actors. The respondents gave their opinion about the freedom of media in addressing political and bureaucratic corruption in a scale of 1 to 5 (1= lowest, 2= low, 3= moderate, 4= high & 5 =highest). The results given in Table 5.4 elucidate that overall media enjoy less freedom in dealing with political corruption. According to journalist opinion, the mean score of freedom for political corruption is 2.9750 which is very adjacent towards the moderate freedom and the mean score (3.275) for bureaucratic corruption is significantly above the moderate freedom. On the other hand, the perception of general respondent is considerably lower than the opinion of journalist in both cases where the mean scores of freedom are 2.5667 (far below the moderate freedom) and 2.9 (fairly below the moderate freedom) respectively for political and bureaucratic corruption.

**Table: 5.4 Descriptive statistics on the opinion of freedom about political and bureaucratic corruption**

N	Political corruption		Bureaucratic corruption	
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. deviation
Journalist (40)	2.9750	1.04973	3.2750	.93336
General (30)	2.5667	.93526	2.9000	1.18467

A very significant result has been found between the opinions of electronic and print media respondents about freedom. From the Table 5.5, it is clear that electronic media enjoy less freedom regardless of political and bureaucratic corruption in comparison to the print media. The mean score of freedom of electronic media on political corruption is 2.5 which is just median value of low and moderate freedom where as the corresponding score for print media (3.45) is near to the median value of moderate and high freedom. Similarly, the mean score of freedom of electronic media on bureaucratic corruption is 2.75 which is below the moderate freedom to some extent while the corresponding score for print media is 3.8 which is near to the high freedom. Therefore, print media enjoy a broad freedom either in political or bureaucratic corruption.

**Table: 5.5 Comparative statistics of freedom about political and bureaucratic corruption**

Journalist Respondent (N)	Political corruption		Bureaucratic corruption	
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Electronic media (20)	2.5000	.88852	2.7500	.71635
Print media (20)	3.4500	.99868	3.8000	.83351

The above description and findings of Table 5.4 and Table 5.5 about freedom of media, deserve four questions to be analyzed: (1) Why overall freedom is almost moderate? (2) Why do media enjoy comparatively more freedom in bureaucratic corruption and less in political corruption? (3) Why general people perception about media freedom is low? (4) Why do print media enjoy broad freedom?

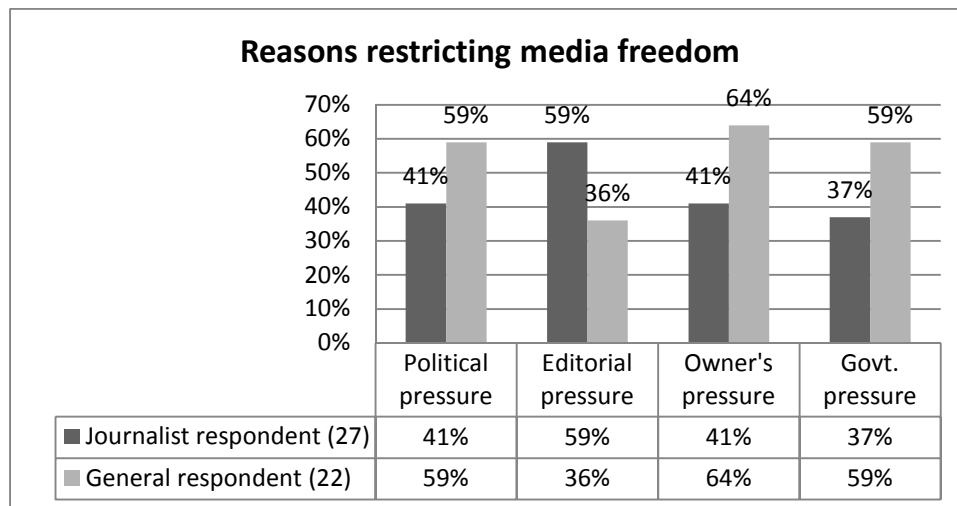
*First*, the average score of freedom from three categories of respondents presented in Table 5.4 and 5.5 calculated to be 2.9291 which is bit below but very adjacent to the moderate. Since the inception of democratic government in 1991, a favorable media environment is prevailing that has been discussed in Chapter 4. Almost all interviewees agreed that media in Bangladesh is enjoying considerable freedom which match the quantitative findings of overall freedom (near to moderate in grade). In this aspect, Dr. Akbar Ali Khan said, *'taking everything into account, media in terms of freedom in Bangladesh by and large is as standard as other equal status countries so far'*. *Second*, result shows media enjoy relatively more freedom in addressing bureaucratic corruption other than political. All media owners except state are either business man or politician or business-cum politician. Besides, media is politicized as well (Iliyas 2010). That is why, media face comparatively more restriction from ownership/management on political ground rather than bureaucratic.

*Third*, it is noticeable from Table 5.4 that general people perception regarding the freedom of media is comparatively low. Again, if we see the mean value of freedom of electronic media respondent's evaluation in Table 5.5, it is more or less equal to the mean value of general respondent. So, the perception of general respondent on media freedom is lower than that of media respondent is not fully correct. What is more rational print media respondent's evaluation about freedom is broad that reflects regardless of overall respondent's evaluation and media respondent evaluation as well.

*Fourth*, historically, print media played very significant role against misrule of the British government and Pakistani rulers. Today’s well established print media industry had developed historically through many ups and down. Lastly, relaxing of the restrictive press laws in 1991 as mentioned before resulted into the liberation of press. Many new newspapers came out with the pledge of creating a new benchmark in reporting, especially exposing corruption (Ali 2006). Most importantly, due to the growth of private advertising market for taking liberalize economic policy since 1990, print media now generate a huge revenue from private advertisement that previously were principally dependent on government advertisement (Anam 2002). Print media are now mostly independent of government from financial ground. All these have contributed to the broad freedom of print media. On the other hand, though the electronic media are financially fully independent of government, relatively higher degrees of editorial and government pressure associated with electronic media are mainly responsible for less freedom (Fig. 5.5). This analysis has been done in the following sub-section in comparative part of media in terms of reasons restricting freedom.

**Reasons restricting freedom**

Out of 70, 49 respondents (journalist=27; general=22) who marked the media freedom between lowest to moderate asked for reasons. The identified reasons and their subsequent frequencies have shown in Fig. 5.4.



**Fig. 5.4: Reasons restrict freedom: Journalist opinions and people perception (n=49)**

As shown in above figure, a very significant and almost equal percentage of general respondents identified owner’s pressure (64%, which is the highest), political pressure (59%) and government pressure (59%) restricting freedom where as the corresponding figure for

editorial pressure (36%) is significantly low. On the other hand, the highest 59% of journalist respondents opined editorial pressure as restrictive factor while the other three factors namely political pressure (41%), owner pressure (41%) and government pressure (37%) were identified almost equally restrictive but less in comparison to editorial pressure.

In all categories of restriction, a significant variation is seen between the answers of media and general respondents. What is quite important here is that in all cases except editorial pressure general respondent significantly outnumbered the media people indicating people are more worried about media freedom for such pressures. On an average, owner's pressure (53%) stands first position regarding the restricting freedom, then comes political pressure (50%) and lastly editorial and government pressure which are equal in percentage (48%). However, overall variation among various reasons of restriction is very low. But why the general people perception in terms of restricting freedom is high than that of journalist is, instead of many limitations few media are maintaining their standard by keeping them free from politicization and owner's interference and there by exposing public corruption to the light. The opinions of that media respondent have been reflected in the result. On the other hand, general respondent thought the situation as a whole.

**Owner interference:** Data collected through interviews delineate that media can never expose its owner corruption. Today, private media owners are either politician, or business personnel or business cum politician. When a politician owns media, that particular media's editor is also appointed from same partisan ideology. In fact, there is nothing wrong unless or until such ideology undermines the entrusted role of media. But the problem has been identified that a media owned by politician is also politicized. They can not go beyond the narrow partisan interest. Political owners remain very concern to protect the image of his party or party man. Interestingly, mindset of the journalists of that media is also like that, they will not address the corruption of same political line. In this context, one interviewee said (Farid Hossain), if a media owner belongs to a political camp, editors or journalists cannot go up to a certain standard despite their high professional and ethical standard. Then, this particular media usually has to do the partisan journalism. This actually happens due to owner interference. In effect, wrong, biased, exaggerate and self-censored reports on corruption are published or broadcast in line with political connection that weakens the media's role. Similarly, the majority of the business people who own media are usually members of the corporate elite who have vested interests in using the media as a business

tool. One instance has been put below to show how they use media to serve their business interest:

*Hunter Bear* is used to supply to the various elite clubs of Dhaka city by the owner of Jamuna Group (one business elite). Recently, these clubs are exporting foreign bear instead of taking 'Hunter Bear' due to the low quality and demand. In response, the daily newspaper Jugantor that is owned by Jamuna Group publishes report against the clubs mentioning that they are involved in illegal duty free alcohol import and evading huge government tax. Some bureaucrats are also involved with it. There is no denying fact that there may be some sorts of anomaly in alcohol importing but the way this newspaper has exaggerated the matter is not objective journalism. It is kind of yellow journalism. As a result this paper is now under investigation. (Source: Interview, Farid Hossain, AP).

In consequence, the journalists work in that type of media has no freedom to do professional journalism. Again, the owner of some media houses are involved in real estate business. Some opinions came from subjects that such business owners are using media to protect their business. When any other media or even government tries to illustrate their corruption or irregularities, they counter it by their own media. Besides, for the very reason for instance, they can never expose the corruption of Housing and Public Work Ministry or Land Ministry to light if occur. Another important and new aspect is the paid journalism. It is a new phenomenon in Bangladesh media industry where the said media owners (not all) buy journalists with high salary to work how they want to do work. In this context, Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul stated that, *'the media owners appoint some journalists to do journalism according to their vested interest'*. Regarding ownership pressure, the News Editor of Channel i TV, expressed his view by mentioning *'we are just doing job of our owner'*.

**Government pressure:** Although government does not exert much restrictive laws-regulations to curb media freedom, this actor significantly constricts freedom by other means. The qualitative findings says, media are free from government interference until or unless they hit the core interests or subjects of government. In fact, there is no tolerance in our democratic culture. As a result, government does not like criticism. In this respect, one respondent pointed out that ruling party hates media and opposition loves media. When a political party in power tells media to be responsible but while in opposition wants media to be critical to the government. When media criticize government or try to investigate

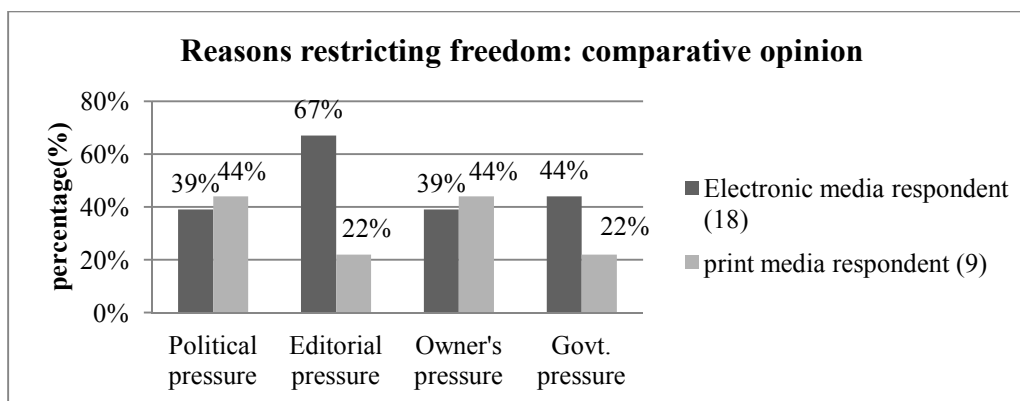
corruption at high level of government, they put indirect pressure on media by various means like using intelligence agency, political connection, unauthorized pressure from law-enforcing agency etc.

**Political pressure:** A large portion of media is involved with two big political parties. Thus, a ruling party affiliated media or journalists can never address public sector corruption except some petty corruption. On the other hand, opposition party affiliated media or journalist can not also function effectively in addressing government corruption due to government pressure from political point of view. Thereby, the political affiliated media and the Journalists who work in that media always face political interference. With regard to political pressure, one special reporter of one electronic media anonymously said, “*we do partisan journalism, we can not write anything against our political line*”. Majority of the journalists are now divided along with political line. Anam (2002) also found in his study that a widespread political divide within the journalist community is a severe constraint of media.

**Editorial pressure:** It is very much linked to political, owners and government’s pressure. Because, as mentioned by Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul ‘*editor is the final gatekeeper.*’ All actors usually mediate their pressure through editor. The highest 59% of media respondents viewed that editorial pressure restricting freedom while only 36% general respondent opined it. This is actually, editorial pressure is more internal and general respondent usually did not see it separately from other actor’s pressures as external pressure generally come through editor. But the journalists shared their experiences where they received pressure directly from editor.

In fact, it is bit difficult to make a clear cut differentiation of above mentioned restrictive reasons of media freedom. All these are interconnected. There is usually a good a nexus between media owners, editors, politicians, business and government as well. This is our democracy problem where there is no proper democratic practices (Hossain, M. M. A. 2005). Being a third world democratic country, our democracy is not as standard as needed. Due to weak democratic environment, the country’s ‘fourth state’s’ freedom is invariably affecting by various actors. In comparison of the opinions between electronic and print media journalist, a striking statistics is revealed in the cases of editorial pressure and government pressure (Fig. 5.5). Regarding editorial pressure, 67% electronic media respondents selected their opinion which is approximately three times higher than of print media respondents (22%).





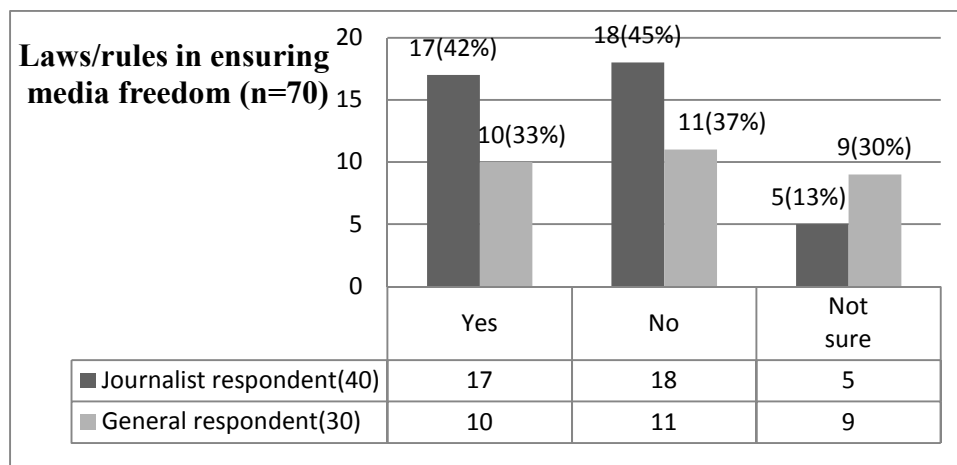
**Fig. 5.5 Comparative opinions of electronic and print media journalists on restrictive factors of freedom (n=27)**

The plausible reason could be, the issuing of TV license is highly politicized by previous and present ruling party. Khan (2010) stated, private television channel license procedures are politicized by the ruling party in Bangladesh with a view to consolidating its power in the country. In this connection, Golam Kibria argued by saying, *'new electronic media licenses which is absolutely based on political ground, to what extent it can exercise freedom is questionable.'* Therefore, getting license on political consideration when an electronic media operated it can not expose corruption of the party in power for two reasons: one, if license issued by the current ruling party, never can write anything about their corruption; another reason, if license issued by the previous ruling party, government create indirect pressure on them and harassed. This pressure mainly comes through editors since they are also appointed on political consideration. That is why, electronic media journalists faces more restriction from editor. In the case of government pressure, electronic media respondent's opinion (44%) is also two times bigger than the print media people (22%). The reason is same as mention immediate before. Thus, the pressure comes to the media through various government channels. In this respect Dr. Akbar Ali Khan's statement can be mentioned, *'Government also create problem but it is not only through legal channel it is also done through internal channel'*.

### **Revealing Media Legislation**

Respondents were asked whether existing laws/rules/regulations ensure media freedom in combating public sector corruption. The findings depicted in the Fig. 5.6 reveals almost equal percentages of the respondents irrespective of journalists and general answered 'Yes' (ensure freedom) and 'No' (not ensure freedom). The result indicates that in recent time rules-

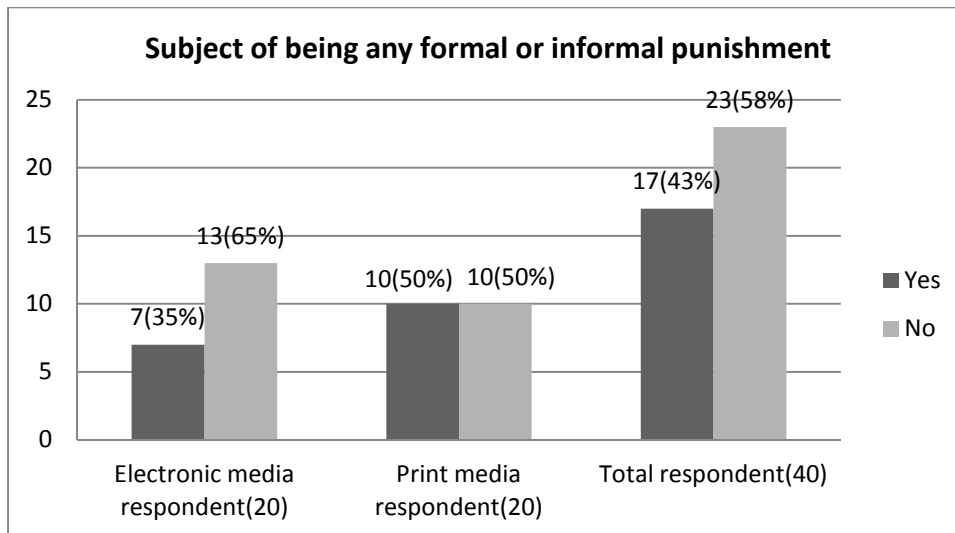
regulations are not so prominent restrictive factor as it was earlier. The reasons are the relaxation of some restrictive laws that is already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. ‘Still there are many laws that can restrict freedom but the fact is that most of these laws are not in use now’ stated by Monjurul Ahasan Bulbul. However, some laws identified by journalist respondents like *criminal defamation, the emergency power rules, the special power act of 1974 and the contempt of court ordinance* as restrictive and often arbitrarily applied by the authority. Again, although there is no significant difference found for electronic and print media journalist’s views, a considerable variation is observed between media and general respondent’s opinions in this regard. This is actually, a significant part of general respondents are civil servants who thought harsh laws/rules are rarely applied now against journalist and the rest is not much aware of laws/rules, hence chose ‘not sure’ option. On the opposite side, journalists sometimes have to face challenges of laws/rules and again when it is used arbitrarily, creates huge pain on them. These all could be the possible reasons why journalist perception about laws/regulations in terms of limiting freedom is significantly high than that of general respondent.



**Fig. 5.6 Respondent’s opinion regarding legal factors in ensuring freedom (n=70)**

### Media Man under Trial

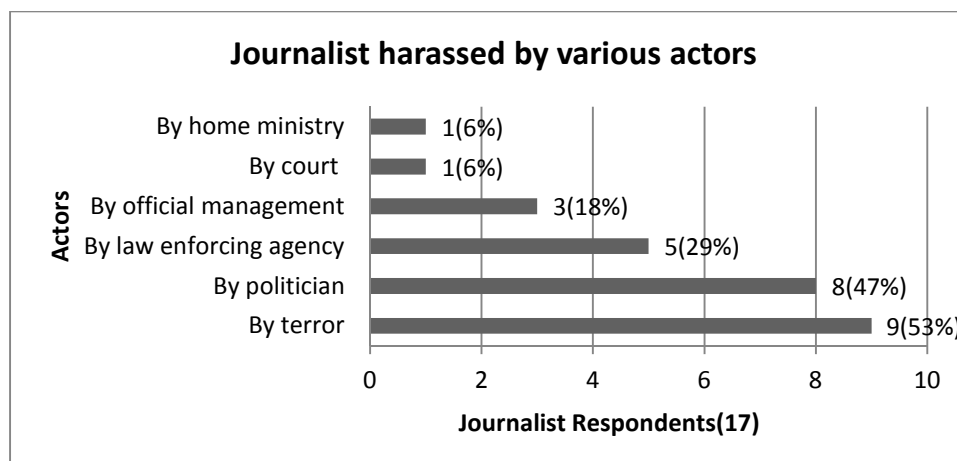
Media persons are subject to punishment/harassment that restrict freedom of expression. Out of 40 media respondents 17 (43%) had been subject of some sorts of punishment action in addressing corruption issues in their professional life. In comparison to electronic media (35% got punishment), the situation of print media is worst where 50 % were subject of punishment action in this respect. The detail picture is depicted in Fig. 5.7.



**Fig. 5.7 Experiences of media respondents about harassment/punishment (n=40)**

The Committee to Protect Journalists-CPJ (2012) who made a statistical analysis about the killed journalists in Bangladesh validates this finding. According to them, 18 journalists have been killed since 1998. Among these, killing motive is confirmed for 12 Journalists while the rest 6 journalist's killing motive is yet to confirm. Most alarmingly, 50% (6) of killed journalists whose killing motive is confirmed were murdered as a result of their corruption investigations. In addition, former Chief Justice and Chief Advisor of one former Caretaker Government Md. Habibur Rahman on his World Press Freedom observing day speech on "Press Freedom: Bangladesh Perspective" on 19 May this year mentioned one statistics about journalist oppression based on ten top newspaper sources. It reveals that in 2011, total incidents of journalists oppression was 154, of which 288 journalists were affected (2 journalists were killed). Out of 288 affected journalists, 101 journalist's harassment was linked to publishing news, 110 was distressed while performing their professional duty (Rahman 2012). In comparison (Fig. 5.7), print media journalists were more likely to be affected by such harassment/punishment. Because, as cited before print media industry is relatively big and they make more hard striking report on crime and corruption.

**Journalist harassed by actors:** The 17 respondents who had been subject of formal or informal punishment/harassment asked for the actors who harassed/punished them. The actors and corresponding frequency of respondents (in ascending order) who were punished/harassed by them have been shown in the Fig. 5.8.



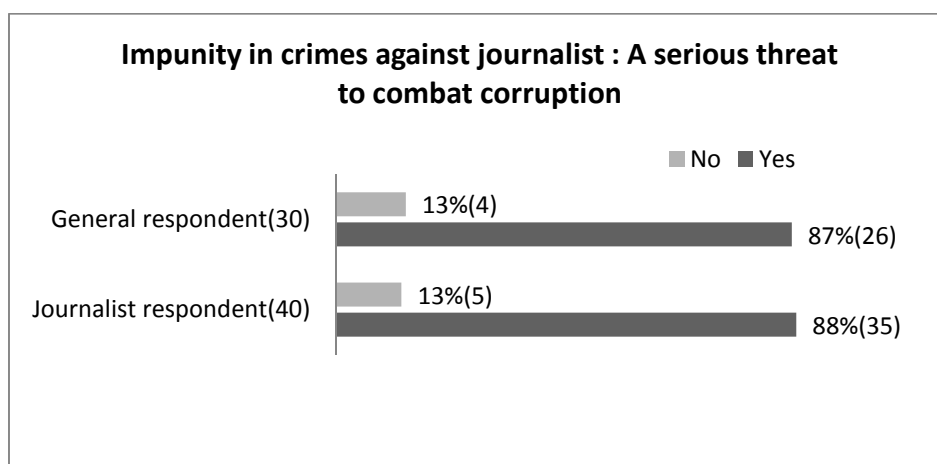
**Fig. 5.8 Frequency of journalists harassed by various actors (n=17)**

From Fig. 5.8, the highest 53% of respondents were harassed by terror where the lowest 6% were punished by home ministry and by court each. The second highest number of respondents (8=47%) was harassed by politician, then comes law enforcing agencies who punished illicitly 29% of respondents. 18% respondents were also subject of official disciplinary action due to the addressing corruption issues. The results shows majority of the journalists got informal punishment either by politician or terror. Most alarmingly, a considerable number of journalist was punished illicitly by law-enforcing agencies. This findings are again validated by the statistics of Justice Habibur Rahman gave in his speech as mentioned earlier. He also disclosed that in 2011, the ruling party government officials, cadre, and terror oppressed 89 journalists and 47 journalists were directly attacked by the law-enforcing agencies (Rahman 2012). One instance of journalist repression has been cited below:

*Mr. F.M. Masum, a journalist at the New Age newspaper, was arrested on October 22, 2009 and allegedly tortured by officials of the RAB. After arresting, Mr. Masum was taken to the headquarters of the RAB-10, where they detained him for approximately ten hours and tortured brutally. RAB personnel rubbed salt on his wounded body created as a result of the torture. They also warned him he would be killed in “crossfire”. Finally, Mr. Masum got release after the intervention of Home Minister, Ms. Sahara Khatun, and several high officials of the Government. Mr. Masum has written reports on extrajudicial killings (death in “crossfire”) committed by RAB officers and on illicit trading in drug substances by police and security officers. He has also written several reports on the torture of journalists across the country. (Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders 2010).*

Therefore, the overall scenario of journalist oppression/harassment/punishment and life frightening threat ‘crossfire’<sup>6</sup> is very hazardous, which undermining the journalist’s freedom and thereby weakening the role of media in combating public corruption.

### Safety and Impunity in crimes against journalist



**Fig. 5.9 Opinion regarding impunity as a serious threat to combat corruption (n=70)**

Regarding impunity in crimes against journalist, 88% of journalist respondents and almost equal 87% general respondents stated, it is a serious threat for media to combat public sector corruption (Fig. 5.9). There was no significant difference found between the respondents of electronic and print media respondents in this connection. CPJ (2012) illustrated the scenario of impunity regarding the murder cases filed after journalist killings: 73% complete impunity, 18% partial justice, 9% full justice. Similarly, IPI (2009) found that impunity with respect to killings of journalists is one of the biggest problems in Bangladesh. They also mention, for the impunity journalists remain under the intuition that the government has not taken these murders seriously and has not done enough to discourage or stop attacks against journalists. Hence, in line with this statistics and present findings, journalist’s safeguard is, no doubt, a key concern for Bangladesh media for corruption coverage. Consequently, while asking question about the safety of journalists in addressing public sector corruption, 95%

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<sup>6</sup> "Crossfire" is an extrajudicial killing that is in flagrant violation of Bangladesh's constitution and the international human rights conventions of which the country is a party. The term "crossfire," which it refers to as gunfights between any alleged criminal group or "hardened" criminals and the Rapid Action Battalion or police. The death criminal in crossfire is justified as "death in an encounter". <http://www.hrsolidarity.net/php/>. Access on 11.6.2012.

respondents viewed that there is no sufficient safeguard for them. However, qualitative data obtained through interview almost all respondents opined that safety and impunity in crimes against the journalist is not anything different from general citizen. This is true for all citizens. Farid Hussain expressed opinion by saying, *'impunity is a big problem that is a threat to press freedom. Law enforcing agency (police, RAB) and ruling party cadre usually get impunity of crime against journalists and other citizen as well'*. The Chief Reporter of the *Daily Star* Zulfiqar Ali Manik said about impunity that *'it is a common practice and true for everyone. We can not see it separately for the journalist.'* Therefore, although impunity in crimes against journalist and safety is a threat to media freedom, it is also true for general people. So, it may be considered as their professional reality or hazards. But again hazards like killing should never be professional reality.

Hence, taking everything into consideration the section of media freedom can be summarized that media is enjoying relative freedom which is true but at the same time it is true that freedom is being largely restricted directly or indirectly by various actors. Such restriction is greatly undermining the role of media in combating public sector corruption.

## **5.5 Access to Information**

There are certain extents of difficulty for media man to get access to corruption related information. Both media and general respondents were questioned to know their views about the difficulty to access information on public sector corruption in 1 to 5 point scale (1= very high, 2= high, 3= moderate, 4= low & 5 = not difficult). The results in Table 5.6 shows that neither journalist nor general respondent thought it is 'low' difficult or 'not difficult'. All respondent's opinion fall between 'very high' to 'moderate' difficult. The mean value is 1.8750 for journalist which is near to 'high' difficult while the mean value for general respondent is 2.3 which is a bit ahead of the 'high' but far below the moderate difficult. Overall, access to information on government corruption is 'high' difficult. But journalists thought, access to government's corruption related information is more difficult comparing general respondents. This is actually general people see that media is considerably bringing government corruption to the public knowledge but they do not know exactly what kinds of hassle journalists face to have regarding information. Therefore, journalist opinion should be taken as more accurate as it is based on their daily experience.

**Table: 5.6 Grade of difficulty to get access to information on government corruption**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Access to information	Journalist (40)	1.00	3.00	1.8750	.68641
	General (30)	1.00	3.00	2.3000	.65126

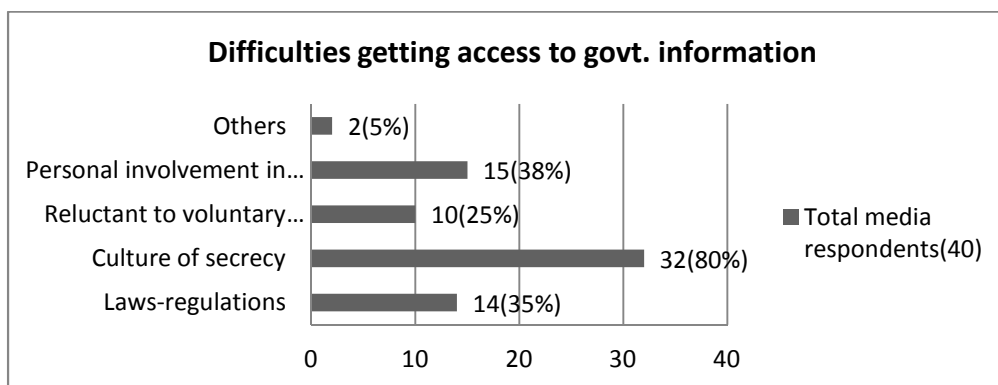
**Whistle blowers:** Whistle blowing<sup>7</sup> is an important mechanism to check corruption. Bangladesh has passed the *Public Interest-Related Information Disclosure (Protection) Act, 2010* that empowers a person to disclose information on ministries, divisions, departments or any other government offices, and all kinds of non-government organizations to authorities concerned. However, it is yet to practice as people are not well informed about the law (Siddiqui 2012). In getting government corruption related information 52% of journalist respondents opined that whistle blowers provide information to them while the rest 48% gave opposite opinions. No significant difference of the opinions of electronic and print media journalists were found concerning whistle blowing. Again, journalists were asked to mention the other sources from where they collect similar information. Most of them mentioned about their personal connection or source like officials, friends, relative, paid source etc. Majority of the respondents who got information from whistle blowers mentioned that the public officials, who are deprived somehow, usually leak the information of corruption. Senior Crime Reporter of *Focus Bangla* Abdul Latif Rana said, family members (wife & son) of one corrupt public official informed his corrupt activities for reporting. However, some of the reporters were a bit cautious about the source as mentioning a ‘top secret’ matter and can not be disclosed.

**Type of difficulty to get access to government information:** Journalist’s opinion about the type of difficulties they face in collecting government information on corruption is shown in Fig. 5.10. About the difficulties to get access to government information, the highest 80% journalist respondent said that culture of secrecy creates problem. The other three significant rated difficulties namely ‘personal involvement in corruption’, ‘laws-regulation’ and

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<sup>7</sup> Whistle blowing is disclosure by a person, usually an employee in a government agency or private enterprise, to the media or public or to those in authority, of mismanagement, corruption, illegality, or some other wrongdoing. The people who disclose such wrongdoings called Whistleblowers. <http://www.legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com>. Access on 10.6.2012.

‘reluctant to voluntary disclosure’ were chosen by 38%, 35% and 25% respondents respectively. While comparing electronic and print media respondent, a considerable variation is found only in the case of laws-regulation where 64% electronic media respondent thought it as difficulty. But the respective figure for print media journalist is 36%.



**Fig. 5.10 Journalist’s opinion in facing difficulties on the collection of information on government corruption (n=40)**

The findings show that ‘secrecy culture’ in public offices is a predominant feature that creates huge problem to get access to information about government corruption. Public service of Bangladesh has inherited ‘secrecy culture’ from British colonial presidency who adopted *Official Secret Act* in 1923. This act is still in place in almost every country of South Asia including Bangladesh, which were under British colonial rules (Manusher Jonno 2005). Theoretically, the basic of the *Official Secret Act* is found to be applied to matters relating to national security, which if disclosed to public, probably cause a risk to the state security. Section 5 of *Official Secrets Act 1923* prevents public officials from providing any secret official code or password or any sketch, plan, model, article, note, document or information which relates to or is used in a prohibited place or relates to anything in such a prohibited place. Even, any government official can be convicted for disclosing such official information (GOB 1973). As a result, in practice, this act has given huge discretionary power to the government officials in choosing what information they can disclose or conceal. In this context, as stated by Ali (2006), the civil servants in Bangladesh classify even, very simple decisions like orders of transfer of a small officer from one desk to another, as a ‘top secret’ document and thus conceal petty information in the name of upholding the law. Thus, in the name of this law the officials can easily ignore journalistic requests for documents. In spite of the presence of *Right to Information Act* (RTI), on owing to the practice of the secrecy act for a long, ‘culture of secrecy’ is still, remained as a major feature of public service. *RTI Act*



2009 came into effect on 1 July 2009. This Act has ensured access to information legally. Although it is clearly mentioned in section 3 of *RTI act* if when any conflicting situation arises between RTI and any other existing rules that resist to provide information, RTI will be overridden (GOB 2009). Despite the fact, the mindset of bureaucrats who are not yet open to the idea of providing information is one of the major challenges in implementing the *Right to Information Act 2009* (*Daily Star* 29 September 2010).

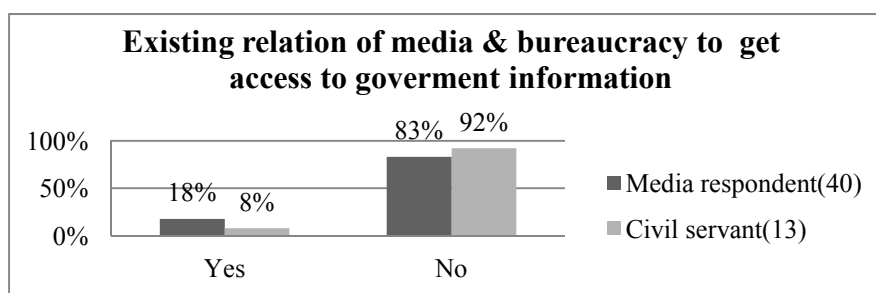
Data obtained by interview also support the findings of quantitative result gathered through questionnaire survey. In this case, Dr. Akbar Ali Khan stated, '*RTI is a theoretical issue. It has no impact in Bangladesh. Press is virtually open in Bangladesh and they have been publishing secret matters. And, I do not see any desirable change after the enactment of RTI*'. Similar observation also drawn from Zulfikar Ali Manik who said, '*Secrecy Act creates problem. RTI is not in use largely. It is not anything that is very significant*'. Actually, according to the section 32 of RTI, this act will not be applicable to the state security and intelligence agencies like NSI (National Security Intelligence), RAB Intelligence Cell etc. Hence, Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul mentioned, '*the achievement of RTI is not significant. Still media is disturbed by RAB, Intelligence Agency to have access information. Actually, there is no protection in practical sense*'. However, Farid Hossain said, '*due to the adoption of RTI media can play more roles against corruption. Now media has the access to government information. So if media want they can ask government for information*'. Similarly, Golam Kibria stated, '*RTI is a breakthrough. It has boosted up morale of journalist. Journalist has been empowered by RTI though it not in practice right now to a considerable manner*'. So the findings suggest that RTI has given a legal right to have government information. Although it is yet to implement, journalist at least can now challenge for information. Therefore, it is said that culture of secrecy prevails as a dominant feature in Civil Service where RTI is yet to bring positive change for media in this respect.

Personal involvement of corruption is another significant factor denying media to provide corruption related information according to 38% of media respondents. When an official is personally corrupt, it is very difficult for media to have corresponding information from his ambience. Since corruption is a pervasive phenomenon of public sector from top to bottom, personal involvement of officials in corruption stands as barrier to get access to information on government corruption. About laws-regulations, 35% of journalists stated that it creates problem to have government corruption related information. Apart from the secrecy act that has already discussed above, the other rules like *Government Servant (Conduct) Rules, 1979*

and *The Rules of Business, 1996* resist media significantly to get access to government information. Rule 19 of the *Government Servant (Conduct) Rules, 1979* utters, any sitting government official without empowering by the government cannot disclose any information to the officials of other ministries, divisions or Departments, or to non-officials persons or media (GOB 1979). Thus, this provision hampers media in getting government information. Similarly, Section (1), (3) and (4) of Rule 28 of the *Rules of Business, 1996* clearly reserves the protection of communication of official information (GOB 1996). The reluctant to voluntary disclosure by the government is another impediment, told a considerable number of respondents (25%). In the present context of our administrative culture and democracy it would be highly ambitious to expect willingly disclosure of governmental corruption from the government.

### Relation of media and bureaucracy

The quality of relationship between media and bureaucracy affects the media to get access to government information. If the relationship of these two institutions is professionally established, media can have more access to government information on corruption, which in turn leads to bring positive impact in combating corruption. When media respondents (40) and civil servants (12) were asked to give their views about the existing relationship of media and bureaucracy, 92% of civil servants and 83% media respondents opined that the relationship is not favorable for media to get access to government information on corruption (Fig. 5.11).



**Fig. 5.11 Whether existing relationship of media & bureaucracy is favorable to get access to govt. information on corruption: opinion of journalist and civil servant (n=40+12=52)**

The data found through questionnaire survey and interviews demonstrates some reasons such as: bureaucrats avoiding media to avoid risk, lack of trust, legal limitations of bureaucrats, media's tendency to always look for fault of public officials, perceiving as opponent by both media personnel and bureaucrats, lack of professional orientation, extra inquisitive

journalism, too friendly relation are responsible for resisting the media in accessing government information.

From all above quantitative and qualitative results and their interpretation regarding access to information, illustrates that the independent variable 'access to information' is highly undermining the role of media in combating public sector corruption.

## **5.6 Media accountability & credibility**

Media accountability and credibility is interconnected. Accountable media are the credible media and viceversa. Thus, these two have been put together as a single variable. Bangladesh media now is diversified and vibrant and enjoying considerable freedom as mention earlier in this paper. Therefore, it is important to examine whether media is accountable because in the absence of precise accountability mechanism media can exploit freedom. Bangladesh's Press Council (PC) that was established in 1974 under the *PC Act 1974*, in order to ensure media accountability (IPI 2009). It deals with complaints from members of the public about the print media content, electronic media is out of its jurisdiction. The data of interview and content analysis reveal that PC is ineffective due to the lack of political will, partisan fraction of press owners and journalist associations, the composition of council, government interference, constant lack of fund and limited power. PC is responsible for devising and updating a code of conduct for preserving high professional and ethical standard. But in practice, the 'code of conduct' is obsolete and not followed by the journalists (Haroon 2004). Section 12(1) of the existing law has given the authority to warn, admonish and censure a newspaper or news agency after investigation if they violate the ethics of journalism or carry news against the public taste, or if an editor or a journalist commits any professional misconduct. However, this power is found to be very limited for the PC according to the most interviewees. In this aspect, one recent judgment given by PC cited by them is given below:

*'Editor and publisher of Prothom Alo newspaper had filed a case to the Press Council against the daily Kaler Kantha for publishing a news on 10.05.2011 titled "Matiur Rahman tried to save the kingpin Maulana Tajuddin (the main architect of the brutal 21 August 2005 grenade attack on the then opposition leader Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina). Matiur Rahman in his complains mentioned the report is objectionable, false, concocted, and had denigrated his personal and family reputation. Thereafter, the court heard submissions from both sides. After review, it found no evidence which supports the report of Kaler Kantho. The Council opined that the information provided by Kaler Kantho about Matiur Rahman does not have any basis and called it 'yellow journalism'. Finally, in the verdict the Council gave warning the Kaler Kantha to refrain from publishing any subject under prosecution or publish any material not supported by proper evidence. The Council further cautioned the editor and publisher of Kaler Kantha and instructing them to refrain from publishing such type of report in future. (Daily Star, 21April 2011)*

Some interviewees by mentioning this verdict said after a long time PC seems to be bit active but the verdict it has given absolutely light due to its limited power. Moreover, the PC has no power to take action against the government for disobeying the freedom of the press, nor does the government consult the PC before taking action against a newspaper or a journalist. Ali (2006) found that a lack of political will both on the part of the government and the media as well as partisan lines of the owner and media associations make the council entirely ineffectual. All members of the PC are directly elected by the government that limits the independence of the press (IPI 2009). They also found a constant lack of fund provided by the government resisting their effective functioning. This qualitative findings validate the result of quantitative data where 62% of totals respondents alleged to activate PC to enhance media accountability.

Hence, it is found that the existing accountability mechanism is very poor where inspite of the recent boom of electronic media, any formal accountability system is yet to develop. Nevertheless, to get the exact standard and picture of media accountability it is essential to examine whether the media houses apply any other informal mechanism and also to examine the standard of professionalism and ethics of journalists.

**Written Code of Conduct:** Journalist respondents were selected from 16 different influential print and electronic media houses. Data collected from journalists suggest except one daily newspaper (*Prothom Alo*), no other media has any written ‘Code of Conduct’ for journalists. Journalistic Code of Conduct is basically a set of standard ethical and professional principles design for journalists that are considered as binding for them. Without such guiding principles it is not possible to do responsible journalism. Thus, this finding indicates that there is no practice of professionalism and ethics in Bangladesh media industry.

**Professionalism & ethics:** Professionalism and ethics is the core of media accountability. With regard to combating corruption, media must have to work in a professional and ethical manner. All respondents made their opinions on professional and ethical standard of journalists separately in a scale of 1 to 5 (1= low, 2= below average, 3 = average, 4= above average, 5 = high). The detail findings are presented in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7 Respondent’s perception about the professional and ethical standard of journalist**

N	Professional standard		Ethical standard	
	Mean	Std. deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Journalist (40)	2.7750	.80024	2.5000	.90582
General (30)	3.0000	.74278	2.6000	.72397

Regarding professionalism, journalist thought the standard (mean= 2.7750) is somewhat lesser than the ‘average’ (moderate) where as the general respondents believed the standard (mean= 3) is average. The current state of professionalism is lower than the moderate standard according to journalist. More or less similar result was found from interviews. The reasons those came out by the interviewees are: (1) Media have not developed professionally. Media owners do not give much importance of professionalism. Farid Hossain said, *‘the way professionalism should be developed, it is not happening in that way. Honesty, integrity, expertise etc. is lacking’*. (2) There is no sufficient professional training. Recently, some initiatives have been taken with the collaboration of NGOs, civil society. For instance, JATRI is providing training to the journalist. Although it is encouraging, the space is very limited. (3) Journalists are not professionally recruited. Majority of the journalist have come from other discipline. It does not necessarily mean that everybody needs to have a journalism background. But it is very important when there is a lack of sufficient training. In this perspective Dr. Asif Nazrul said, *‘due to the recent exposure of many electronic and print media, demand of journalists has adequately increased but supply side has not been broad enough in terms of quality. Thus, journalists are not professionally recruited to do investigative journalism the way it had been 20-25 years ago. For instance, in the past it was very difficult to become a reporter of the Daily Ittefaq or Bichitra.’* (4) Some people come in this profession for their survival. Golam Kibria mentioned one example such as, when any one does not get any other job comes to this profession. However, the situation has started to be improved mentioned by a considerable number of interviewees. Some people have very good professional standard and have the feelings as well as commitment to upgrade the professional standard. The rationale why general citizen evaluation about professionalism is relatively better than journalist respondents is that due to the recent boom of media industry some promising and committed and young bright people are increasingly taking journalism as

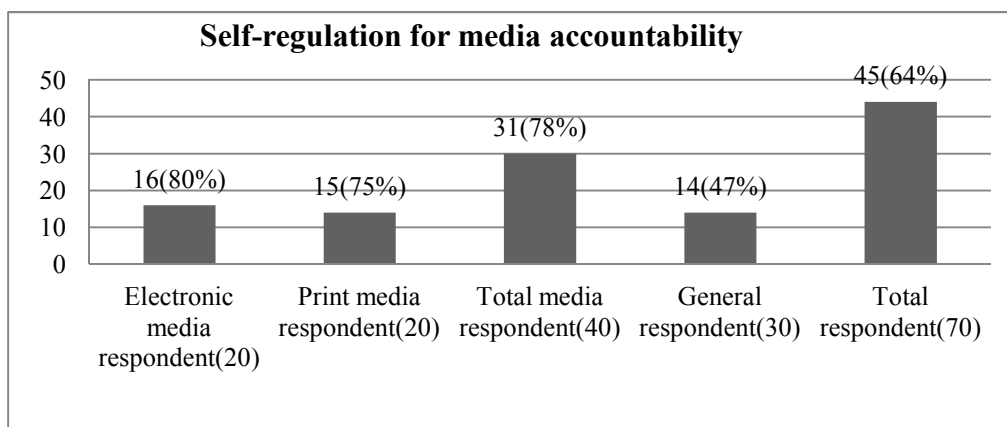
their profession and certainly they are doing well. On the other side, journalist respondents as a professional know ins and out and overall picture of their profession.

About ethical standard, the mean value of journalist is 2.5 meaning their position is just middle of 'below average' and 'average' standard. On the other hand, the mean value of general respondents is 2.6, a bit better than the journalist opinion. The result indicates the ethical standard is significantly lower than the average (moderate). This finding is validated by the interview data. As ethics is very much linked to the professionalism, the reasons behind the low ethical standard are more or less same as mentioned in professionalism. Lack of ethical practice and training is one of the important factors. In this respect, Saiful Amin states '*media owners do not want the practice of ethics in media houses for their vested interest. So, they keep media beyond ethics*'. Inadequate knowledge of media personnel about journalistic ethics is another cause. Many journalists do not know anything about journalistic ethics. They sometimes make news based on speculation. They do not justify the information whether it is genuine and thereby mentioning anonymous source or reliable source. Some journalists do not take the views of accused person for self-defense. In most cases, they mention the unavailability of accused person even by reiterated effort. Irresponsible journalism with children is another issue. Reiterating interview of Sagor-Runi's (Recently killed journalist couple) little child by the journalists can be cited here as an example. Showing harmful scene or picture to sell the news bypassing its long run impact in the society is another important issue. Another important matter pointed out by the Senior Correspondent of *Channel i TV* Mustafa Mallik is, in case of wrong information media rarely regret willingly. When allegation comes they mention it in such a way, in most cases remain unnoticed of readers or viewers. These all findings are actually linked to the inadequate ethical knowledge and practice of journalists as well as business interest. The present finding is further supported by the JATRI (2011) that shown ethical standard of journalist is not satisfactory in Dhaka based journalists. Again, the justification why general citizen evaluation about ethics is relatively better than journalist respondents is same as mentioned in the case of professional standard.

A similar observation is found between the opinions of electronic and print media respondents about professional and ethical standard. Overall, although it is not easy to separate professionalism from ethics, the result shows the standard of professionalism is somewhat better than the standard of ethics. This is because, proper grooming of ethics is not happening nowhere in the society. Journalists are not alien; they are the part of the society

and thereby affecting. Nevertheless, in a noble profession like journalist, this justification would not be expected for the betterment of the society. The absence of ‘Code of Conduct’ as mention before is one vital cause of existing standard of professionalism and ethics, a great concern for media accountability. Lastly, the situation of ethical and professional standard is validated by the opinions of respondents where 80% of total respondents opined to improve the standard of professionalism and ethics to enhance media accountability.

**Self-regulation versus government regulation:** Currently, media in Bangladesh is usually regulated by government. To enhance media accountability respondents were asked whether self-regulation is better. Self-regulation implies that media impose rules upon themselves. Most often, media owners initiate auto-discipline for fear that a government will legislate restrictions to their freedom of enterprise. Sometimes journalists initiate rules to ensure good service and to protect their profession (Bertrand 2005). Out of 70 respondents, 45 (64%) opined self-regulation for ensuring media accountability. No significance difference was found between the electronic and print media respondents. However, a major variation is revealed in the opinion of media respondent from the general group. 78% media respondent was in favor of self-regulation where as 47% general respondent favored it. The distribution of statistics is illustrated in Fig. 5.12.

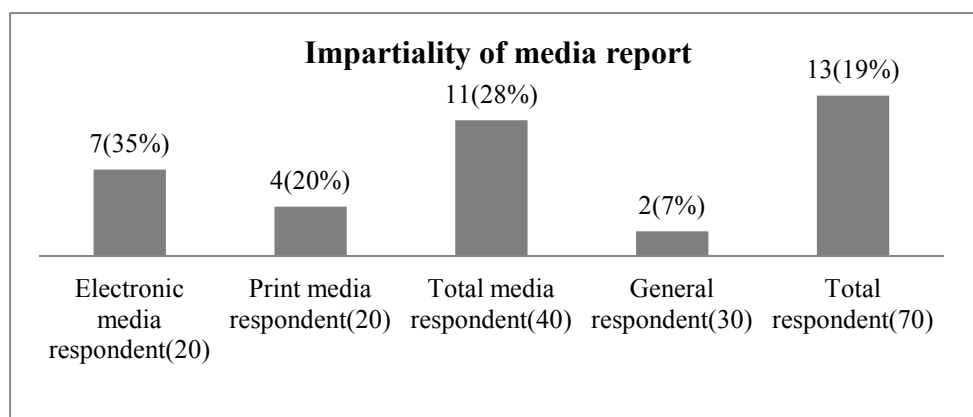


**Fig. 5.12 Comparative opinions regarding the self-regulation for media accountability (n=70)**

On the other hand, most of the interviewees were also in favor of self-regulation. The justification of self-regulation was that media should have public accountability, it has to be accountable to the people. Government should not have any regulation on media. Readers and viewers will decide which media they will accept or reject. But opposite opinions also came in interview data. Md. Farhad Hossain (Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information)

stated that ‘self-regulation is the best option. But the question is whether the people of our country are self-regulated. Media in Bangladesh is yet to reach in that standard so that they can be self-regulated. ‘Dictator is the best government if it is a benevolent dictator.’ Similarly, more than half of the general respondents opined government regulation. The rationale is that media is now enjoying considerable freedom. However, media is yet to develop with necessary professional and ethical standard. Corruption within the media is also a big problem that is discussed later in this section. In such context, media need some sorts of external regulation.

**Impartial/unbiased reporting:** The credibility of a media largely depends on its impartial/unbiased reporting. Only 19% of total respondents thought that media reporting in addressing corruption is unbiased which means 81% respondents agreed that media report is biased.



**Fig. 5.13 Comparative views about impartial media report on corruption (n=70)**

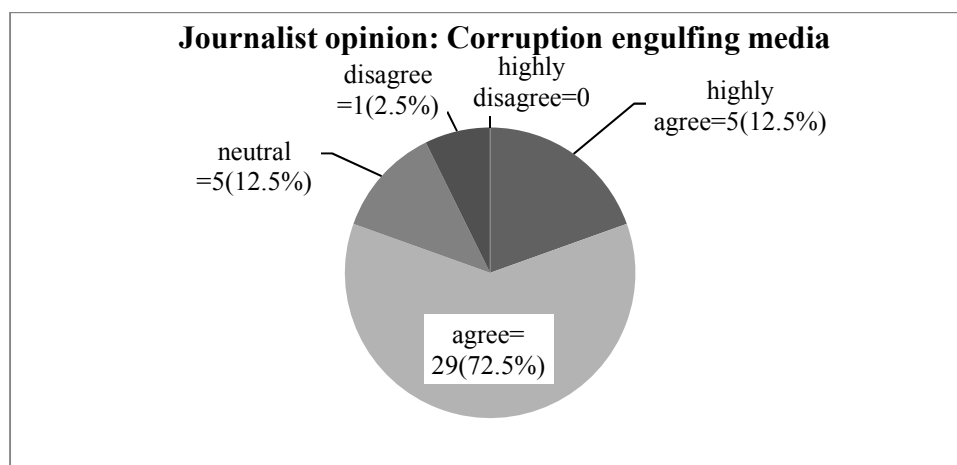
The most alarming picture is drawn from general people where 93% opined media report is partial (7% impartial) indicates people have relatively less credibility on media report on corruption. Though media respondents are relatively better position, still it is very frustrating that only 28% thought media report is impartial meaning 72% assume partial. Within the two clusters of media respondents, the results are also mention worthy where 35% of electronic media respondents assumed media report is impartial which is almost two times higher than the print media respondent (20%). The distribution of respondent’s opinions is illustrated in Fig. 5.13. The reasons for such biasness are due to politicization of media and pressure and threats/punishment/harassment imposed to the media from various actors as well as financial dependency and business interest as all mentioned before are responsible. In comparative analysis, the collected qualitative data support the statistics of general respondents. The



gathered data says people now can not depend on a single media for any corruption cases. Often, they become confused with the report of different media on same incidents. For instance, one journalist respondent anonymously mentioned, *'people have to read at least three standard newspapers for extracting the real fact of corruption incident where either politician or top officials or business personnel involved.'* However, few media is bringing government corruption to the light impartially and the opinions of those media respondents have reflected in the corresponding statistics. Again, as electronic media report relatively less and make less hard-hitting report on corruption as mentioned earlier, their perception about impartiality of report is better than that of print media. In a summary, overall statistics of reporting impartiality is a big sign of credibility crisis of media.

### Corruption engulfing the media

If anybody is personally corrupt or any institution is corrupt itself, it has no moral right to expose the corruption of others. It is not only a question of image or credibility crisis but also a question of professionalism and ethics. In this perspective, corruption within the media has been examined. In a question whether corruption has engulfed the media like other corrupt institutions of the society, the majority 72.5% of respondents 'agreed'. Although one journalist (2.5%) 'disagreed', no one was 'highly disagreed' with it. It is also important to note that 12.5% respondent were 'highly agreed' with the statement. Apart from these, few respondents (12.5%) expressed their neutral views meaning neither agreed nor disagreed. The findings indicate that corruption exists within the media. The detail is in Fig. 5.14.



**Fig. 5.14 Corruption engulfing the media: opinion of media respondents (n=40)**

This finding is validated by the answer of another question regarding unholy nexus where 95% of journalist respondent agreed that there is unholy nexus between a class of journalist and corrupt bureaucrats/politicians. In addition, qualitative data in this study reveals the picture of corruption within media also support the quantitative findings. The reasons identified by the respondents; low ethical, moral and professional standard; lack of sufficient ethical and moral training; poor salary of journalist; infusion of non-professionalism in the media sector; degradation of society's morality as a whole are mentioned. Thus, low ethical and professional standard; lack of sufficient ethical and moral training have already been discussed in this section are very much responsible for corruption. In this connection, the following case can be useful to understand the situation.

#### **Case study 4.4 Milk seller's story: Brother, now I add water in milk**

Milk sellers of Palashbari upazila of Gaibandha district sell milk in Gaibandha town. They are to pay donation on regular basis to some local journalists of Palashbari upazila for selling milk. If they do not want to donate, the journalists force them by saying 'we will write about you that you add water in milk and we will also call Upazila Agriculture officer to test your milk every day. Without testing milk you can not go to the Gaibandha for selling. If milk sellers have to test milk before going to district town, it will be spoiled due to the consumption of much time by the process. So, it is impossible for them to go for test every day. In consequence, they are obliged to give donation. District agriculture office is also informed about this matter. But, they are not interested to take any attempt in this respect. Because, they do not want to take any risk of being harassed by the local journalists. It is also known that donation money is shared among the influential members of Upazila Press Club. In fact, poor milk sellers do not have any other alternative but to give donation. This story came to know when one of the milk sellers eventually shared with one of his neighbor who is a leading TV journalist and stays in Dhaka. When he went to his village home, the said milk seller knowing him as journalist told that, "brother you are a journalist but it is regrettable that now I pay donation and add water in my milk that I never did before. Otherwise, I can not make profit and without paying donation even I can not sell my milk". (Source: Staff Reporter *Bangla Vision TV*)

Journalist's duty is to combat corruption and social irregularities by bringing it to the public knowledge other than force people to be corrupt as depicted in the above case. This is really a

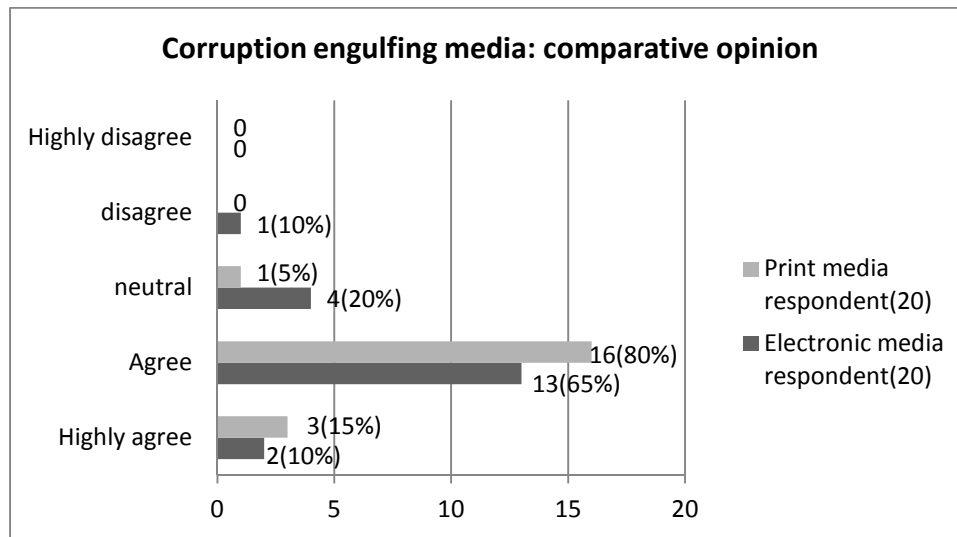
very pertinent question of professional and moral ethics and very dangerous for the profession image.

Poor salary of journalist was identified as one of the vital factors of corruption within media. Although few media give good salary to the journalists, the average salary structure is poor. Interestingly, most of the media both electronic and print do not give any salary to the local journalists. As a result, journalists become involved in corrupt activities by using their identity. Media owners and management know this matter but they are reluctant about it meaning, they provide an indirect approval of unethical earnings. In this aspect, Golam Kibria mentioned that *'in many cases local journalists are provided with Identity Card and are advised to manage earnings by saying "koira khao" (earn by doing whatever be the ways) on behalf of the media management.'* Again, one of the high profile respondents anonymously said, *'local journalists take small amount of money where as central journalists take big amount.'*

Infusion of non-professional people in media industry was also found responsible for institutionalization of corrupt practices in media. That is why in one question 35% of all respondents opined to resist the infusion of non-professionalism to enhance accountability of media. Besides, a considerable number of respondents said degradation of overall moral values of the society is the root cause why corruption is the number one national problem which is also recently, uttered by the Finance Minister. Media is a part of that society and very reality to be involved in corruption from this point of view opined by some respondents. In this context for an instance, Golam Kibria viewed, *'Journalists are not alien. Like all other sectors media have also mal practices unfortunately.'*

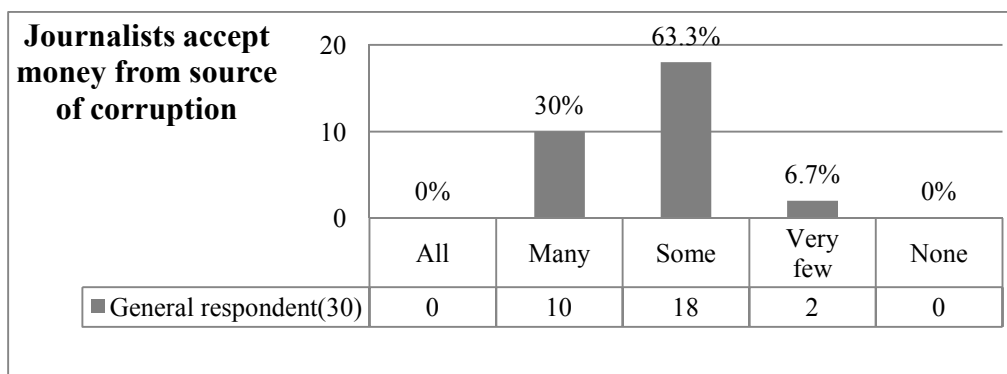
Comparatively, print media journalists more consented about corruption in media (Fig. 5.15). In the cases of 'agree' and 'highly agree' the frequency of print media respondent outnumbers the electronic media to a considerable figure. Again, no print media respondent disagreed though 10% electronic media respondent disagreed with the statement. Besides, 20% electronic media respondent showed their neutral views which are four times higher than print media. Hence, the comparative results indicates that print media is more vulnerable to corruption. Because, print media is vast, it can now reach almost the whole country and there are many local presses as well. Moreover, as earlier found print media enjoy comparatively broad freedom as well as report more and make relatively in-depth report on corruption. Besides, as a whole professionalism and ethics as well as recruitment system are not as

standard as required. So, print media journalists have very less protection to be involved in corruption. On the other side, electronic media is a newly emerging force. They report comparatively less, of which most are awareness building report. Many fresh young talents are coming in this sector through a relatively competitive recruitment system and they are also provided with good salary.



**Fig. 5.15 Comparative opinions of electronic & print media journalist on ‘corruption engulfing media’. n= (20+20) =40**

**Journalist accepts money from the source of corruption:** In a question to general respondents whether journalists who report on corruption take money from the source, indicates that a considerable number of journalists are personally involved in bribery. The maximum 63% respondents viewed that ‘some’ journalist and a significant 30% thought ‘many’ journalists take money from the corruption source (Fig. 5.16).



**Fig. 5.16 Perception of general respondent about ‘journalists accept money from source of corruption.’**

In this regard, news editor of *Channel i TV* expressed his view by saying, ‘*media is hiding corruption rather than exposing*’. JATRI (2011) conducted a study on a survey on ethics and standards among 335 Dhaka based journalists where 27% of journalists told them they know journalists who have accepted money from sources. According to their study, a considerable number of journalists also agreed about the involvement of journalist with bribery, which is a kind of validation of present findings.

Thus, from above analysis, it is obvious that corruption prevails within the media. This statement is further strengthened by the result of Ali (2006) who in a study on ‘governance and media’ found that media itself is embedded in a wider culture of institutional corruption and mismanagement. Therefore, corruption within the media is no doubt, undermining the credibility of media has also been reflected in the opinions of general respondents mention in the following sub-section.

**Media’s corruption undermine media’s role:** General respondents ranked their answer within 1 to 5 point scale (1= highly agree, 2= agree, 3= neutral, 4 =disagree & 5= highly disagree) whether media’s corruption undermining their role. The findings (Table 5.8) tell as a whole, respondents agreed with it as the mean score (2.01) is equal to ‘agree’. Since the general respondents agreed with the statement, it indicates that the corruption in media is challenging the credibility of media.

**Table 5.8 People perception about 'corruption within media stands as barrier in combating corruption**

Corruption within media stands as barrier in combating public sector corruption	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	30	1.00	4.00	2.0100	.92289

**Many media/Journalists pursue their own agenda:** In a 5 point scale (1= highly agree, 2= agree, 3= neutral, 4 =disagree & 5= highly disagree), all respondents expressed their opinions on ‘many media/journalist pursue their own agenda other than national interest’. From the Table 5.9, it is seen that none of the respondent was ‘highly disagreed’ with the statement. The mean score for general respondent (2.3) is rather above the ‘agree’ but far below the ‘neutral’ indicating majority agreed with the statement. The journalist were asked this question to see whether any significant deviation of the general respondent’s opinion. The mean score for journalist (2.55) is a bit high but near to the general respondent’s opinion

which is a form of validation of general respondent observation. This finding is also questioning the credibility of media's role.

**Table 5.9 Opinions on many media/journalist pursue their own agenda**

Many Journalist pursue their own agenda	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	General(30)	1.00	4.00	2.3000	.74971
	Journalist(40)	1.00	4.00	2.5500	.84580

**People trust about the objective report:** Regarding public trust on the objectivity of report, general respondents gave their opinions between 1 to 5 point scale (1= lowest, 2= low, 3= moderate, 4 =high & 5= highest). The result shown in Table 5.10 demarcates none of the respondent showed the highest trust, the responses lies between lowest to high trust. However, mean score of trust is 2.6667 which means overall people trust is significantly lower than the moderate trust. Why general respondent trust level is significantly lower than the moderate trust can easily be understood by all above results and analysis on 'media accountability and credibility'.

**Table: 5.10 Trust level of general respondent about the objectivity of report**

Public trust about the objectivity of reporting	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
	30	1.00	4.00	2.6667	.75810

To conclude this section, all the indicators set to examine the status of accountability & credibility of media delineate that media accountability condition is very poor and at the same time, its credibility in terms of combating public corruption is less. Thus, this independent variable adversely affects the role of media in combating public sector corruption.

### **5.7 Quantitative analysis in line with analytical framework**

This section scrutinizes the relative status of variables and the relationship of independent variables with dependent one in connection with the analytical framework. It also analyzes interdependency within various independent variables. The aim of this section is to show a quantitative linkage among variables in order to know the comparative strength and significance of each independent variable.

## Relative status of Dependent and Independent variables

Mean index for each variable has been calculated to examine the status of each variable by using SPSS statistical package. Since this study is a blending of both quantitative and qualitative in nature, only the battery of questions (Appendix III) prepared in scale of 1 to 5 against variables have been applied in this respect. It is mention worthy that the findings of these battery of questions are well supported by the qualitative findings. The summary of this descriptive statistics are shown in Table 5.11.

**Table: 5.11 Mean Index of Dependent and Independent variables**

Variables	Mean Index	
	Journalist view	People perception
<b>Dependent variable</b>		
1. Media's role in combating corruption (Satisfaction with overall performance and impact)	2.7750	2.9333
<b>Independent variables</b>		
1. Reporting incident	3.1750	3.3300
2. Freedom of media	3.1250	2.7333
3. Media accountability & credibility	2.4688	2.5613
4. Reporting quality	2.3250	2.5667
5. Access to information	1.8750	2.3000

[In a scale of 1 to 5, the more the score, the situation is better]

The mean index of the dependent variable 'media's role in combating corruption' shown in above table (Table 5.11) is quantitatively obtained with the respondent's satisfaction on media's role in terms of impact and performance in combating public sector corruption. The mean index for journalist (2.775) and general respondent (2.9333) is below the neutral (3= neither satisfied nor dissatisfied), meaning respondents were rather dissatisfied with media's role. The detail has been discussed earlier in Chapter 4. Regarding independent variable, Table 5.11 shows that 'reporting incident' has highest mean index regardless of journalist and general respondents. It means media bring corruption cases more than moderate in frequency (detail analysis in section 5.2). The independent variable 'freedom of media' belongs to second highest position and the mean index is 3.1250 and 2.7333 respectively for journalist and general respondents. According to journalist media is enjoying above the moderate freedom while general respondent's perception is significantly below the moderate freedom

(detail in section 5.4). The independent variable ‘media accountability and credibility’ occupies the third highest mean score in both cases namely journalist and general respondent. In both cases, the mean index is more or less near but far below the moderate standard (detail in section 5.6). The fourth highest mean index is preserved by the variable ‘reporting quality’ according to journalist while according to general respondent occupies the third highest mean index (detail discussion in section 5.3) Finally, the independent variable ‘access to information’ holds the lowest mean index by both the journalist and general respondents (detail in section 5.5).

In comparative analysis, the mean index of ‘reporting incident’ and ‘media freedom’ is in better position where both indexes are above ‘three’ (3) which is considered as medium/moderate. On the other hand, all other independent variables, other than ‘access to information’ (only for journalist), belong to the mean index between ‘two’ (2= low) and ‘three’ (3). Only, the mean index (1.875) of ‘access to information’ according to journalist falls below the ‘two’ (2) which is the lowest index among all variables. Now, how much influence of these independent variables each on the dependent variable has been analyzed in the following sub-section.

### **Correlation of Independent Variables with Dependent variable**

A statistical correlation (Bivariate Pearson’s correlation) analysis has been accomplished by using SPSS in order to find out whether any significance correlation of dependent and independent variable.

**Table: 5.12 Correlation of Independent Variables with Dependent variable**

Independent variable	Correlation (r) with dependent variable (media’s role in combating corruption)	
	Journalist point of view	General people point of view
Reporting quality	.567**	.637**
Access to information	.535**	.166
Accountability & credibility	.374*	.402*
Freedom of media	.356*	.412*
Reporting incident	.296	.428*

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)



Again, only the battery of questions (Appendix III) for making a quantitative connection between dependent and independent variable have been used in this analysis. Here, respondent's 'level of satisfaction' is taken as indicator of dependent variable 'media's role in combating corruption'. The results are presented in Table 5.12.

**Reporting quality:** From Table 5.12 it is seen that the highest and strong correlation with the dependent variable 'media's role in combating corruption' according to both respondent clusters. The R Square value presented in Appendix VI indicates that 32% and 40% (respectively journalist and general respondents) of the dependent variable 'media's role in combating corruption' can be explained by this independent variable. The mean index of reporting quality shown in Table 5.11 indicates reporting quality is poor which is also justified by the qualitative findings as mentioned earlier. Thus, existing reporting quality has affected strongly respondent's satisfaction (bit dissatisfied) on media's role.

**Access to information:** The second highest significant and strong correlation has been found in this case from journalist point of view while there is no correlation from general respondent's perception. In line with this correlation, the R Square value (Appendix VI) implies a significant 28% of dependent variable can be explained by this independent variable according to journalist meaning why the journalist respondents were rather dissatisfied with media's role can be explained 28% by 'access to information' while only 2% can be explained from general respondent perspective which is very insignificant. It has happened because, though the general respondents thought access to information is a problem, the difficulty faces media to get access to information is not well known by them and thereby scored comparatively better for dependent variable. For example, one general respondent gave score 'one' (1) for 'access to information', but he gave score 'four' (4) for dependent variable which means this independent variable has insignificant influence on dependent variable.

**Accountability and credibility:** The third highest significant correlation are found in case of 'accountability and credibility' from journalist aspect while it stands the fifth position according to general respondent. In regression analysis, the R Square value (Appendix VI) indicates a significant 14% (journalist perspective) and 18% (general respondent perspective) of dependent variable can be explained by this independent variable. The situation of accountability & credibility of media is poor as mentioned in Table 5.11 and section 5.6, which has significantly influenced respondent's satisfaction on media's role.

**Freedom of media:** It belongs to the third highest correlation with dependent variable from journalist's opinion and fourth highest significant correlation from general respondent perception. Moreover, R Square value (Appendix VI) further crystallizes this correlation where a significant 12% (journalist point of view) and 17% (general respondent point of view) of dependent variable can be explained by this independent variable. According to journalist, the condition of overall freedom is good (Table 5.11). But this freedom is invariably restricted by various actors where electronic media is comparatively more vulnerable (section 5.4). Due to such restriction although this variable has significant correlation with media's role, it has not much reflected in existing media's performance.

**Reporting incident:** It has no significant correlation with dependent variable according to journalist. R Square value (Appendix VI) also implies that this independent variable from journalist perspective can only explain 8% of dependent variable. Instead of relatively more incidents of corruption reporting, this variable has not affected media's role significantly. The reason is, the independent variable 'reporting quality' which is found to be significant and strong correlation with dependent variable (Table 5.12), but not significantly correlated with 'reporting incident' (Appendix IV). In addition, most report can not address the top level government corruption as stated before. However, in the case of general respondent 'reporting incident' has significant correlation where R Square value (Appendix VI) also indicates a significant 18% of dependent variable can be explained by the 'reporting incident'. The explanation is, general respondents possibly thought if media bring more incidents of corruption, people and authority become much aware, corrupt officials/politicians become cautious and thereby happening positive impacts. Besides, significant relation of reporting incident is found with freedom of media (Appendix IV & V). Thus, it has also contributed to this correlation.

In general, except 'access to information' in all other cases correlation with dependent variable is relatively high for general respondent than the journalist. The justification is, as journalists have practical knowledge in reporting on government corruption, they made opinions from their real professional experience. On the other hand, general respondents answered based on their perception that developed from their daily life experience where they made more balance of these independent variables with dependent variable while scoring. Hence, in case of journalist, quantitative data obtained for independent variables have interacted more each other than the data of general respondents that has been presented in the following sub-section.

### **Correlation among independent variables**

Bivariate Pearson's correlation was also performed among independent variables by using SPSS to find out whether any significance correlation between them. The results are presented in detail in Appendix IV and Appendix V for journalist and general respondent respectively. In case of journalist respondent, each independent variable has positive and significant correlation with minimum two and maximum three other independent variables. On the other hand, results drawn from general respondent reveal each independent variable has positive and significant correlation with only one other independent variable except 'access to information' which has no significant correlation with dependent or any independent variable. Overall, the results show that independent variables are comparatively more interdependent from journalist respondent's perspective. These variations have happened as mentioned immediately before that journalists answered according to their professional experience whereas general respondents answered usually from their perception.

### **5.8 Conclusion**

All the tested independent variables or factors are found to be more or less responsible for bit dissatisfaction of media's role in combating public sector corruption under democratic government. From operational aspect, although the position of 'reporting incident' is good enough, the 'quality of reporting' is greatly undermining the media's performance. Again, from environment perspective media are enjoying considerable freedom. However, such freedom is being undermined by various vested interest groups that greatly affecting media function. In terms of 'access to information' inspite of all legal provision in place, media are facing tremendous challenges to have information about government corruption especially in upper echelon corruption. Similarly, the condition of 'media accountability & credibility' is very poor that hampers the role of media largely. The relative status of each independent variable quantitatively and subsequent correlation with dependent variable (media's role in combating corruption) as well as correlation among themselves have crystallized the condition of factors affecting the performance of media in combating public sector corruption.

## **Chapter 6: Findings and Conclusion**

### **6.1 Summary of Findings**

It is demonstrated in Chapter 3 that although first effort of press in Indian sub-continent was taken in 1767 to expose the corruption of colonial administration, it was failed due to company ruler's interference. Afterward, this continent had to wait another twelve years to come first press in 1780 with strict government control. Government started to regulate press from the very beginning, which continued throughout the colonial India that followed the Pakistan regime, and finally in independent Bangladesh until the restoration of democracy in 1991. However, there were few brief relieves of press restriction especially during the first one and half year of liberation when press brought cases of huge government corruption to the public and made corruption a major issue. But within shortly such freedom was halted by reintroducing the restrictive laws and regulations. The main constraint associated with past press was the stringent government rules and regulations. In addition, access to information, financial constraint and literacy barrier were other important factors that affected the role of press. Therefore, historically media mostly played role on social reforms, dissemination of education and knowledge, communal harmony and in politics.

The journey of present vibrant media industry was started with the withdrawing of some restrictive provisions of press related laws in late 1990 by the then caretaker government. The subsequent government respected the media freedom considerably and also took the liberalization and privatization policy in the sector that result into the present boom in the industry. But our democracy is yet to reach up to the mark. All democratic institutions are facing tremendous challenges. Corruption has become a vital governance and economic problem. In the context, being a 'fourth estate' and watchdog of democracy what role media playing or what impacts contemporary media creating on public corruption along with other governance issues has become a vital sphere of debate or discussion.

It was found in empirical data that media reporting has both tangible and intangible impact on corruption. Indicating tangible impact, 73% respondents of questionnaire survey (82.5% journalist & 60% general) perceived that media reporting on corruption has tangible impact. The highest 90% of these respondents identified 'launching of investigation' as impact while the other impacts namely 'departmental proceedings', judicial proceedings and scrapping of

law/policy are opined by 41%, 25% and 6% respectively. Data collected through interview, content analysis and case study also supported that media reporting have such tangible impacts. Indicating intangible impact: 80% respondents of questionnaire survey (82% journalist, 77% general) thought that media reporting on corruption has intangible impact. The majority 82% of this 80% respondent felt 'awareness' as intangible impact where as other intangible impacts specifically 'sense of accountability', 'sense of transparency', 'education' and 'empowerment' stated by respectively 43%, 30%, 13% and 4% respondents. Again, the findings of qualitative data through interview, content analysis and case study also validated that media reporting have such intangible impacts. It is also found that tangible and intangible impact of reporting also interact each other meaning, intangible impact eventually creates tangible effect and viceversa.

However, respondents were bit dissatisfied with media's such impact and role. The journalist respondent was more dissatisfied than the general respondent. Data found through interview and content analysis revealed that there are logical reasons for such dissatisfaction. An analysis of the factors affecting media's role studied in chapter 5 revealed that logical causes. Overall, media is bringing a good number of incidents of corruption. But qualitative data reveals that majority of corruption cases exposed by the media are at the mid to lower levels or service delivery level (petty corruption). Though media have limited successes in exposing corruption of few top officials/ ministers/member of parliament, they can rarely touch systematic corruption involved at policy level. Besides, in comparison to the depth of corruption people facing every day, media expose only little part of it. Therefore, all these associated with 'reporting incident' are partly responsible to be dissatisfied with media instead of good number of reporting.

Quality of report was found to be very poor that greatly undermining media's role. The quality of reporting on corruption mainly depends on the standard and nature of reporting. Regarding reporting nature, data from questionnaire reveals 'investigative reporting' is the highest which is opined by 54% of respondents. The other three categories namely, 'awareness building', 'agenda setting' and 'other' occupy the frequency of 43%, 37% and 9% respectively. In comparative data, a substantial difference is identified in the case of investigative reporting where journalist stated that 68% of their corruption reporting is investigative in nature and the corresponding perception of general people is only 37%. Besides, comparative findings of electronic and print media show electronic media make

more awareness building report than the print media and which is viceversa in case of investigative report. Despite the good number of 'investigative reporting' which is very effective in exposing the true nature of corruption, due to poor quality it is not creating much impact in combating corruption.

It is found that the standard of reporting below the 'moderate' indicates that reporting quality is not up to the mark. The factors recognized for such below standard are: i) Making investigative report on public sector corruption in the current democratic context is 'very high' difficult opined by 78% journalist respondents. Investigative journalism is also time-consuming and expensive. Nevertheless, reporters are not provided with necessary support from management. In most cases media do not investigate by their own, they depend on the investigation of state formal agencies. ii) Threats/restriction involved in investigative reporting undermines the quality of reporting. 75% of journalist viewed that 'threat of political terror' is the most alarming one. 'Pressure from management' is another problematic factor opined by 45% of respondents. 'Threat of law enforcers' also creates problem as viewed by 38% respondents. In comparison, electronic media respondents experienced very high restriction from management which is almost four times higher than print media. By converse, the print media journalist about 'threat of law enforcers' is as twice as electronic media respondents. Hence, self-censorship has become a predominant phenomenon in corruption reporting which greatly undermining the reporting quality. In addition, politicization, owner's interference and financial cause are responsible for self-censorship. iii) 'Follow up' reporting is very low where 74% of respondents stated media do not follow-up their reporting on corruption. iv) Lack of motivation and intention of journalist is another potential factor found to be responsible for below standard of reporting.

In terms of freedom, the data collected through questionnaire survey elucidates that although overall, media enjoy almost moderate freedom, such freedom is also restricted by the various actors and legislations. In comparison to bureaucratic corruption, media enjoy less freedom in dealing with political corruption. General respondent's perception about freedom irrespective of political and bureaucratic corruption is significantly lower than that of journalist. Again, a very significant result found between the opinions of electronic and print media respondents where print media enjoys a broad freedom either in political or bureaucratic corruption. The respondents who marked the freedom between 'lowest' to 'moderate' identified editorial, owner, political and government pressure restricting freedom

considerably. Journalist recognized editorial pressure (59%) restricting freedom mostly but people identified owner's pressure (64%). On an average, owner's pressure (53%) stands first position, and then comes political pressure (50%) and lastly editorial and government pressure which are equal in percentage (48%). But, on an average, variation is very low. In comparison to print media, electronic media journalists are experiencing very high editorial pressure (3 times higher) as well as government pressure (2 times bigger). However, it is found difficult to separate individual pressure of these actors in qualitative analysis as all actors are inextricably linked. About legislation, majority 41% respondents thought existing legal setting does not ensure media freedom to address public sector corruption. However, a very significant 38% believed that existing legal framework ensure such freedom. The findings of interviews also revealed that rules-regulations are not applied as harshly as it was earlier.

Punishment/harassment measures faced by the journalist also restrict freedom. 43% journalist respondent had been subject of some sorts of punishment action in addressing corruption issues in their professional life. In comparison to electronic media (35% got punishment), the situation of print media is worst where 50 % were subject of punishment action. Secondary data obtained through content analysis well supported this findings. The highest 53% of respondents were harassed by terror where the lowest 6% were punished by home ministry and by court each. The second highest respondents (8=47%) was harassed by politician, then comes law enforcing agencies who punished illicitly 29% of respondents. 18% respondent were also subject of official disciplinary action due to the addressing corruption issues. This findings are validated by statistics collected from secondary literature. Again, regarding impunity in crimes against journalist, 88% of respondents and almost equal 87% general respondents believed, it is a serious threat for media freedom. However, qualitative data obtained through interview almost all respondents opined that impunity in crimes against the journalist is not anything different from general citizen. Thus, taking everything into account, media is enjoying relative freedom which is true but at the same time it is true that freedom is being largely limited directly or indirectly by various actors. Such restriction is greatly undermining the role of media in combating public sector corruption.

Regarding access to information, neither journalist nor general respondent thought getting information on government corruption is 'low difficult' or 'not difficult'. All respondent's opinion fall between 'very high' to 'moderate' difficult. On an average, access to information

on government corruption is 'high' difficult that greatly affects media's role. 'Culture of secrecy' is the main difficulty identified by 80% journalist. The other significant difficulties are personal involvement in corruption, laws-regulation and reluctant to voluntary disclosure. Electronic media (64% opined) faces more difficulty from laws-regulations than print media (36% opined). Uncongenial relation of media and bureaucracy also resist media to have respective information. Most importantly, despite the presence of *Right to Information Act (RTI)*, on owing to the long time practice of the secrecy act, 'culture of secrecy' is still, remained as a major feature of public service. *RTI Act 2009* came into effect on July, which theoretically has ensured access to information. But in practice, result shows it has no impact in Bangladesh so far. Despite all above limitations, 50% journalist respondents opined that they get information on government corruption from whistle blowers. They also collect information from other sources like paid source, through personal connection with officials, friends, relative etc.

Lastly, media accountability & credibility have been found very critical in undermining media's role. Bangladesh's Press Council is the only organ formally in charge of ensuring media accountability. It deals with complaints from members of the public about the print media content, electronic media is out of its jurisdiction. The results reveal that Press Council is ineffective due to the lack of political will, partisan fraction of press owners and journalist associations, the composition of council, government interference, constant lack of fund and limited power. On the other hand, data collected from 16 different print and electronic media houses delineate except *Prothom Alo*, no other media has any written Code of Conduct/rules for journalists. It is mentionable that Press Council made a code of conduct for preserving high professional and ethical standard. However, this code of conduct is obsolete and is not followed by the journalists. This findings indicate that mechanism of media accountability is very poor. In addition, though the professionalism and ethics are the core of media accountability, it is found below the moderate standard.

The reasons that were indentified for below the average standard are: media have not developed professionally; media owners do not give emphasis professionalism and ethics; lack of sufficient professional and ethical training and practice; journalists are not professionally recruited; majority of the journalists have come from other discipline which becomes a factor due to the lack of sufficient training; some people come in this profession for their survival; inadequate knowledge of media personnel about journalistic ethics;



showing harmful scene or picture to sell the news bypassing its long run impact in the society; proper grooming of ethics is not happening nowhere in the society where journalists are the part of the society. However, some journalists have very good professionalism and ethics and have the feelings as well as commitment to upgrade the professional and ethical standard. Overall, although it is not easy to separate professionalism from ethics, the result shows the standard of professionalism is somewhat better than the standard of ethics.

Accountability and credibility complements each other. In line with accountability the situation of media credibility is found to be less. The result shows that 81% of respondents agreed that media report is biased. Print media respondents surpass electronic media by 2 times in terms of biased reporting. 95% of journalist respondent agreed that there is an unholy nexus between a class of journalist and corrupt bureaucrats/politicians. In addition, 63% of media respondents 'agreed' that corruption has engulfed the media like other corrupt institutions. The maximum 60% respondents viewed that 'some' journalist and a significant 33% thought many journalists take money from the corruption source. Again, 87% of general respondents agreed that corruption within media undermining media's role. Apart from these, 63% of media respondents agreed that many journalist/media pursue their own agenda rather than national interest. Print media respondents (75%) were more likely agreed with the statement than electronic media representative (50%). Thus, the trust of people on media in addressing corruption is significantly lower than the moderate trust as mentioned by the respondents. Therefore, considering all the existing situation of media accountability & credibility it is said that this independent variable is significantly responsible for poor performance of media.

In quantitative analysis a mean index for each variable was calculated in a scale of 1 to 5 (where the more the score, the situation is better) that reveals the mean index of the dependent variable is 2.775 from journalist point of view and 2.9333 from general respondent perspective. In both cases, the index is below the neutral, meaning respondents were rather dissatisfied with media's role. Among independent variables, 'reporting incident' and 'freedom of media' has the highest and second highest mean index respectively in both respondent types. 'Accountability and credibility' occupies the third highest mean score in both cases of respondent. The fourth highest mean index is preserved by the variable 'reporting quality' according to journalist while this variable according to general respondent occupies the third highest mean index. Finally, the independent variable 'access to information' holds the lowest mean index by both respondent types. To know the influence of

each independent variable on the dependent variable, a statistical correlation was performed that reveals that all independent variables have more or less significant and positive correlation with the dependent variable except 'reporting incident' from journalist perspective and 'access to information' from general respondent point of view, which was further crystallized by the regression analysis. The strong and positive correlations were found in the cases of 'reporting quality' for both categories of respondents and 'access to information' for only journalist. Correlation among independent variables also found the interdependency among themselves where the results indicate variables are interdependent more from journalist point of view.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

The findings of data and their corresponding analysis with regard to the research questions and objectives delineate that historically media could not play mentionable role in combating government corruption although the first effort of newspaper publication was linked to unearth the corruption of company ruler. The freedom of media was found as a very restrictive factor that affected press role. The government controlling of press that started from its very inception continued all through the Colonial, Pakistan and even in independent Bangladesh until 1990 except few brief respites. Apart from freedom, access to information, financial limitation and literacy barrier affected media considerably. Thereby, at past times, press was mainly devoted to social reform, spreading education and knowledge, communal harmony and in politics which especially started since 1850s.

About contemporary media (1991 and onwards), it was evident from the empirical data that media make a good number of reports on public sector corruption, which have both tangible and intangible impacts. However, the respondents were rather dissatisfied with that impacts and overall role, media currently playing. To investigate the causes of such dissatisfaction as well to answer the second research questions about the factors affecting media role, the collected data were analyzed in line with the analytical framework that fixed five independent variables namely 'reporting incident', 'reporting quality' 'freedom of media', 'access to information' and 'media accountability & credibility'. The summary of findings explains that all five independent variables are more or less responsible about the drawbacks of media's role in combating public sector corruption. In quantitative analysis, a significant and positive correlation was established between all independent variables with the 'media's role in combating corruption', except 'reporting incident' from journalist perspective and 'access to

information' from general respondent point of view. Qualitative data also supported these findings. The 'reporting quality' and 'access to information (except general respondent view)' have affected strongly the media's role. The rest three independent variables specifically 'reporting incident (except journalist point of view)', 'freedom of media', and 'media accountability & credibility' have also affected media's role significantly. In comparison to electronic media, overall print media's performance is found to be better. Again, general people perception about media's role in combating corruption is established better than that of journalist.

Thus, all findings and analysis about the impacts as well as the factors affecting media's performance postulate that the role of media in combating public sector corruption is not as effective as required to bring significant impact. However, the potential of media's 200 years old notion as 'fourth estate' and powerful watchdog is universally accepted. Realizing this potential, all supporting institutions and concern authority should come forward to strengthen this vital democratic institution so that they can bring success of anti-corruption campaign. Most importantly, political support of media is of utmost necessity to check widespread corruption in public sector of Bangladesh. To conclude, it is the high time for all governance leaders thought about media's potential and take steps to fight pervasive challenge of corruption in public governance.

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## Appendix I

### Composition of respondent for questionnaire survey

Questionnaire	Respondent criteria	No. of respondent	Total
Journalist	Assistant Chief Reporter to Chief Reporter, Staff Reporter, Staff Correspondent, Special Reporter, Special Correspondent, Newsroom Editor	20 = electronic media 20 = print media	40
General	Civil Servant, Private sector employee, NGO worker, Business people, Teacher, Student, Lawyer	30	30
Total			70

## Appendix II

### Key personnel interviewed

No.	Name	Designation	Interview date
1	Golam Rahman	Chairman, Anti-corruption Commission	15.4.2012
2	Dr. Akbar Ali Khan	Former Advisor of Caretaker Government	3.4.2012
3	Dr. Iftekharuzzaman	Executive Director, TIB	28.3.2012
4	Dr. Asif Nazrul	Professor, University of Dhaka	28.3.2012
5	Md. Farhad Hossain	Additional Secretary(Admin & press), Ministry of Information	8.4.2012
6	Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul	Editor in Chief & CEO Boishakhi TV	1.4.2012
7	Farid Hossain	Bureau of Chief, Associated Press	29.3.2012
8	Saiful Amin	Editor (News & Current Affairs), Channel i	24.3.2012

9	Julfiquir Ali Manik	Chief Reporter, The Daily Star	8.4.2012
10	Md. Golam Kibria	Media & Communication Specialist	9.4.2012

### Appendix III

#### Battery of questions used in determining mean index and correlation of variables

Variables	Questions	Remark
Reporting incident	Q. How frequently do you/your media/media report about public sector corruption? (both respondent)	Detail in appendix VII & VIII
Reporting quality	Q. Evaluate the standard of media reporting on public sector corruption. (both respondent)	
Media freedom	Q. How much have you/media freedom in preparing/editing/ investigating your news on political corruption and bureaucratic corruption (separate question)? (both respondent)	
Access to information	Q. How difficult it is to access government information especially on corruption cases? (both respondent)	
Accountability & credibility	<p>Q.1. What is your personal opinion about the overall standard of professionalism and ethics of journalists? (both respondent)</p> <p>Q.2 ‘Corruption has engulfed the media like other corrupt institutions of the country’. To what extent do you agree with this statement? (media respondent)</p> <p>Q.3 Many journalists/media pursue their own agenda rather than the national interest in terms of corruption reporting. (both respondent)</p> <p>Q.4 “Journalists who coverage corruption accept money from the source of corruption.” Give your opinion about this statement below. (general respondent)</p> <p>Q.5. ‘Corruption within the media stands as a barrier to fight public sector corruption’. To what extent do you agree with this statement? (general respondent)</p> <p>Q.6 Evaluate your trust level on journalists for objectivity of news regarding public sector corruption. (general respondent)</p>	
Media in combating corruption	Q. Are you satisfied with the overall role/impact of media in combating public sector corruption? (both respondent)	

## Appendix IV

### Correlation among independent variables (Journalist point of view)

	Freedom of media	Reporting incident	Accountability & credibility	Reporting quality	Access to information
Freedom of media	1	.387*		.346*	
Reporting incident	.387*	1	.383*		.348*
Accountability & credibility		.383*	1	.317*	.328*
Reporting quality	.346*		.317*	1	
Access to information		.348*	.328*		1

## Appendix V

### Correlation among independent variables (General respondent point of view)

	Freedom of media	Reporting incident	Accountability & credibility	Reporting quality	Access to information
Freedom of media	1	.795**			
Reporting incident	.795**				
Accountability & credibility				.335*	
Reporting quality			.335*		
Access to information					

## Appendix VI

### Summary of regression analysis

Independent variable	Association of independent variables with dependent variable 'media's role in combating corruption' ( <b>R Square</b> )	
	Journalist perspective	General respondent perspective
Reporting quality	.322	.406
Access to information	.286	.028
Accountability & credibility	.140	.161
Freedom of media	.126	.170
Reporting incident	.088	.183



## Appendix VII

### Role of media in combating public sector corruption in Bangladesh

#### Questionnaire (Media Personnel)

[Dear respondent, this questionnaire has been designed in order to collect data for academic research only and strict confidentiality about your identity will be maintained. Your sincere cooperation will add countless value to the research.]

Name (optional).....  
Organization.....  
Designation ..... Year(s) in  
service.....

1(a) What are the visible/tangible impact(s) of media reporting on public sector corruption in Bangladesh? Please mark below that all apply

Launching of investigation  Departmental proceedings  Judicial proceedings  Scrapping of a law or policy  No visible impact  Not sure  other (specify).....

1(b) What are the invisible/intangible impact(s) of media reporting on public sector corruption in Bangladesh? Please mark all that apply.

Awareness  Sense of transparency  Sense of accountability  Education  
 Empowerment  No invisible impact  Not sure  other (specify).....

2. How frequently do you/your media report about public sector corruption?

Always  Most often  Often  Seldom  Never

3 (a) What are the natures of reporting you or your media apply while addressing corruption?  
[You may tick multiple boxes]

Investigative  Awareness building  Educational  Agenda setting (creating arena for debate or discussion)  Impartial  Follow-up reporting  Other  
(specify).....

3 (b) How difficult is it to prepare investigative reporting on public sector corruption?

Very difficult				not difficult
1	2	3	4	5

3(c) What kind of difficulties are involved in making investigating report?

Threat of law enforcing agencies  Threat of political terror (Mastan)  Hampers personal interest  Restriction from the management  Other (specify).....

3(d) Evaluate the standard of media reporting on public sector corruption.

Very low					very high
1	2	3	4	5	

4(a) How much have you freedom in preparing/editing/investigating your news on political corruption? (Give a score between 1 to 5, where 1= lowest & 5= highest)

.....

4(b) If score between 1-3, select the reason(s) below [You may tick multiple boxes]

Political pressure  Editorial/internal pressure  Media owner's interference  Govt. interference  Other (specify).....

5(a) How much have you freedom in preparing/editing/investigating your news on bureaucratic corruption? (Give a score between 1 to 5, where 1= lowest & 5= highest)

.....

5(b) If score between 1-3, select the reason(s) below [You may tick multiple boxes]

Political pressure  Editorial/internal pressure  Media owner's interference  Govt. interference  Other (specify).....

6(a) Do you think that the existing laws/rules/regulations etc. ensure your freedom to address public sector corruption effectively?

Yes  No  Not sure

6(b) If no, which of the following you are most unhappy with? [You may tick multiple boxes]

Criminal Defamation (Under the Penal Code of 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1898)  The Emergency Powers Rules of 2007 and the Anti-Corruption Campaign  The Special Powers Act of 1974  The Contempt of Court Ordinance 2008  Don't know  Others (specify).....

7(a) Have you ever been a subject of judicial action or your official disciplinary action or any other harassment/assault/oppression?

Yes  No

7(b) If yes, please mention what sorts of?

By politician  By law enforcing agencies  By terror (Mastan)  By your official management  By Press Council  Other (Specify).....

8(a) Do you think journalists have sufficient safeguards to protect themselves from undue pressure / oppression/ harassment/assault in preparing investigative report on corruption?

Yes No

8(b) If no, to what extent you are safe for investigative reporting on public sector corruption?  
(Give a score between 1 to 5, where 1= lowest & 5= highest)

.....

9. Do you think impunity in crimes against journalists is a serious threat for media to combat public sector corruption?

Yes No

8 (a) How difficult it is to access government information especially on corruption cases?

Very difficult					not difficult
1	2	3	4	5	

8(b) Do the ‘whistle blowers’ within public service provide enough information about public sector corruption?

Yes No

8(c) What other sources do you use to collect corruption related information? Please mention

.....  
.....

9. What kinds of difficulty you face to access government information especially on corruption cases?

Laws & regulations  Culture of secrecy  Reluctant to voluntary disclosure  Personal involvement in corruption  Insufficient pressure from demand side  Other (specify).....

10(a) Do you think that the existing relationship between media and public bureaucracy is favorable to ease public sector corruption?

Yes  No

10(b) If no, what is (are) the reason(s)?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11(a) What is your personal opinion about the overall standard of professionalism and ethics of journalists?

	Low			High	
	1	2	3	4	5
Professionalism					
Ethical standard					

11 (b). If score between 1-2, give the reason(s).

Professionalism:.....  
 .....  
 .....

Ethical standard:.....  
 .....  
 .....

12. Do you have any written official rules/regulation/code of conduct?

Yes  No

13. Do you think that there is an un-holy nexus between a group of journalists and corrupt public officials/ politicians?

Yes  No

14. ‘Corruption has engulfed the media like other corrupt institutions of the country’. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Highly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Highly Disagree

15. Many journalists/media pursue their own agenda rather than the national interest in terms of corruption reporting.

Highly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Highly Disagree

16. How to hold media accountable?

Formulating new policy/code of conduct  Adequate training  Enhancing ethical & professional standard  Activate Press Council  Resisting the infusion of non-professional in media sector  Self-regulation  Others (specify).....

17(a) Are you satisfied with the overall performance and impact of media in combating public sector corruption?

Highly satisfied  Satisfied  Neutral  Dissatisfied  Highly Dissatisfied

17 (b) If dissatisfied, what is the reason?

.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for your cooperation.

## Appendix VIII

### Role of media in combating public sector corruption in Bangladesh

#### Questionnaire (General)

[Dear respondent, this questionnaire has been designed in order to collect data for academic research only and strict confidentiality about your identity will be maintained. Your sincere cooperation will add countless value to the research.]

Name (optional).....  
Profession.....  
Education.....

1(a) What are the visible/tangible impact(s) of media reporting on public sector corruption in Bangladesh? Please mark below that all apply

Launching of investigation  Departmental proceedings  Judicial proceedings  Scrapping of a law or policy  No visible impact  Not sure  Other (specify).....

1(b) What are the invisible/intangible impact(s) of media reporting on public sector corruption Bangladesh? Please mark all that apply.

Awareness  Sense of transparency  Sense of accountability  Education  Empowerment  No invisible impact  Not sure  other (specify).....

2. How frequently do you think media deliver report on corruption in Bangladesh? [Please tick the appropriate box]

Always  Most often  Often  Seldom  Never

3(a) What are the natures of reporting you find currently Bangladesh media usually apply while addressing corruption? [You may tick multiple boxes]

Investigative  Awareness building  Educational  Agenda setting (creating arena for debate or discussion)  Impartial  Follow-up reporting  Other (specify).....

3(b) Evaluate the standard of media reporting on public sector corruption.

Very low					very high
1	2	3	4	5	

4(a) How much freedom have media in dealing with political corruption? (Give a score between 1 to 5, where 1= lowest & 5= highest) .....

4(b) If score between 1-3, select the reason(s) below [You may tick multiple boxes]

Political pressure  Editorial/internal pressure  Media owner's interference  Govt. interference  Other (specify).....

5(a) How much freedom have media in addressing bureaucratic corruption? (Give a score between 1 to 5, where 1= lowest & 5= highest) .....

5(b) If score between 1-3, select the reason(s) below [You may tick multiple boxes]

Political pressure  Editorial/internal pressure  Media owner's interference  Govt. interference  Other (specify).....

6(a) Do you think journalists have sufficient safeguards to protect themselves from undue pressure / oppression/ harassment/assault in preparing investigative report on corruption?

Yes No

6(b) If no, to what extent they are safe for investigative reporting on corruption? (Give a score between 1 to 5, where 1= lowest & 5= highest) .....

7. Do you think impunity in crimes against journalists is a serious threat for media to combat corruption?

Yes No

8. Do you think that the media related existing laws/rules/regulations etc. ensure media freedom to address public sector corruption effectively?

Yes  No  Not sure

9(a) How difficult it is to access government information especially on corruption cases?

Very difficult					not difficult
1	2	3	4	5	

9(b) What kinds of difficulty media usually face to access government information on corruption cases?

Laws & regulations  Culture of secrecy  Reluctant to voluntary disclosure  Personal involvement in corruption  Insufficient pressure from demand side  Not sure  Other (specify).....

10(a) What is your personal opinion about the professionalism and ethical standard of journalists?

	Low				High
	1	2	3	4	5
Professionalism					
Ethical standard					

10(b) If score between 1-2, give the reason(s).

Professionalism:.....  
.....

Ethical standard:.....  
.....  
.....

11 “Journalists who coverage corruption accept money from the source of corruption.” Give your opinion about this statement below.

All journalist  Many journalist  Some journalist  Very few journalist  None of them

12. ‘Corruption within the media stands as a barrier to fight public sector corruption’. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Highly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Highly Disagree

13. Evaluate your trust level on journalists for objectivity of news regarding public sector corruption. (Give a score between 1 to 5, where 1= lowest & 5= highest)

.....

14. Many journalists pursue their own agenda rather than the national interest in terms of corruption reporting.

Highly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Highly Disagree

15. How to ensure media accountability?

Formulating new policy/code of conduct  Self-regulation  Adequate professional & ethical training  Activate Press Council  Resisting the infusion of non-professional in media sector  Others (specify).....

16(a) Do you think that the existing relationship between media and public bureaucracy is favorable to ease public sector corruption?

Yes  No

16(b) If no, what is (are) the reason(s)?

.....  
.....  
.....

17(a) Are you satisfied with the overall performance and impact of media in combating public sector corruption?



Highly satisfied  Satisfied  Neutral  Dissatisfied  Highly Dissatisfied

17(b) If dissatisfied, what is the reason?

.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for your cooperation

# Appendix IX

## Interview Checklist

1. Concept of public sector corruption

2. Media's role and impact on corruption

3. Media freedom:

- Constitutional provision: Article 39(1) & Article 39(2)
- Laws affecting media freedom
- Actors and factors restrict freedom of media
- Journalist safety & impunity

4. Media access to information:

- Laws regulations: The Right to Information Act; Official Secrets Act 1923; the Rules of Business 1996; and the Government Servants (Conduct) Rules of 1979, The draft broadcasting policy 2011.
- Whistle blowing
- Relationship of media and bureaucracy

5. Media accountability & credibility:

Professionalism and ethics, code of conducts, Press Council, Corruption within the media, impartiality, public trust, self-regulation.

6. Self-censorship

7. Satisfaction on media's role/impact