

## **The Contemporaneous Coverage of War News: A Study on Liberation War News of Bangladesh**

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### **Abstract:**

This study is intended to find out the basic nature of war news in the present days' print media coverage. The focus of the study is to find out the contemporaneous nature and coverage of liberation war news in Bangladesh after almost 50 years of that incident. This study analyzed The Daily Star and Prothom Alo newspaper coverage of the liberation war story of Bangladesh. This study sought to achieve the basic storytelling nature of the liberation war news. The study applied the content analysis method of 124 copies of The Daily Star and Prothom Alo newspapers over a period of the months of March and December in 2018. Newspaper contents have been selected purposively from which the relevant articles were extracted. The findings indicate that the highest focusing news is the soft news type, and the mostly used structure is narrative structure. It also found most of the news subject is on political personalities, and single-column news treatment has been published most. Documentis being used as the source of most of the news. Besides a little portion of findings highlighted the use of picture color, source and the theme, etc. The newspapers are not highlighting the deeds of martyrs and freedom fighters in the present day's news coverage. Now they are mostly emphasized on the political personalities' achievement. This study recommends that newspapers should publish more news and editorials on freedom fighters and the coverage should be enhanced.

**Key Word:**News coverage; News nature; War News.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The mass media played a vital role in the liberation war of Bangladesh. All kinds of media publish and broadcast news, programs and special event in every year with the remembrance of the liberation war of Bangladesh. The media is continuing its role since 1971. In this paper, the contemporaneous coverage of liberation war news on print media has been reflected.

Print media is one of the most popular and efficient forms of mass communication. It plays an important role in transforming and educating the society.

With more in-depth news and analysis, print media influences and shapes the perception of readers. It has the benefit of creating a longer influence on the minds of the reader, with more in-depth coverage and investigation (Roba, 2012).

The print media of Bangladesh have a good reputation for reflecting the history through its' news coverage. On March 26, the liberation war of Bangladesh has been declared and the final victory is achieved on 16<sup>th</sup> December. So, all the print media of Bangladesh is providing special treatment on this issue in these two months. This historical news content is getting coverage every year. Wilber Schramm (1949) elicited that, news exists in the mind of men. It is not an event; it is something perceived after the event. It is not identical with the event; it is an attempt to reconstruct the essential framework of the event- essential being defined against a frame of reference which is calculated to make the event meaningful to the reader.

This paper investigates the nature of war news coverage in newspapers. It also analyzes the representation of liberation war news in the present context.

#### **I A. Aim and Objectives of the Study**

Finding out the liberation war news coverage and nature in today's print media is the main aim and objective of this research work. Besides, some secondary objectives have also been aimed while conducting this research. These objectives are:

- Finding out the structure of this new type of coverage
- Finding out the use of the current news sources for presenting the war news
- Finding out the present special treatment for war news

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Every news published in the newspaper has its own specific nature. The nature of the news can be identified by some features like the genre or type and mode of the news, which structure the story follows, what are the elements of the news, what kind of sources have been used in the story and if any pictures have been used then what's the source of that picture etc.

Newspapers use quite a number of cues of relevance, such as the ordering of the articles in the paper as a whole and on every page, as well as font size colors, pictures, and so forth. These cues may stimulate attention for information one had not initially been searching for (Garcia & Stark, 1991).

The commercialization of news is seen as an important explanation for the personalization of political news (Langer, 2007). Personalizing and simplifying news are ways to make it more attractive to a large audience, and focusing on readers does both (Dahlgren, 2000).

Oliur Rahman (2007) gathered in many different kinds of news types or genres and modes in his known Bangle book named "Shangbadikota Dharona O Koushol" (Concepts and Strategies of Journalism) in various standards. His given standards are as follows: on the purity of information that consists with objective and subjective news, on searching information deeply that consists with surface news and depth news, on overall flexibility that consists of hard news, soft news, scoop news and exclusive news, on proximity which consists with local news, national news and international news and on subjective standards which consists with political news, war news, crime news and many more.

Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge (1965) in their journal titled *The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers* discuss on how an issue be news and how media present that on their perspective. While news structure refers to the exact news writing formation that reporters follow while writing any news story. There are different types of news structures that reporters follow to write different kind of news.

Reporting also has some structures like *The Wall Street Journal* has its own invented structure named the wall street journal five box system.

Every event would not be news. It must be newsworthy. News gets some precious space and sometimes special treatment only because of its newsworthiness. Jason Mudd (2014) summarized ten elements that make a story newsworthy. The elements are as following: (i) Proximity (ii) Prominence (iii) Timeliness (iv) Oddity (v) Consequence (vi) Conflict (vii) Human Interest (viii) Extremes/Superlatives (ix) Scandal (x) Impact.

Dan Berkowitz and Douglas W Beach said, "Journalists usually learn about events and issues through news sources, and most of the information that journalists subsequently gather about those events and issues come from news sources." (Berkowitz & Beach, 1993)

In 2012 Sydney Public Relations Agency elucidated four ways how pictures enhance story as following: Images grab attention: If you include an image in a media release, article in a magazine, or blog post it will grab the reader's attention better than a block of text. This may lead to more people reading the article that accompanies the image. Images tell a story: Sometimes a picture is better at communicating a story than the written word. For example, a very emotional scene of a family that has just been reunited after a traumatic event may connect with a reader more than if the scene was only written. Images can convey a message quickly: People often skim through website articles without stopping to read the full article. A picture is a great way to convey your message quickly to an audience without them reading through a lot of text. Shareability: Images can be easily shared by other people, which mean your story will be seen by a larger audience. You could even link the image back to an article you want your target audience to read.

News on wars after a decade or century isn't different from other newsworthy events. It also has the news characteristics, nature and the other needed features of news. These are searching in this paper.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This research has been conducted with quantitative and qualitative approach. However, quantitative data with qualitative interpretation has been presented in the table. In the qualitative discussion, both deductive and inductive coding has been applied. Since the main aim of this research is to evaluate the coverage and nature of war news, content analysis method is applied. This paper analyzed the contents of two Bangladesh newspapers of March and December in 2018. To select these months, purposive sampling has been taken. In March, The declaration of independence of Bangladesh is announced and the final victory is achieved in December. Generally, the print media of Bangladesh gives special coverage in these two months. Two newspapers have been taken as a sample where a newspaper, Prothom Alo is from Bangla language, and another newspaper, The Daily Star is taken from English language cluster based on their circulation and readership.

**IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

News data have been figured out and analyzed with the proper illustration. The output of the data has been presented with qualitative discussion. About 87 newshave been analyzed on the liberation war of Bangladesh in two months (March and December) of 2018.

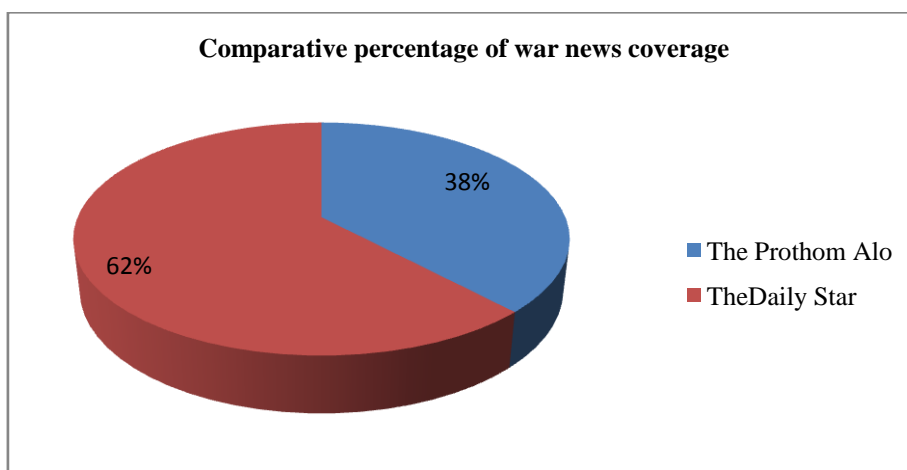
Analysis found that Today’snewspapers give much focus on political personalities rather than the freedom fighters. And the news sources mostly depend on documents. Witness and Freedom fighter have also not found as much as a storyteller or as a source of contemporaneous news coverage. Moreover, the English newspaper The Daily Star gives the better treatment in terms of large coverage than the Bangla language newspaper, Prothom Alo.

**IV A. Total News Size (column/inch) on Liberation War**

Table no1: In the 62 days of the month of March and December there are only 87 news has been covered where 1,410 column/inch news on the liberation war. The Daily Star coverage is larger than Prothom Alocoverage.

**Table no 1: Total News onLiberationWar**

Newspaper	War News Published (column/inch)	Percentage of Total War News (1410.5)
Prothom Alo	533	38%
The Daily Star	877	62%
Total	1410	100%



**IV B. Position of News (By Page and Folder)**

Table no 2: The position of the news indicates the importance of the news. Front page and back page coverage is considered more important to the readers than other pages. Table-02 propounds that, in total frequency war news doesn’t get much importance but in individual, The Daily Star published much on the front page.

**Table no 2: Position of News by Page**

Pages	Total Frequeency	Coverage Percentage	Prothom Alo	The Daily Star
Front	37	42%	11(13%)	26(30%)
Inside	42	48%	26(30%)	16(18%)

Back	8	10%	1(1%)	7(8%)
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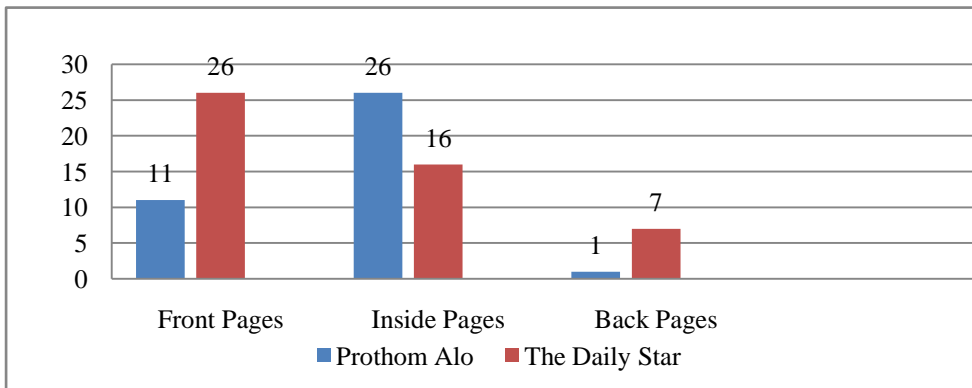
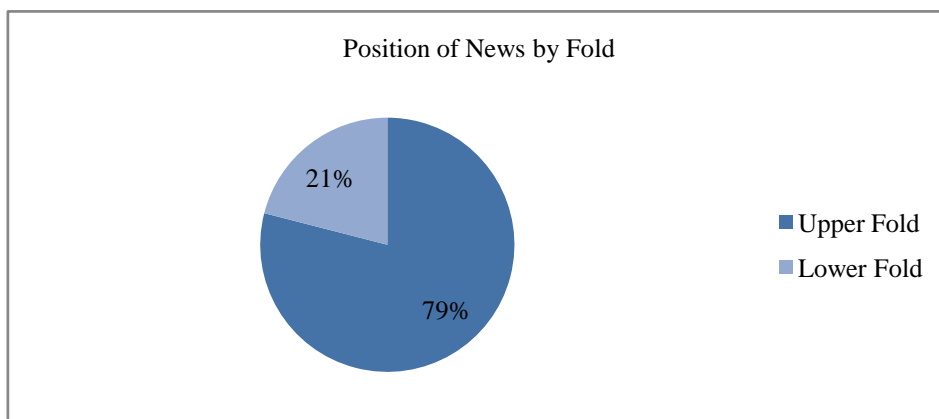


Table no 3: The position of folders of the newspapers carries the importance of reports. The reports that are published in the upper folders have much more importance than the lower folder news. Table-03 indicates that by the yardstick of folder newspapers give importance to this type of news by publishing in the upper folder. It has a total of 79% of the news in the upper folder.

**Table no 3: Position of News by Fold**

Fold	Total Frequency	Coverage Percentage	Prothom Alo	The Daily Star
Upper Fold	69	79%	35 (40%)	34 (39%)
Lower Fold	18	21%	3 (3%)	15 (17%)



#### IV C. Subjects of News

Table no 4: News on the war has several personalities. In almost all news the story of political personalities and martyrs flourished. And also, the good wishers (Foreign ambassadors, journalists, singers etc) of the liberation war has got a remarkable place in Prothom Alo to be a news subject on this kind of news. In Table-04 the frequency and percentage of the personalities used in war news has shown:

**Table no 4: Number and Percentage of News Subjects**

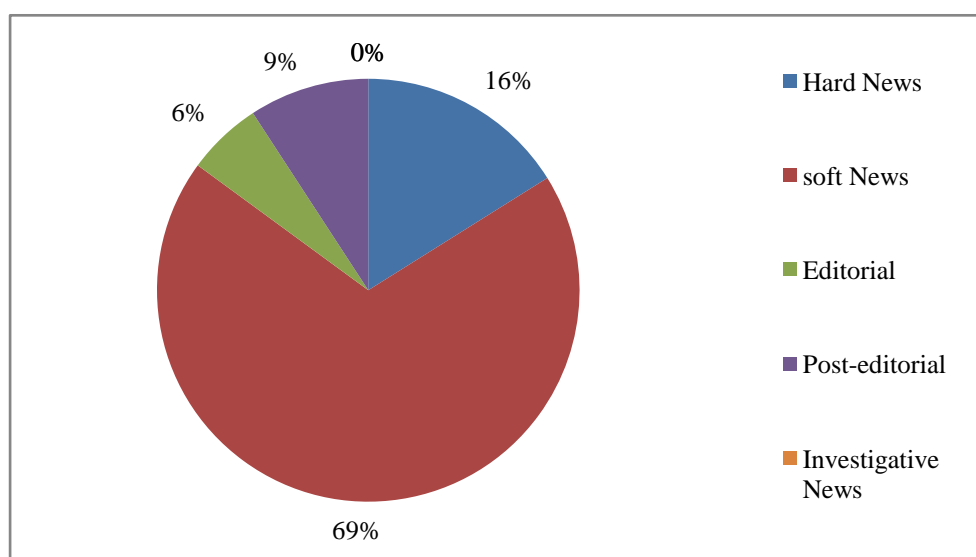
Newspapers	Martyrs	Freedom fighters	Political Personalities	Good Wishers
Prothom Alo	11 (13%)	7 (8%)	6 (7%)	16 (18%)
The Daily Star	20 (23%)	9 (10%)	34 (39%)	0 (0%)

**IV D. Types of Contents**

Table no 5: shows that most of the news are soft news where no investigative news have been found. The coverage of editorial has not get the significant coverage.

**Table no 5: Types of Contents**

Newspapers	Hard News	Soft News	Editorial	Post-editorial	Investigative News
Prothom Alo	9 (10%)	23 (26%)	1 (1%)	5 (6%)	0 (0%)
The Daily Star	5 (6%)	37 (43%)	4 (5%)	3 (3%)	0 (0%)
Total	16%	69%	6%	9%	0%

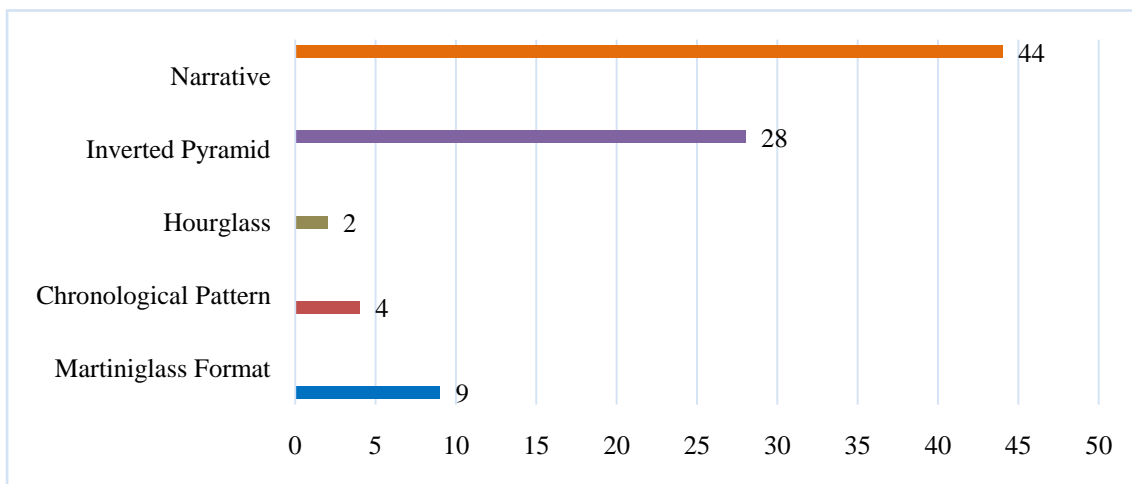


**IV E. Structures of News**

Table no 6: The narrative structure has been used mostly to cover war news in both newspapers. 44 news are in narrative structure of total 87 news on the war which covers more than 50% of total war news.

**Table no 6: Structures of News**

Newspapers	Narrative	Inverted Pyramid	Hourglass	Chronological Pattern	Martini glass Format
Prothom Alo	16 (18%)	12 (14%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	7 (8%)
The Daily Star	28 (32%)	16 (18%)	0 (0%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)



**IV F. Type of Headlines**

Table no 7: Simple left touch headline has been mostly used and eye-catchy pyramid and inverted pyramid type totally been omitted in both newspapers. Though The Daily Star used some eye-catchy types of headlines but the Prothom Alo just used kicker.

**Table no 7: Types of Headlines in the Newspapers**

Newspapers	Left Touch	Hammer	Centered	Crossline	kicker	Reverse	Pyramid	Inverted Pyramid
Prothom Alo	32 (37%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
The Daily Star	36 (41%)	5 (6%)	4 (5%)	2 (2%)	1 (1%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

**IV G. News Credits**

Table no 8: Prothom Alo publishes most news crediting the reporter by name but most of the news of The Daily Star is by staff reporter and correspondent.

**Table no 8: News Credit in the Newspapers**

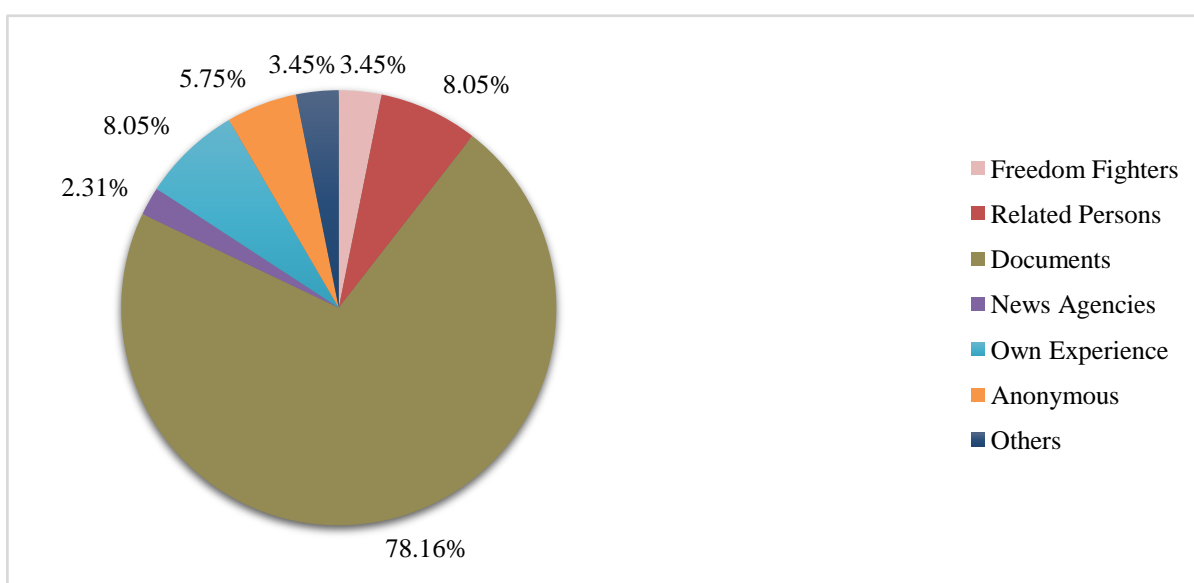
Newspapers	Byline	Dateline	Credit line
Prothom Alo	23 (26%)	15 (17%)	0 (0%)
The Daily Star	13 (15%)	33(38%)	3 (3%)

**IV H. News Sources**

Table no 9: This research finds that documents used most as the sources of war news. And news agencies had very few contributions.

**Table no 9: News Sources Used in the Newspapers**

Newspapers	Freedom Fighters	Related persons with Liberation war	Documents (books, research etc.)	News Agency	Own Experience / Memory Sharing	Anonymous	Others
Prothom Alo	0	6	29	1	1	3	2
The Daily Star	3	1	39	3	6	2	1



**IV I. News Treatment**

Table no 10: Research found that The Daily Star published single column news most besides all types of columns news including 17% news with pictures. Where Prothom Alo double-column news most including 37% news with picture.

**Table no 10: News Treatment in Each Newspaper**

Newspapers	Sing Column	Double Column	Three Column	Four Column	Banner	Box	Picture	Use of Logo
Prothom Alo	12 (14%)	20 (23%)	0 (0%)	4 (5%)	2 (2%)	0 (0%)	32 (37%)	17 (20%)
The Daily Star	35 (40%)	3 (3%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	5 (6%)	2 (2%)	15 (17%)	28 (32%)

**IV J. Pictures Treatment**

Table no 11: Study found that Prothom Alo emphasized on color pictures and The Daily star on caption.

**Table no 11:** Pictures Treatment in Each Newspapers

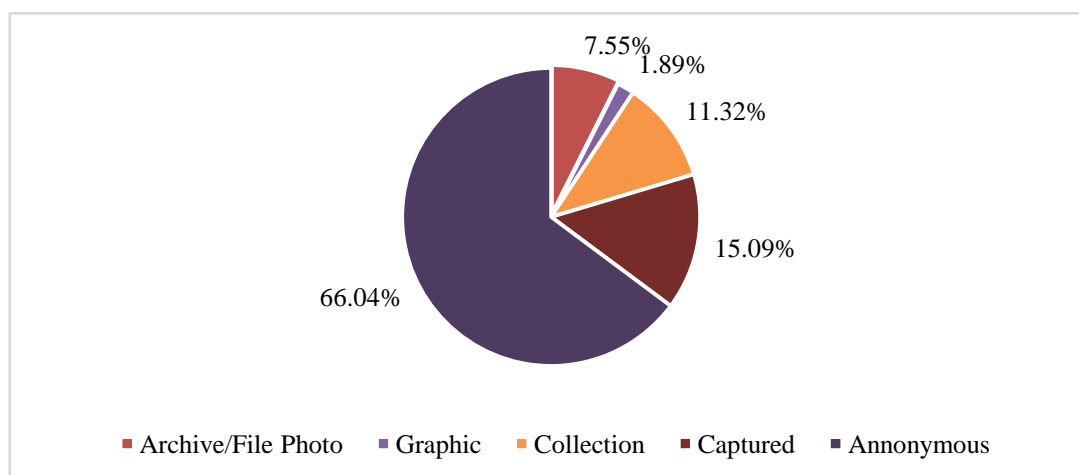
Newspapers	Color	Black and White	Caption	Without Caption
Prothom Alo	18 (34%)	14 (27%)	13 (25%)	19 (36%)
The Daily Star	9 (17%)	12 (23%)	14 (27%)	7 (13%)

**IV K. Sources of the Pictures**

Table no 12: Study found that sources of pictures are usually unknown/anonymous.

**Table no 12:** Sources of the Pictures in Each Newspaper

Newspapers	Archive/File Photo	Graphic	Collection	captured	Anonymous
The Daily Prothom Alo	1	1	1	5	29
The Daily Star	3	0	5	3	5



**IV L. Theme of the Pictures**

Table no 13 indicates that the theme of the pictures usually is a person. It has a total 34% publication percentage considering both.

**Table no 13:** Theme of the Pictures in Each Newspaper

Newspapers	Person	Savagery	Hope and Achievement	Protest and Bravery	Memory
Prothom Alo	13 (25%)	7 (13%)	0 (0%)	9 (17%)	0 (0%)
The Daily Star	5 (9%)	3 (6%)	3 (6%)	0 (0%)	4 (8%)



#### IV M. Theme of the Reports

Table no 14: This study found that both the newspapers mostly liked to have protest and bravery theme to cover this type of news.

**Table-14:** Theme of the Reports in Each Newspaper

Newspapers	Savagery	Protest and Bravery	History	Contribution	Achievement
Prothom Alo	12 (14%)	35 (40%)	13 (15%)	15 (17%)	3 (3%)
The Daily Star	23 (26%)	30 (34%)	12 (14%)	0 (0%)	11 (13%)

#### IV N. Nature of War News: Qualitative Discussion

In this segment, the nature of war news in present days' print media coverage is expounded in the qualitative method with inductive coding. The aim and objective of this study is to discern the pattern to cover wars by studying two months of news coverage of Prothom Alo and The Daily Star in 2018. The study examined the total coverage of this issue, type of the news, structure of the news, sources of the news, picture treatment, and subjects of the news that reflected in print media after 49 years of liberation war in Bangladesh. There are some basic codes that describe the nature of news as mentioned below:

**Triumph of political personalities:** Political personalities got much attention in most of the reports. The reports described bravery works did by the political leaders while the freedom fighters got less coverage.

**Dependent on a single structure:** Almost half of the reports have been written with narrative storytelling structure. But some other report structure has been absent which may bring the variety of news.

**Special Emphasis:** The study found that this type of news use special symbolic logo to get readers' attraction. Though most of the reports' headline is simple left touch and singled-column news but it manages to get enough attraction by using symbolic logos and pictures.

**Dependent on documents:** Study indicates that almost 80% of news was based on documents. Reports are being written based on that documents, and there are very few reports where sources are directly related persons of that issue.

### V. CONCLUSION

The contemporaneous news coverage of print media in Bangladesh is quite satisfactory. This event had happened almost 50 years ago. Media has been playing its role since 1971. But unfortunately true that it's a very rare case to find any news report without the national days. Though the duration of the study is the month of independence (March) and the month of victory (December), only 87 reports in 120 days have been found. Especially the highest circulated Bangla newspaper of Bangladesh, Prothom Alo provided poor coverage and less attention than the English daily, The Daily Star. However, this issue should have taken more treatment in front and back pages. Box news can be a standard coverage for this type of news to get more attention. Pictures take readers attraction most, so the use of pictures in this type of news must be increased. Using symbolic logo is a very effective idea when the relevant picture cannot be found. And the most important recommendation in terms of news ethics is that the sources of the pictures should be mentioned properly. The future generation of a country found their history from the contemporaneous news coverage. So the news coverage on the liberation war should get more attention for the betterment of the country.

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