

Presentation of Covid-19 News in Bangladeshi Media: Constructive Journalism Perspective

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Abstract

In the media system of Bangladesh, private ownership is mostly noticed. Analyzing the media scenario, it is seen that most of them are from the ruling party. Moreover, the second largest share belongs to the big business groups. Studies have identified most three common features of Bangladeshi media: firstly, the owners are involved with the ruling party; the second aspect is that a large part of the directors of these media are family members and the third issue is media conglomeration—one group is operating newspapers, radio and television channels. As a result, the media are failing to fulfill their moral responsibilities. Profit making has become the main concern which is conflicting with the basic principles of journalism. These media outlets are playing a role in enhancing the socio-political status of the owners and acting as a bulwark of other commercial interests. At the same time, successively clickbait journalism is increasing. Objective journalism is being sacrificed to report "news first". Irrelevant negativity is increasing in the headlines. As a result, the desirable constructive journalism practice is very limited or absent. The readers are confused and terrified by the negative news. Readers are losing confidence in news objectivity. However, the practice of constructive journalism has also been seen in a positive way as opposed to negative news. Traditional journalism has been seen in news coverage even in the crucial time of Covid-19. It is seen that some news was presented in a constructive way. Though it was insignificant in number, the study has attempted to provide a comparative analysis of the news coverage of mainstream online news portals in Bangladesh at a crucial time of Covid-19 (2020-2021). The study has also provided a comparative analysis of BBC News Bangla and Bangladeshi mainstream online news portal's news presentation on Covid-19's new variant Omicron.

Key words

Constructive Journalism, Covid-19, Bangladesh, Omicron, Traditional Journalism.

Introduction

A Short History of Bangladeshi Journalism: Journalism with modern features began in Europe in the eighteenth century. Although print journalism started in the subcontinent with the publication of *Hickey's Gazette* from Calcutta in 1780, the journey of Bengali journalism started in 1818 with the publication of *Bengal Gazette*, *Dikdarshan* and *Samachar Darpan*. The profession of journalism expanded at the beginning of the twentieth century. The First and Second World Wars, the partition of the country in 1947 and the rise of Dhaka as the capital of East Bengal played an important role in the spread of journalism.¹

Later, many changes happened in various paths. Newspapers have been associated with television, radio and film as mass media. New innovations in information technology have opened up new avenues in the media and journalism. Recent computer technology and the Internet have added a new dimension to journalism. Journalism has changed dramatically in the last two decades. Especially in the last two decades, with the proliferation of print and electronic media, there have been many changes in its size, content and style. Journalism, like any other profession, is now recognized as a profession. In a free market economy, like any other business, anyone can invest in this sector. We see that corporate organizations and large business groups have invested in the media sector. As a result, the profession is now being used as a medium for corporate commercial interests. Now no one is born a journalist like before,

one has to learn journalism according to the market demand. Journalism has now taken an institutional form. New forms of journalism are also being discussed and practiced. Although the practice of traditional journalism still remaining. Constructive journalism is also in competition line with Click Bait journalism. We have seen the practice of traditional journalism on Bangladeshi online portals during the recent Covid-19 Epidemic. However, along with this many portals have also practiced constructive journalism. This study will show a comparative analysis of the type of news coverage in the online news portals of Bangladesh during the situation of the covid-19 outbreak. Comparative analysis will also be done on the news presentation of the covid-19 new variant Omicron between *BBC News Bangla* and Bangladeshi online news portals.

Constructive journalism: Generally, people are accustomed to seeing negative news and this is a harsh truth in the context of Bangladesh. The basic functions of news are informing, educating, motivating.² Now corporate journalism has become a challenge to objective journalism. Constructive journalism is the exact opposite of this journalism.

In constructive journalism-

- The news is presented in a balanced way and news headlines are also balanced;
- This is a solution-based journalism;
- It involves the readers/audiences with the news;
- It applies problem solving methods as well as encourages solutions [It provides information so that people can form an option and find a solution.].

Constructive journalism is a very new concept in the context of Bangladesh.³

Covid-19: On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed the news of an unknown viral pneumonia disease in China's Wuhan Province. On January 6, 2020, Chinese authorities identified it as the cause of the novel coronavirus and temporarily renamed it "2019-nCoV". This is a new strain that has not been detected in humans before. On January 30, 2020, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director of WHO identified the outbreak as an international concern and declared it an alarm for public health. At that time there were 98 cases in 18 countries outside of China and there were no deaths till then. On March 11, 2020, as the number of outbreaks outside China continued to rise, the WHO director declared it an epidemic. The first case of the covid-19 disease in Bangladesh was reported on March 6, 2020, and the first death occurred on March 16, 2020, after originating from China's Wuhan Province.⁴

Objectives of the Study

At the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, the online news portals presented information to the public in various ways, and also have given health instructions to be vigilant during the Covid-19 outbreak. However, negativity has been noticed in the style of news presentations. Although some news portals have reported in a balanced way, they are few in number. People were more panicked in the Covid-19 situation; it was natural for people to be more panicked by seeing negative news on online news portals.⁵

In the same context, some news portals have given positive news and some news portals have given negative news. This study has shown a comparative analysis of both types of news presentations in mainstream online news portals. The specific objectives of the study were:

- ✓ To identify and compare the presentation of Covid-19 news within different mainstream online news portals;

- ✓ To analyze the general trends of news presentation—the negative way of news presentation and the balancing;
- ✓ To compare the Covid-19 new variant Omicron news presentation in *BBC News Bangla* and other mainstream online news portals of Bangladesh.

The study carried out a comparative analysis of a total of 16 Covid-19 news presented in different mainstream online news portals on the basis of Covid-19 infection or healing rate, vaccination, education situation, unemployability in the period of 2020-2021. It also has analyzed the trends of negativity and balancing in the presentation of studied news. The study has completed a comparative analysis of 5 Covid-19 variant Omicron news presented in *BBC News Bangla* and other mainstream online news portals of Bangladesh in January 2022.

Research Questions

The study was designed to find out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) Was the news presented in a constructive way or the news presented in a traditional way?
- 2) Did the audience benefit by being involved?

Hypothesis

Negativity in news presentation is a general trend in Bangladeshi media and it has a historical legacy. Due to having some orientations on balancing negativity in news and many more reasons, the news presentation is changing slowly from negativity to positivity, in other words, balancing with positive dimensions of a news story. But it is a long way to go, hence the study has been carried out by the following assumptions:

- 1) The amount of negative news in online news portals is high.
- 2) People were not benefited from the news as the audiences were not involved as the news has not been presented in a constructive way.

Methodology

In this study, a total of 21 news (18 news on Covid-19 issues and 5 news on Omicron) have been analyzed which has been published on the online news portals. A total of 7 news has been analyzed from the daily *Prothom Alo*, online news portal *Jagonews24.com*, the daily *Bhorer Kagoj* and the *BBC News Bangla* on the basis of Covid-19 infected/ heal rate, vaccination, education situation, unemployability etc. So, the study is qualitative in nature. The qualitative research method is a widely used method in social science research. This study has followed the content analysis methods for analyzing the selected news stories following the mentioned categories. It involved qualitative analysis rather than quantitative findings.

Literature Review

Paul Rozin and Edward B. Royzman have shown in their study titled 'Negativity Bias, Negativity Dominance and Contagion' that humans and animals are more prone to negativity, and it is assumed that humans and animals have a common bias. That is to give more importance to the negative entity like events, objects, personal features. It is expressed in 4 ways -(1) Negative energy where the negative entity is stronger than the equivalent positive entities (2) Negative gradients (the negativity of negative events increases faster than the positive of positive events) (3) Negative Dominance (negativity is assessed between a combination of negative and positive entities) and (4) Negative differences (Negative issues are more diverse, conceptual results are complexly presented and involve a larger population).

In a study emphasizing negative dominance, researchers suggest that one feature of negative events that makes them dominant is that the negative entity is more contagious than the positive entity.⁶

Liesbeth Hermans and Catherine Gyldensted have shown the classification of elements of constructive journalism on their article named 'Elements of Constructive Journalism: Characteristics, Practical Application and Audience Valuation'. They have written about constructive journalism. Constructive journalism, a new term of journalism includes behavioral sciences, a unique news type which gives positive vibes on news body. It is future oriented and involves public contribution. It has been researched that how people value these elements in the news. In the Netherlands this study had taken place where data were gathered from 3263 people. Their age limit was 20-65. Overall, a positive result has been seen in the results. Age, educational background and interest in news seem to play a role in this assessment. So constructive journalism is gradually finding its way in the practice of journalism! There are also indications that people value the news which includes structural elements. It has been shown that it is important to further develop in journalism sector and define the concept in the coming years.⁷

In recent times, constructive journalism has become a popular term and it is the basis of many seminars, conferences, courses in journalism school, fellowship programs and research projects. In the paper "Constructive Journalism Proponents, Precedents, and Principles", Peter Bro has described about constructive journalism. This research paper explores the origins of constructive journalism by describing and discussing its proponents, examples and principles. Research shows that constructive journalism is not a new term. Its underlying inherent principles in line with other well-known movements in the history of journalism. It includes action journalism, which became popular on the Atlantic coast in the early part of the last century, and public journalism, which emerged earlier this century. Differences and similarities between constructive journalism, past movements, and more classical concepts of journalism can be analyzed through the structure of the journalism compass which describes the four classical roles in journalism. This article describes the advantages and disadvantages of constructive journalism. Because many individuals and organizations still demand to practice constructive journalism and it describes how the proponents can learn from former journalism activities that have gained vogue for a time period but whose popularity has diminished.⁸

Content Analysis (Part-1)

In the crucial time of covid-19, online news portals have been covering news in accordance with the traditional rules of journalism where the practice of constructive journalism was not seen. But there were some exceptions. The

করোনাভাইরাস

করোনায় ২৩৫ জনের মৃত্যু, শনাক্ত ১৫ হাজারের বেশি

By নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক
August 03, 2021 at 5:09 PM



ঢাকা ও চট্টগ্রাম বিভাগেই সবচেয়ে বেশি মৃত্যু হচ্ছে

করোনাভাইরাস সংক্রমণে গত ২৪ ঘণ্টায় (সোমবার সকাল ৮টা থেকে আজ মঙ্গলবার সকাল ৮টা পর্যন্ত) দেশে আরও ২৩৫ জনের মৃত্যু হয়েছে। এ সময় নতুন রোগী শনাক্ত হয়েছে ১৫ হাজার ৭৭৬ জন।

আজ মঙ্গলবার বিকেলে স্বাস্থ্য অধিদপ্তরের সংবাদ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে এ তথ্য জানানো হয়েছে। আগের দিনের তুলনায় গত ২৪ ঘণ্টায় করোনায় মৃত্যু ও নতুন রোগী শনাক্ত দুটোই কিছুটা কমেছে।

study has compared traditional news and constructive news and used 21 news as samples for the years 2020 and 2021 and January 2022. This news has been selected based on Covid-19 infection/healing rate, vaccination, education situation, unemployability.

Content - 1.1.1

On August 3, 2021, a news was published in the online version of *Prothom Alo*. The headline was "235 killed in Corona, more than 15,000 identified."

According to the news intro, 235 more people have died in the country due to Covid-19. 15,776 new patients were identified. In contrast to the test, the patient identification rate is 29.91 percent. In other words, the rate of recovery has been suppressed by highlighting only identification and death. Naturally, this is not balanced news. People are less interested in this type of news. The constructive aspect was not brought up by shedding light on the completely negative issues. As a result, reader engagement cannot be noticed. The news highlights the issue of death across a graph which is extremely negative.⁹

Content - 1.1.2

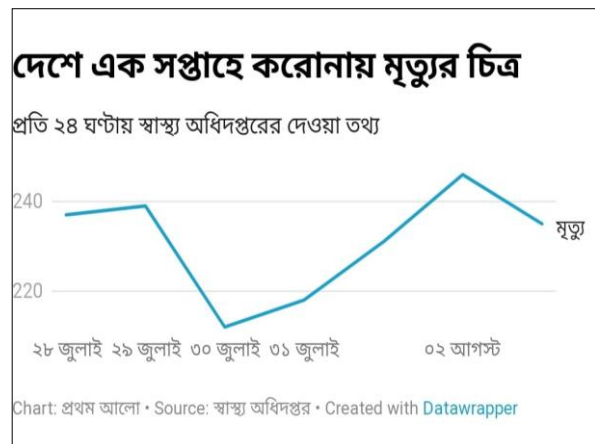
About a month apart, a news item was published in the online version of *Prothom Alo* on September 22 with the headline "98 out of 100 infected people are recovering".

The news is presented in a balanced structure. In the news intro, the number of 'recovering people' has been given priority. An essential element of constructive journalism is balancing which is present in this news. It is assumed that the people will feel sootiness at the news "98 out of every 100 infected people are recovering" and will be vocal to follow the hygiene rules. We can say that this type of news presentation is constructively made.¹⁰ Because the story had a look at the recovery rate and it didn't highlight only the death rate.

The following two news have given focus on recovery and death. In the first news, negativity is given prominence by mentioning the identification rate and death rate. This is the practice of the traditional form of journalism. On the other hand, the second news is positive and relates to the text which is constructive.

Content - 1.2.1

One of the most popular news portals, *Somoy News*, published a news on December 20, 2021, stating that "The death rate and identification rate due to Covid-19 have increased in the country." The whole news was full of fear and death. Nowhere the recovery rate was mentioned. Analyzing this news, it can be said that it is done in the traditional way of journalism. In this news, from the beginning to the end the negativity



করোনা আক্রান্ত ১০০ জনের মধ্যে ৯৮ জনই সুস্থ

সামছুর রহমান ঢাকা

প্রকাশ : ২২ সেপ্টেম্বর ২০২১, ২৩ : ২৪

দেশে করোনা রোগী শনাক্তের হার কমছে | ফাইল ছবি : প্রথম আলো

দেশে করোনা রোগীদের সুস্থ হওয়ার হার বাড়ছে। বর্তমানে দেশে প্রতি ১০০ জন আক্রান্তের মধ্যে প্রায় ৯৮ জনই সুস্থ হয়েছেন। অন্যদিকে দৈনিক শনাক্তের চেয়ে সুস্থ রোগীর সংখ্যা বেশি হওয়ায় চিকিৎসাধীন রোগীর সংখ্যাও কমে এসেছে।

is predominant. Reader involvement cannot be noticed here because the readers cannot involve themselves in such news.¹¹

Content –1.2.2

On August 21, 2021, a news item was published on the *Somoy News* online portal. The headline was "Identification rate and death rate have decreased in Bangladesh".



Since the advent of Covid-19 in Bangladesh in 2020, there has been panic in the minds of the people. The reader turned away from the news. There was a lack of public news. Thanks to the old style of news, constructive journalism is slowly taking place, which engages the masses. In this news, positivity has been given priority. In the previous news, we have seen that death identification has been highlighted. This creates panic and confusion in the mind of the readers. The readers will be satisfied after reading the 2nd news headline as it gives a comforting message which is involving the reader with the news. Although the numbers of identification and death rates have also risen in the news, the recovery rate has also been given priority which is higher than the detection and death rate.¹²

Content –1.3.1

A report was published on *banglanews24.com* on August 9, 2020. The headline was "The death rate in Lower Court 0.57 % ". The intro said that in the lower court, the recovery rate was 8 percent, and the death rate was 0.56 percent which is 6.5 percent more than the national recovery rate and 0.75 percent less than the national death rate.

The intro shows a higher recovery rate and lower death rate. Despite this, the headline of the news has given priority to death which is negative.¹³

অধস্তন আদালতে করোনায়
মৃত্যুহার ০.৫৭ শতাংশ
স্টাফ করেসপন্ডেন্ট
আপডেট: ১৫৫৬ ঘণ্টা, আগস্ট ৯, ২০২০

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গুরুত্বপূর্ণ
আত্মবিশ্বাস

টিভির প্যানেলে

WALTON

ঢাকা: অধস্তন আদালতে করোনা শনাক্ত বিবেচনায় সুস্থতার হার ৬৬ শতাংশ এবং মৃত্যুর হার শূন্য দশমিক ৫৭ শতাংশ। যা জাতীয় সুস্থতার হারের চেয়ে যথাক্রমে সাড়ে ৮ শতাংশ বেশি এবং জাতীয়

Content –1.3.2

On the other hand, a news was published in the same context of the portal *Banik Barta* on 9th August, which was titled "In the lower court 66% of Covid-19 infected are recovering".

This title is positive enough. Intro to the news was '66% of the infected judges and officials of the lower court have been recovering, the recovery rate is 66% and the death rate is 0.56%. Which is 8.5% higher than the national recovery rate and 0.75 % lower than the national death rate respectively. Negativity was not given priority in the intro of the news, but positive news was given priority.¹⁴

Content-1.3.3

Similarly, the same issue was reported in a positive manner in the online version of UNB on 9 August where we see a spontaneous news. The headline was "Corona recovery rate in the lower court is 66%, the mortality rate is 0.56%".¹⁵



Clearly, the headline highlights the recovery rate. In the news intro, the

Covid-19 detection rate in the lower courts was 66% and the death rate was 0.56%, which is 8% higher than the national recovery rate and 0.75% lower than the national death rate, respectively. The news is positive enough.

Since the Covid-19 vaccines have been invented, various reactions have been coming from different countries. People were apprehensive about the first vaccine, although researchers have been saying that vaccination can prevent the virus. Twenty-three people have died since the vaccination campaign began in Norway.

Although there is no clear evidence that the death was caused by vaccination, various news portals reported it negatively. Such news was enough to create panic in the minds of the people.

Content -1.4.1

On January 16, 2021, the Bangla Tribune published the report "23 people die after being vaccinated by Pfizer in Norway".

The intro was, at least 23 people have died in Norway after being vaccinated against the Covid-19 invented by Pfizer which was reported by Bloomberg, quoted as the country's authorities saying. Thirteen people died in the hospital. Side effects have been observed in their body immediately after vaccination.¹⁶



অধস্তন আদালতের করোনা আক্রান্ত বিচারক ও কর্মকর্তা-কর্মচারীদের মধ্যে ৬৬ শতাংশই সুস্থতা লাভ করেছেন বলে জানিয়েছে আইন, বিচার ও সংসদ বিষয়ক মন্ত্রণালয়। আজ রোববার মন্ত্রণালয়ের এক সংবাদ বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বলা হয়, অধস্তন আদালতে করোনা শনাক্তের বিবেচনায় সুস্থতার হার ৬৬ শতাংশ এবং মৃত্যুর হার শতাংশ



Content –1.4.2

A report on the vaccine was published in the Bengali version of Deutsche Welle on 13 February 2021 which has been done in a sufficiently constructive way. The headline of the news was "Fact check: Are people dying after Covid-19 vaccination?"

Where there is enough material to connect the reader. The news has emphasized the fact of fact-checking. The news agency has verified the fact check in the case of death after vaccination in Norway. The Norwegian Medicines Agency is investigating 33 deaths at a Norwegian nursing home as of January 28 after the vaccination. According to them, those who are vaccinated, many of them were seriously ill. An average of 45 people died every day in Norwegian nursing homes and similar institutions. Therefore, the number of deaths at the time of vaccination is not unusual. Ticker has nothing to do with it. (In addition, in many other countries, accurate information has been given by checking the facts subject to an investigation into the deaths due to vaccination. This is constructive news.¹⁷



Content –1.5.1

There was seen a lot of negative news about vaccines in Bangladesh. Normal deaths are reported along with vaccinations which created panic among the people.

On November 9, 2021, the online version of Kaler Kantho published a report entitled "One died 10 minutes after taking vaccine". According to the intro, a man named Deen Islam died 10 minutes after getting the Covid-19 vaccine at the Ganatika center in Dhamrai upazila of Dhaka. This has created confusion in the minds of the readers and created doubts about the vaccine. Doctors later said the man was suffering from various diseases including heart disease and diabetes. However, he said that he did not die due

to vaccination. It has become clear in this news that the news has misled the reader with a negative headline.¹⁸

Content –1.5.2

In the same context, Dhaka Times reports which can be said to be relatively constructive. Just because a heart patient has died from a vaccine does not mean that he has died from the vaccine. Heart patients can die at any time.

The headline was "Heart patient died after taking vaccine."¹⁹



Content –1.6.1

In the Covid-19 situation, people mostly have suffered economically. Unemployment has increased speedily. However, many unemployed youths have gained self-reliance through online platforms. Many housewives have found success in online businesses sitting at home. However, several mainstream online news portals have raised the issue in a negative way. On June 25, 2020, the online version of *Prothom Alo* published "Unemployment has increased, many sources of income have been completely cut off"

According to the intro, due to covid-19, people's income has decreased, and unemployment has increased. Lower class people have suffered more. There are many people whose sources of income have been completely cut off. This news has been made by emphasizing the negative side of Covid-19.²⁰

Content –1.6.2

It is true that unemployment has risen in the Covid-19 situation; many people have lost their jobs and become entrepreneurs successfully. On January 9, 2021, the online version of *Jugantar* published "They lost their jobs in Covid-19 situation and became successful entrepreneurs", meaning that the positive context has been highlighted without giving priority to negativity in Covid-19.

According to the intro, the epidemic has turned the whole world down. What no one could have imagined, has happened in the world in the last two years. Different countries have been peddled to give one lockdown after another



due to Covid-19. Bangladesh is no exception. The way of income of general people including various institutions, industries, educational institutions has been closed due to continuous lockdown. Many people have been unemployed. However, many have succeeded in the struggle in such a situation. They have turned over to get rid of the curse of unemployment, became an entrepreneur. They have shown the way of survival not only to themselves but also to others. How unemployed people have moved on as entrepreneurs. It has come up positively in the news. The news is constructive and engages the reader.²¹

Content –1.7.1

An unexpected change happened in the education system during Covid-19. All educational institutions including schools,

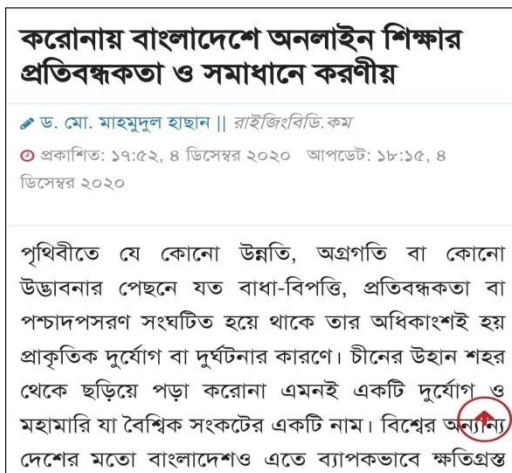


is also a burning issue. The news has been reported negatively on the educational institutions' progress where there were no constructive words or quotes. This type of news creates frustration in the minds of the people.²²

Content –1.7.2

There have been many negative reports about the collapse of the education system during the Covid-19 situation. We have seen such reports in the online version every day. However, in a constructive way, the positive report is not very noticeable. On 28 March 2020, *Prothom Alo* reported on how the study can continue even in the crucial situation of Covid-19, highlighting how can be reduced the loss of education system. It can be said that the report is giving positive vibe, engages the readers.

This news item has presented how to ensure the education system in Covid-19 as a means of



colleges and universities were declared closed. Millions of students were placed under convicted in their houses. Online teaching has begun. The negativity of online education has been talked about. Some news was published in the online version of *Samakal* on 23 May 2021. The headline was "Inquietude education system in Corona; Four and a half crore students, 50 lakh teachers are in misery".

It is said that the education system of the country has been ruined due to Covid-19. All the educational institutions in the country have been closed almost for 18 months. About four and a half crore students and 5 million teachers from primary level to higher education level are the victims of extreme loss.

The infrastructural damage of the educational institutions which have been closed for a long time



describing different ways step by step. This news soothes the mind of the reader; so it can be said to be structural.²³

Content –1.7.3

Another similar story is seen on *Risingbd*, an online news portal. The news was published on December 4, 2020, and the headline was "Obstacles to online education in Bangladesh and what needs to be done to solve them". So, this can be called constructive news.²⁴

Content Analysis (Part-2)

Omicron news presentation in BBC News Bangla in comparison with other mainstream online news portals of Bangladesh in January 2022

Bangladeshi online news portals have been publishing a lot of news since the new variant of Covid-19 Omicron came up for discussion. Most of which were not presented in a balanced way. Most of the news frightened the readers. Though omicron is not as deadly as delta, most of the news portals did not highlight this. Omicron was first identified in South Africa. Since then, the virus has spread rapidly to at least 25 countries. As a result, there has been panic all over the world. Meanwhile, the WHO has issued a worldwide warning about the variant.²⁵

Content-2.1.1

A report was published on omicron on the online portal of *Prothom Alo* on 24 January 2022 where the headline was –'The detection rate is above 32%, new patients 14828'. According to the intro, in the last 24 hours (from 8 am on Sunday to 8 am on Monday) 45,807 samples were tested. Among these, 14,828 people tested positive. The identification rate is 32.38%

শনাক্তের হার ৩২ শতাংশের ওপরে,
নতুন রোগী ১৪৮২৮

By নিজস্ব প্রতিবেদক
January 24, 2022 at 5:05 PM

করোনা মৃত্যু

দেশে এক দিনে নমুনা পরীক্ষার বিপরীতে রোগী শনাক্তের হার ৩২ শতাংশের ওপরে উঠেছে। সর্বশেষ ২৪ ঘণ্টায় (গতকাল রোববার সকাল ৮টা থেকে আজ সোমবার সকাল ৮টা) ৪৫ হাজার ৮০৭ জনের নমুনা পরীক্ষা করা হয়। এর মধ্যে ১৪ হাজার ৮২৮ জনের দেহে সংক্রমণ শনাক্ত হয়। পরীক্ষার বিপরীতে রোগী শনাক্তের হার ৩২ দশমিক ৩৭ শতাংশ।

করোনা শনাক্তের হার ৩২.৩৭ শতাংশ

সোমবার, ২৪ জানুয়ারি ২০২২

করোনাভাইরাসের নতুন ধরন ওমিক্রনের প্রভাবে দেশে সংক্রমণ বেড়েই চলেছে। গত ২৪ ঘণ্টায় ১৪ হাজার ৮২৮ জনের করোনা শনাক্ত হয়েছে। আর এই সময়ে শনাক্তের হার ৩২ দশমিক ৩৭ শতাংশ।

It was said in the news body that the new type of Covid-19 variant has spread in the country. This type of Covid-19 spreads very quickly. The number of new Covid-19 patients has been increasing in the country within several weeks.

The negative effects of omicron are highlighted throughout the story.

Although the effects of omicron are not very negative, the rate of infection is predominant. This was

completely a traditional news format.²⁶

Content-2.1.2

On the same day, the online version of *Jagonews24.com* reported that the Covid-19 detection rate was 32.38%. In the introduction, it has been said that the new type of Covid-19, omicron infection is increasing throughout

প্রথম আলো

ইউরোপ

বিশ্ব স্বাস্থ্য সংস্থার সতর্কতা
অমিক্রন এখনো দ্রুত ছড়াচ্ছে

প্রথম আলো ডেস্ক

প্রকাশ : ১১ জানুয়ারি ২০২২, ২৩ : ৫৮

ফেসবুক টুইট লিংক অ+ অ- ব্লক

করোনা শনাক্তের হার ৩২.৩৭ শতাংশ

the country. In the last 24 hours, 14,828 people have been identified. At this time the detection rate is 32.38% whereas similarly to the first news, negativity prevails.²⁷

Content-2.2.1

On 11 January 2022, *Prothom Alo* online portal published a report titled 'Omicron is still spreading fast' where concerns about Omicron have been expressed.²⁸



Content-2.2.2

On 18 January 2022, a report was published on the *Bhorer Kagoj* online portal, '22 more omicron patients in the country, identification increased to 55'. The report mentioned that 22 people from Dhaka are infected with the omicron variant. The news was presenting omicron as a panic issue.²⁹

Analyzing some of the omicron news of the online portals of Bangladesh, it can be said that most of the news was filled with negative words. The news has

been published more with the predominance of identification and infection

rate. So these are not constructive, but conventional.

On the other hand, analyzing the news of *BBC News Bangla*, we can say that omicron news has been presented positively where the reader can also be involved.



Content-2.3

Some news was published on *BBC News Bangla* on 18 January 2022 titled 'Corona Virus: Is Covid epidemic ending with omicron variant? Is the last stage now?'

The words in the headline are positively sorted. In the news it is said that scientists are talking about the hope, maybe very soon the epidemic will end. Many of them think that the Covid-19 variant is under a lot of pressure and as a result, it is getting weaker day by day. Vaccination has also strengthened the human body's immune system. Analyzing all these things, the report assumed that the epidemic has begun to come to an end. Undoubtedly such news gives relief to the reader and involves them to the news.³⁰



Content–2.4

A report on omicron was published in *BBC News Bangla* on 23 January 2022 with the headline, 'Covid: How do you know if you have been infected with omicron?' What a wonderful way to connect people with one question! The report makes a video about the type of omicron which has enough material to engage the reader.³¹ This news can be called constructive.

Content–2.5

A report was published on *BBC News Bangla* on 19 January 2022, "Corona Virus: Is Bangladesh towards herd immunity?" This headline is analytical because the report said that herd immunity is the only hope when the effect of omicron is not stoppable. Explanations have been analyzed at various points. Such news is quite positive and constructive in nature.³²

Findings

In Part-1 the contents from several mainstream online news portals in Bangladesh have been analyzed. Some of the news that has been done during the Covid-19 situation of 2020 and 2021 has been analyzed in part 1. Analyzing the contents of the news, it is seen that there has been a lot of negative structured news during Covid-19. People were confused in Covid-19 situation; this negative news made people more confused. Almost all the news portals have served the news in the traditional way of journalism. Besides, there was no material in the news to engage the reader.

But there has been some positive news in between where some elements were presented to engage the reader. By analyzing the news contents 1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.3.1, 1.4.1, 1.5.1, 1.6.1 and 1.7.1, we see that the news has been formed by giving priority to the negative subject. On the other hand, the news contents 1.1.2, 1.2.2, 1.3.2, 1.4.2, 1.5.2, 1.6.2, 1.7.2 and 1.7.3 are relatively constructive. A lot of touchy headlines have been made from the news information.

In Part 2, news presentation on Covid-19's new variant 'omicron' has been analyzed. Here each content has been taken from 4 Bangladeshi online news portals and 3 from *BBC News Bangla*. News on the issue has been circulating since the beginning of the omicron effect. However, most of them were filled with negativity. It has been said that omicron is not as deadly as Delta.³³

Nevertheless, there have been a lot of negativities in the coverage of online news portals on omicron. In the case of the omicron news presentation in part 2, by analyzing the contents 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.1, 2.2.2, have found the traditional pattern of journalism. Such news on omicron really created a lot of panic in the minds of the people. On the other hand, examples of constructive journalism have been found by analyzing contents 2.3, 2.4, and 2.5 of *BBC News Bangla*. All the news has been presented in a very balanced way where the problems and solutions are addressed.

Recommendation

As a concept, constructive journalism is new in practicing journalism by Bangladeshi media. However, based on its features, it can be said that the practice of such journalism is much needed. Based on the above discussion, we recommend some steps can be taken in this regard:



- ✓ Some orientation training can be arranged for the journalists by academic institutions like universities or training institutions like the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB).
- ✓ Related training and orientations can be arranged for the media managers for selected media outlets from the national level to the district level.
- ✓ Constructive journalism practice can be rewarded by media houses as well as government institutions like the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB).
- ✓ International organizations like DW Akademie can arrange some fellowships for practicing journalists.

Limitations

This study was conducted using content analysis. A total of 21 news (18 news on Covid-19 issues and 5 news on the Omicron variant) have been analyzed from some mainstream Bangladeshi online news portals. The term constructive journalism is new to the media industry in this country. So, the lack of examples of constructive journalism was widespread. Moreover, no previous research has been conducted on Bangladeshi media content on constructive journalism. So, there is some insufficiency of the literature review.

Conclusion

During the Covid-19 outbreak, Bangladeshi online news portals have been publishing Covid-19 related news regularly. But analyzing the above news contents, it can be said that the constructive structure was missing. Relatively small numbers of news items have been made in a constructive way. The news content from *BBC News Bangla* can be said to be quite compared to that of traditional news content.

After the era of traditional journalism, the practice of various types of journalism is slowly starting. However, the new type of journalism is not fully practiced yet. Only in some cases do we see the different presentations of news. Constructive journalism is such a new type of journalism that is slowly evolving. In the era of clickbait journalism, constructive journalism is a challenge though the features of reader engagement, balance etc. Constructive journalism is gradually practicing. It will take its place in the news field one day.

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