Report on

The Internship Program at *Risingbd.com*

By

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An internship report submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial

fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts in English

Department of English and Humanities

Brac University

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Declaration

1. It is hereby declared that

2. The internship report submitted is my original work while completing degree at BRAC University.

3. The internship report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

4. The internship report does not contain material that has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The internship report that titled **The Internship Program at *Risingbd.com*** submitted by Shamera Siddique Toran ID:20103082 of Summer 2022 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

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Acknowledgement

In the name of Allah, the most gracious and the most merciful.

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Glossary

Journalistic Terminologies:

Audience: Audience refers to consumers who receive information or content from the media.

Byline: A byline is a line that contains the names of news writers.

Copy: a copy refers to any piece of writing intended to be published in print or online media.

Copy editing: Copy editing enhances readability and eliminates linguistic and factual errors in written content. Editors are responsible for editing copies to prepare them for publication.

Correspondent: A correspondent works as an on-the-scene reporter who collects and sends information to the news media office.

Editor: A news media or magazine editor edits and revises copies before publishing them. He or she oversees what information should be included in a copy as well as when a news piece is to be released. An editor tracks whether a news story adheres to the news value factors.

Follow-Up: Follow-ups are news stories that provide supplementary information regarding a story that has already been published or aired.

Libel: Libel refers to any misrepresentation of an individual or organisation on print or online media that may jeopardise that individual's or organisation's reputation.

Media Independence: news media such as a newspaper, television channel, radio station or online media are considered independent when it is not subject to external control or state influence.

Obituary: An obituary includes information about the demise of a person with a brief biography.

Propaganda: Propaganda is information disseminated deliberately via media to influence a target audience.

Chapter 1

Introduction

With the rise of the internet, traditional media in Bangladesh, such as print and broadcast, has had to evolve to keep pace with the global media landscape. Some leading Bangladeshi dailies and television networks such as *Prothom Alo, The Daily Star, The Daily Ittefaq, Channel i, NTV,* and *Somoy TV News* now publish online content on their news websites. According to a survey conducted by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) in July 2022, an estimated 126.21 million people accessed the internet; among them, around 115.07 million accessed the mobile internet in June 2022. An increasing number of consumers rely on the internet to facilitate their daily activities. Since the world is digitalised, the media, especially the internet, has become an integral part of today's era – particularly in the sphere of news exchange. Hence, news providers in Bangladesh have responded to the demand by airing the news through digital platforms, which has led to the need for credible online news sources.

One of the popular platforms for digital news media is news portals. A news portal is a website where news articles are posted for public consumption on the internet. Many news portals allow their audience to access content any time, from any location, free of charge, providing news consumers instantaneous, flexible access to a wide array of free information. The advantage of reading news online is that readers are updated with the most recent information as soon as it is available to journalists, especially the type known as 'breaking news'. In contrast to reading newspapers, which requires and is bound by timed outputs and inputs, news consumers of online portals need not wait until the following day to receive the latest news. Online portals also enable their audiences to interact with one another through commenting on, providing feedback and participating in real-time discussions.

Bangladesh inaugurated its first online news provider in 2006 called *Bdnews24.com* (*bdnews24.com*). Several emerging media outlets enter the Bangladeshi market annually, creating a dynamically evolving media landscape. So far, the nation is home to 45 licensed private television stations, 28 FM radio stations, 32 community radio stations, 1,248 daily newspapers and over 100 news portals (Assessment of the Media Sector in Bangladesh 10). Despite the availability of diverse media outlets in Bangladesh, I completed my internship at *Risingbd.com,* which is the fastest-growing Bangla-language news portal that also provides English content. I opted for an internship in news media because I believe journalism would broaden my worldview and enhance my understanding of current events around the globe. Moreover, choosing an online platform helped me follow through with my aim to acquire the essential professional skills required to thrive in the increasingly competitive market of digital information.

The internship experience at *Risingbd.com* allowed me to explore the Bangladeshi journalistic field, including translating and editing news reports. The theoretical knowledge I acquired during my undergraduate studies at BRAC University helped me carry out my professional responsibilities effectively. Journalism has always appeared challenging to me because, in a sense, journalists give voice to the voiceless. At the same time, journalism is adventurous because it enables different journalists to present the same news story through a variety of lenses. At the same time, I do not overlook the fact that the media can be a persuasive and manipulative tool due to its ability to influence journalists, news content and consumers. In brief, these concepts strengthened my desire to pursue my bachelor's degree in Media and Cultural Studies. My time at *Risingbd.com* gave me a better, more nuanced and critical understanding of how the news media operates in Bangladesh. This dissertation provides a detailed account of my internship experience at *Risingbd.com.*

Chapter 2

Overview of *Risingbd.com*

This chapter provides a brief overview of the emergence of *Risingbd.com* and its current operations. The chapter consists of six sub-sections.

2.1 Brief History

Figure: Logo of *Risingbd.com*

Risingbd.com is a free-to-access online news platform in Bangladesh that covers national and international news and breaking news in Bangla and English. It is the fastest-growing Bangla-language news portal. It was officially launched on April 26, 2013, and it received national recognition as an online news media platform from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Bangladesh in July 2020. The tagline of *Risingbd.com* is 'প্রতি মুহূর্তের খবর', which translates into English as 'The News of Every Moment'. The tagline succinctly describes the news portal's responsibility to keep its audience up-to-date on current events happening around them through timely coverage. The web link for this portal is www.risingbd.com. This online news portal covers a broad spectrum of news stories at home and abroad, as will be mentioned in detail in chapter 3 (see Section 3.2).

Risingbd.com is owned by Walton, a Bangladeshi conglomerate founded by SM Nazrul Islam in 2008. Walton Motors, Walton Micro-Tech Corporation and Walton

Electronics are subsidiaries of this multinational company. The head office of *Risingbd.com* is on the outskirts of the capital, Dhaka, in Mirpur. *Risingbd.com* maintains correspondents across the country.

2.2 Number of Employees

Risingbd.com has a total workforce of over 150 individuals, with approximately 140 working in Bangladesh. The number of desk employees is 55, while 85 are on-the-scene reporters. It also employs correspondents in seven countries: the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada, Spain, Slovenia, Japan and China.

2.3 Office Hours

Risingbd.com has a rotating shift schedule. The firm operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with work shifts split into three segments: morning (8 am to 3.30 pm), evening (3.30 pm to 11 pm) and night (11 pm to 8 am) shifts.

The employees have the freedom to switch shifts, thereby providing them with a flexible work schedule. This flexibility encourages employees from different shifts to interact and foster relationships with one another. The workload escalates as the day proceeds.

2.4 Awards

Rafiqul Islam Montu, a Coastal Investigative Journalist of *Risingbd.com* and the pioneer of Coastal Journalism in Bangladesh, received awards multiple times for his contributions to writing coastal news. He was honoured twice by the Bangladesh Press Institute (PIB) with the PIB-A1i Media Award in 2015 and 2018 for publishing a series of eight episodes titled 'Digital Coast' on *Risingbd.com*'s website. Additionally, he received the Best Reporting Award by Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) three times for publishing an eight-part documentary series on the fishermen of the coastal region of Bangladesh, an eight-episode

series detailing the threats to Bangladesh's coastline and a ten-episode series report on the potential of Bangladesh's coastal region in 2014, 2015 and 2017, respectively. He also received the Investigative Journalism Award 2021 by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) for his outstanding contributions to anti-corruption investigative reporting.

2.5 *Risingbd.com*: Strength

Risingbd.com has brand value due to its ownership by the Bangladeshi electronics giant, Walton. Apart from that, *Risingbd.com* has an impressive 8-year experience in digital journalism. The firm is regarded as being a credible, accountable and reliable news source. It has a reputation for its rapidity of delivery with reporting and publishing news on its website and associated social media. Due to these attributes, *Risingbd.com* was ranked among Bangladesh's top ten online news portals by Facebook Interaction Insights in July 2022.

2.6 *Risingbd.com*: Limitations

Risingbd.com has significant limitations, primarily due to its being a mid-size sub-branch of Walton. *Risingbd.com* is also relatively short-staffed compared to other news portals in the country. Hence, there is no special graphic design team to create and edit audio and visual content at *Risingbd.com.* That responsibility is delegated to the web management team. Moreover, the web management and the English news portal teams are visibly understaffed. The teams currently have fewer than six members. Consequently, a limited number of employees are constantly overburdened with meeting deadlines and challenges, which can sometimes be overwhelming. In my opinion, *Risingbd.com*'s low recruitment rate can be attributed to a number of factors, including its inability to attract qualified applicants for open positions, its preference for candidates with relevant experience over those with less relevant skills, and its inability to bear the high costs associated with hiring new employees.

It is worth mentioning that the organisation had a good number of employees before the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. However, the pandemic caused a drastic employee turnover because some employees felt unrecognised, while others faced commuting challenges, and some were dissatisfied with their pay.

Chapter 3

Organisational Structure

A well-defined organisational structure identifies and assigns the most qualified individuals to key roles essential for a company to meet its objectives. Without a framework, a firm will inevitably collapse under the weight of incompetent management and will fall far short of its true potential. In the case of *Risingbd.com*, its structure is fairly conventional. This section introduces *Risingbd.com*'s management structure.

3.1 Organogram
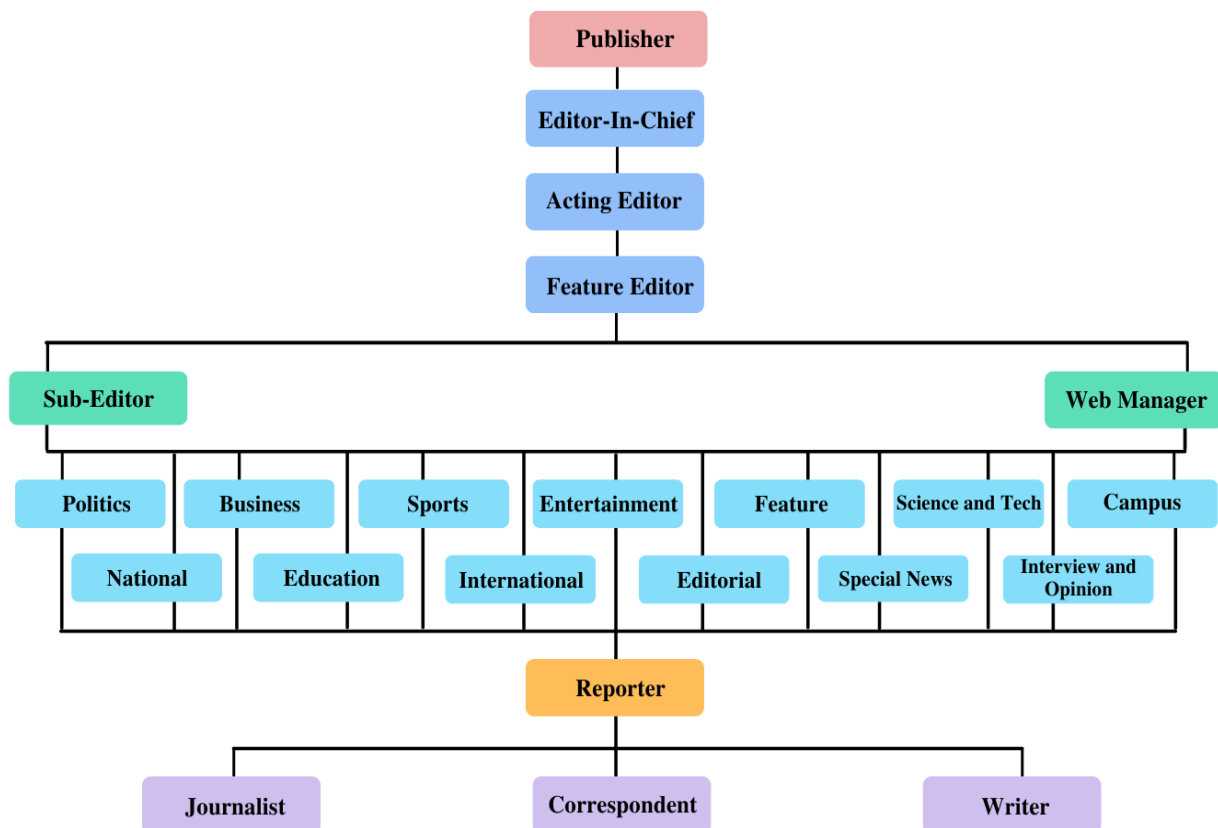
Figure: Organogram of *Risingbd.com*

Publisher: In the news media, the publisher is considered the highest-ranking officer in the firm. For Risingbd.com, SM Zahid Hasan holds the highest position in the organisation. His responsibilities encompass the entire firm. He oversees the governance of the news portal from reporting to editorial operations, the business market, the finalisation of decisions and the implementation of policies at *Risingbd.com*.

Editors: The editorial board is composed of the Editor-In-Chief, the Acting Editor and the Feature Editor. M. M. Kayser is the Acting Editor of *Risingbd.com*, while Taposh Kumar Roy, who was my on-site supervisor, is the Feature Editor. The editorial board oversees the entire news portal and is accountable for publishing all content on the portal and social media.

Web Team: The team monitors and manages the portal and social media platforms. The team is also responsible for making and editing audio and visual content.

Sub-Editors: The desk employees carry out the responsibilities of a sub-editor. They revise news content before publication. Sub-editors for the English news portal work independently as this team is responsible for translating copies from Bangla to English.

Reporters: The reporters include senior and junior reporters, journalists, correspondents and writers.

3.2 News Sections

Risingbd.com categorises its news content into several sections:

1. National

2. Politics

3. Business

4. Education

5. Sports

6. International

7. Entertainment

8. Feature

9. Special News

10. Science and Tech

11. Interview and Opinion

12. Campus

The special news section includes editorials, interviews and opinions of prominent figures and the general public. The campus news section features scholarly works, expert opinions and other types of institutional news such as seminars, research, activities, announcements, etc.

3.3 News Production Process

The process of news production in *Risingbd.com* is composed of news coverage, copy editing and delivery. The entire process is carried out through different mediums, from local, regional and foreign correspondents and journalists to editors and sub-editors.

Initially, writers, on-the-scene reporters and correspondents report information to editors and sub-editors through phone calls and social media platforms. Regarding written and multimedia content, email is the primary method of communication. Editors subsequently select the most compelling and newsworthy news pieces and pass them on to sub-editors for copy editing, while the web management team handles the audio and visual content editing, including photos and recordings. The content is then shared by sub-editors on the portal's website and social media sites. Eventually, the copies are sent to the portal's English team for copy editing, translation and publication.

Chapter 4

Internship Experience at *Risingbd.com*

Following a brief overview of *Risingbd.com*'s background in the previous two chapters, this section explores my experience as an intern at *Risingbd.com*.

4.1 Journey as an Intern

My journey at *Risingbd.com* began on December 1, 2021, and officially ended on February 28, 2022. I completed my internship during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, the spread of the infection in Bangladesh was on the wane at the time, allowing me to work offline and gain valuable hands-on experience. I worked an additional week, thereby seizing the opportunity to enhance work performance and quality.

It was a strenuous journey since I had two courses that ran parallel to the internship. Before joining the office, I was apprehensive about the office environment, the people I would be working with, and how I would juggle work and study. On the first day of work, I addressed the employees as Sir and Ma'am. However, they requested that I call them 'Bhaiya' (Brother) and 'Apu' (Sister) instead, believing this would foster a more flexible and productive work environment.

I worked the morning shift from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., six days a week. I served as a sub-editor of the English news portal team. I was in charge of writing, translating and editing news reports. I wrote a total of 245 news items, of which 179 were national and 66 were international; I covered news on Coronavirus, accidents, crime, climate, sports, wars, entertainment, obituaries, and press conferences. Initially, my seniors selected the stories from the website's "latest' section for me, but later I was given the leeway to choose the ones that piqued my interest the most.

4.2 How I Chose News Stories

Before working as a sub-editor at *Risingbd.com*, I was unaware that choosing a news story for coverage entails multiple, complicated, meticulous steps. The process required me first to determine the type of news I was most interested in presenting to my audience, but I was uncertain as to how to choose the news type. I recalled learning about two types of news categories, such as 'Hard' and 'Soft' news, during my undergraduate studies. Fred Fedler et al. suggested that hard news encompasses 'breaking news', politics, accidents, crime, fire, speech, business and international affairs. In contrast, soft news covers less serious and more informal items such as stories about people, places, events, features, op-eds, sports and entertainment. Usually, hard news is written solemnly, accompanied by a formal style with little or no humour and requires immediate publication. Soft news, on the other hand, is less timely, so it is written in a less formal tone using descriptions, colour, anecdotes and quotations (131). Both hard and soft news stir up the news consumers' emotions; however, journalists have more leeway in shaping the latter. Soft news prompts readers to act in certain ways.

Next, I selected a few news articles from the 'latest' section of the portal's website and compared their news value factors based on the five values: timeliness, proximity, consequence, prominence and oddity, as discussed in Chapter 6. After identifying what was in the news and what might make the news on the front page, I prepared myself to write the report.

During the internship, I worked primarily on hard news stories such as COVID-19, fatal road accidents, rapes, human trafficking, domestic violence and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. I found the news selection process to be both intriguing and intricate.

4.3 How I Wrote News Reports

After poring over a few news stories on *Risingbd.com*'s website, I discovered that hard news items answer the basic 5Ws and 1H questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why and How. These details are often organised in descending order of importance on three levels: lead, body and tail. This structure is known as the Inverted Pyramid Style. According to historians of journalism, the telegraph – a communication system invented by painter Samuel Morse in 1845 that transmits information through electrical signals over wires – influenced the concept of this news reporting style. However, the origin of this style could not be ascertained. In April 1865, a reporter for the Associated Press wrote a news piece about the assassination of Abraham Lincoln following this style, what is today regarded as one of the earliest inverted pyramids leads (Scanlan 153).

As the name suggests, the lead paragraph briefly introduces "the most newsworthy, important or striking information and establishes the central point for the rest of the story" (200). A few questions are answered in this paragraph, but the rest are addressed in the subsequent paragraphs. Throughout the internship, I followed this structure to write hard news items. For instance, news reports regarding accidents "usually emphasise deaths, property damage or unusual circumstances." (403). Following the instructions, I opened the story with, "A motorcycle hit a cyclist on Dhaka's Airport Road early Wednesday (December 29), leaving the cyclist dead." (Moslem, Shamera, et al.). Here, the lead paragraph served as a summary of the incident answering 3Ws and 1H.

What: road accident

Where: Dhaka's Airport Road

When: early Wednesday, December 29

How many: One person was killed

When it was breaking news, I highlighted the salient facts of the incident in a short declarative incomplete sentence, "Cyclist dies in crash on Dhaka's Airport Road".

Next, I divided the body of the paragraph into distinct segments, demonstrating the victim's identity first, then the details of the accident. Also, I added direct quotations from the witness and the police because "descriptions, like quotations, make stories more interesting and help people visualize scenes" and "describe a story's dramatic moments" (219).

Finally, I ended the report with supplementary information, a quote from the police officer. I then added the byline at the end of the report.

4.4 My Work as a Translator

The three months of internship gave me insight into the life of a media translator. Before working as a translator at Risingbd.com, I thought having the basic knowledge of both the source and the target language would be sufficient for media translation. However, I soon discovered that an in-depth understanding of cultural norms, idioms and a solid command of both languages, including technical terminologies, are essential for producing meaningful and accurate translations for the media. Translation refers to rephrasing the original message in the target language accurately. I learnt about two types of translation processes: 'word-for-word' or literal translation and 'sense-for-sense' or meaning-based translation, in the course ENG 465: Translation Studies. I employed both methods to translate news articles: literal translation formation to translate the 5ws and 1h, and quotations; and the meaning-based one to translate descriptions.

I was primarily in charge of translating news stories from Bangla to English. In the first week, I translated two to three reports per day. With time, I began working on additional reports, averaging four to eight daily. The length of the reports determined the time required

to submit them. The time allotted for the short ones was 20 to 25 minutes, while 30 minutes to an hour for the lengthy ones.

Before translating news stories, it is crucial to analyse the context because translation without a contextual understanding can possibly result in serious mistranslation. Intriguingly, I experienced it when translating the news story, 'Helper dies falling off bus overloaded with passengers' (Mainuddin, Shamera, et al.). The original version was 'বাসের দরজায় দাঁড়িয়ে থাকা অতিরিক্ত যাত্রীর চাপে হেলপার বাস থেকে পড়ে যান' (the bus helper fell off the door of the bus due to the extra passengers standing at the door). Due to my lack of understanding of the context, I translated this sentence using the literal translation formation, which resulted in a hilariously mistranslated sentence that read: 'the physical pressure exerted by the extra passengers standing at the door forced him off the bus'. However, my teammates, without making me feel ignorant, clarified the context and distinction between the helper falling off the bus and falling off the bus's door. Since then, I began conducting research prior to translating reports. Besides, I kept a good Bangla-English and English-Bangla dictionary to ensure the accuracy of my translations.

4.5 My Responsibilities as a Sub-editor

As sub-editor, my responsibilities included proofreading news reports and presenting news stories from the audience's perspective. I revised reports using the copy-editing techniques I learnt in ENG 401: Editing course. I prioritised keeping the copies concise, comprehensible and succinct.

The lead paragraph of a news article guides news consumers in determining whether to continue reading a news story or not. For that reason, the first few paragraphs of a news article present information in a straightforward and engaging manner. Hard news items are written in the Inverted Pyramid format (see Section 4.3), whereas soft news items contain the

'hook' or the bait with which the audience is captured. When revising the first section of news reports, I paid more attention and took my time to write a good hook.

Another crucial aspect to consider is ensuring that the information in the articles is comprehensible to the intended audience; otherwise, readers will simply disregard the report. Many readers have a limited attention span, which encourages them to move on to the next article when they encounter information that is difficult to understand. The correlation between the media and its audience is of paramount importance because every piece of media content is designed to appeal to a specific and targeted group of consumers. News content on *Risingbd.com* is also produced to serve its target audience, readers of all ages. Articles composed in advanced English would not benefit the average news consumer, who may not have the working knowledge of difficult English prose. Taking this information into account, I wrote news stories in simplified English using common rhetoric, jargon and vocabulary. I changed passive sentences into active ones and split long sentences into short ones to make the news in English more receptive to the audience.

Likewise, using language appropriate for the demographics and context of the news consumers in news articles is equally important. Initially, I wrote and edited reports without considering these factors. For instance, while writing the report '10 receive booster shots on Tuesday', I displayed numbers in millions considering it an international unit (SB, Shamera, et al.). However, my senior colleague changed 'millions' to 'lakhs' and 'crores' because *Risingbd.com* is a local platform with a local readership. Local readers are more familiar with terms such as 'lakhs' and 'crores' than 'millions'.

I also discovered a distinct yet intriguing fact that news stories are usually written in the past tense, with the exception of breaking news, which is written in the present tense. In the case of headlines, they are usually written in incomplete sentences in the present tense

without the necessary 'be' verbs, auxiliary verbs and articles. Following these rules, I wrote the report 'Rain likely in parts of country' in past tense and edited out 'is' and 'to occur' from the headline. I was instructed to include the date and time of the reported event to specify the day. For example, 'confirmed the news on Tuesday (February 1)' (Moslem, Shamera, et al.).

Moreover, I was uncertain about using acronyms and abbreviations in news reports, but my teammates suggested writing them in headlines and body paragraphs only. Thus, I wrote the headline '5 BU students to get PM Gold Medal' which contains abbreviations such as BU and PM, but I mentioned their full form in the lead paragraph and continued to use the abbreviations in the subsequent paragraphs in the report (Joinal, Shamera, et al.).

Apart from this, I revised grammatical errors and misspellings and cross-checked facts before sending the copies to my teammates for their approval. Inaccurate information casts doubt on an organisation's credibility; hence, I had to be especially careful. Thus, I had to be extra cautious while checking reports, especially regarding names and designations, because misspellings would enrage and disappoint readers and most likely embarrass the organisation and question its reputability. While revising crime reports, I concentrated on writing 'said' and 'told' instead of 'claim', 'accuse' and 'report'. I meticulously used words such as 'reportedly', 'allegedly' and 'suspect' to avoid libel lawsuits. These words indicate that the accused is guilty of the crime for which he or she is charged.

Similarly, I eliminated gender-biased words and sentences to combat sexism and racism. To clarify, mentioning the sex of a female drug dealer in the report 'One held with drugs in Dinajpur' appeared irrelevant to me because no journalist would ever use the term 'Man' if it were a man (Moslem, Shamera, et al.). In a similar case, I avoided mentioning one's sex, race, religion and ethnic background in a news story unless they were directly relevant to the news and had the potential to break down stereotypical social or occupational

barriers. A good illustration of this would be the news about Pakistan appointing its first female SC judge. I mentioned the judge's sex in the headline to highlight occupational equality (Shamera and Al).

Lastly, I was instructed to keep news articles short as reading through lengthy texts can be monotonous, cumbersome and time-consuming for most readers, thereby making them lose focus and overlook crucial textual details. So, I omitted information from the bottom of stories that appeared superfluous to me, keeping the articles concise, easy-to-read and respectful of readers' time.

Chapter 5

Linking Theories to My Experience

This chapter analyses my experience at *Risingbd.com* with respect to the concepts I learnt during my undergraduate studies. Throughout the internship, I concentrated on understanding how the news media industry functions. By the end of the internship, I caught a glimpse of the factors that enable newsmakers, journalists and news readers to perceive events differently; these paradigm shifts fascinated me.

The first concept that accurately portrays my internship experience is Foucault's panopticon. According to his framework, authorities secretly monitor individuals' behaviour, but once the observees become aware of the surveillance, they self-monitor their actions to please the authorities. In the office, a surveillance camera was installed diagonally opposite my desk. I believed I could take some time off when I had no work at hand, but I constantly felt exposed to the authorities and eventually monitored my actions during my solid 7:30 hours workday. I felt like I was being observed in an observation room, similar to Jeremy Bentham's hypothetical prison.

Again, at times, I switched back and forth between the roles of observee and observer. I was enthusiastic about knowing the inner workings of the news media, so I volunteered to track the news consumers' responses to articles on *Risingbd.com*'s website and associated social media. I worked at a digital platform, so I was a part of the digital panopticon system. I focused on identifying the news type and angle that captured readers' attention. I observed that news consumers are highly interested in reading controversial and compelling news such as tragedies, politics, rights, religion, and celebrity gossip. News consumers enjoy voicing their opinions by making inferences based on their understanding of news stories. However, sometimes journalists craft news stories in a manner that influences readers' interpretations of news events. Readers' inferences reflect or at least partially align with the journalists'

inferences of the news events. This strategy is known as the "preferred meaning" or "preferred understanding" of news reports (Van Dijk 14). I employed this strategy to boost *Risingbd.com*'s readership. I showcased this news story, "Helpless farmer crying as his 10000 watermelon plants uprooted" with a melancholic tone to make my readers' inference of the story similar to my interference (Imran, Shamera, et al.). As explained earlier in chapter 4, journalists can shape soft news items by emphasising emotion more than intellect, which can influence consumer behaviour. I attempted to make this hard news appear soft or at least partially soft to spare my readers from drama and prepare them to bear the impending tragedy in the story (see Section 4.2). Adding supplementary effects such as emotion-evoking words, tone, mood, background music, etcetera, to content can heighten its emotional impact on news consumers. These supplementary effects distort the content's authenticity. I realised that the hook in the lead paragraph of the article and the melancholic tone made the article appear more emotional than it was. The article depicted a distorted version of reality or "hyperreality" as Baudrillard conceptualised it. Consequently, the article became a "simulacrum" and manipulated the audience emotionally.

Emotional manipulation increases consumers' interactions with content. Frequent media interactions boost media circulation, and subsequently, profit the media owners, those who own power. In Foucault's view, power is omnipresent. Those in positions of authority shape the knowledge and ideology of the masses. They also have a firm grasp of the media and public discourse. As proof, I exercised power by including my 'preferred understanding' in the article to shape the perspectives of my readers.

Another fascinating aspect of the power structure is that the power of the media can expose and yet, conceal the truth. In the article mentioned above, the farmer allegedly bribed the duty officer after being asked for money, but the officer denied the claim. I was willing to emphasise the allegation but was encouraged to highlight the farmer's torment. One possible

explanation is that shedding light on the allegation could result in political interference since "leading politicians, managers, scholars, or other professionals have more or less controlled access to many different forms of text and talk, such as meetings, reports, press conferences, or press releases." (Van Dijk 12). This privilege indicates that the media is not independent of external control, such as government, large corporations and influential individuals. These external sources set the parameters for what information should and should not be featured in news pieces. This condition also applies to the mass media in Bangladesh. Regarding media freedom, Bangladesh was ranked 162nd out of 180 nations in the World Press Freedom Index 2022, released by Reporters Without Borders (RSF).

Usually, the government and the political party in power often exercise influence over the media by censoring and monitoring content on the internet and social media, limiting the coverage of news stories. On the flip side, the media sometimes receives financial support from business houses to encourage sponsorship, advertising and news coverage, which is favourable to the interests of those corporations. Due to this fact, the media is considered a product of capitalism. According to the Marxist ideal, the media is run by ruling class members, who dominate the mainstream media, ensure mass surveillance and manipulate media content. Their conservative ideologies are disseminated using Althusser's ideological state apparatuses such as the media to preserve power and dominance over the masses. They influence knowledge production and keep the capitalist paradigm alive in society.

Intriguingly, the majority of the power owners are primarily male because the system is patriarchal and often sadist. Consequently, women are constantly subjected to the male gaze in all spheres of life. The patriarchal society regulates women's behaviour, appearance and social duties. At the same time, the mainstream media propagates patriarchal elites' capitalist ideologies such as sexism and misogyny and misrepresents women, reinforcing the existing power structure. The media satisfies the male desire by depicting women as objects;

after all, women significantly impact sales. Evidence for this was elucidated when I discovered that the news article "Ukrainian beauty queen joins war against Russia" received more attention, with 53 social media shares as opposed to only 4 for "Pakistan appoints first female SC judge." (Shamera and Al; Shamera and Mukul). The article about the former Miss Ukraine featured a sexually objectifying photo of the beauty queen and so was more sensational than the other article. This strategy of entertaining consumers reminded me of Mulvey's criticism of "the male gaze". She believed that the media objectifies women as 'strong visual' to create an 'erotic impact' on male viewers. This strategy helps sell content and generate more capital for the high society members. The media might perhaps defend itself on the grounds that sexualised depictions of women are what consumers desire. However, the ultimate truth is that the elites wield leverage to manipulate public interest, perception and media content evaluation.

Chapter 6

Reflecting Academic Knowledge at Work

This section covers and illustrates, with examples, my practical application of journalism skills learnt in ENG 440: English for the Print Media course at work. During my three months at *Risingbd.com*, I wrote some follow-up news stories and obituaries besides translating and revising hard news items.

My first follow-up was on the Bangladesh Election Commission (EC) regarding the reconstitution of the Commission, "EC formation: Justice Obaidul Hasan to lead search committee" (KI, Shamera, et al.). I published new articles on the same subject to update readers on the subsequent developments in the story. The articles also included the committee members' comments, reactions and a summary of previous events. I was also tasked with writing obituaries for such notable figures as Bangladeshi language activist Ziaul Haque, poet Quazy Rosy, and Indian singing legends Lata Mangeshkar and Bappi Lahiri. Writing obituaries was relatively easy for me due to my prior experience with an obituary writing assignment in the academic course.

Similarly, the course taught me to consider the following five criteria when assessing the significance of a news item: timeliness, proximity, consequence, prominence and oddity. Applying my theoretical understanding, I evaluated news stories based on the number of news value factors the stories reflected.

Timeliness: Timeliness indicates reporting a news piece on time. A story, especially breaking news, loses its value if not reported on time. News consumers consider delayed news worthless as the information in the news is no longer recent. For instance, my day often started with publishing reports on weather updates. Since the weather changes every few hours, a delayed update would diminish the news's value.

Proximity: Proximity refers to the closeness of an occurrence to news consumers. The greater the distance between an incident and readers, the less value the news receives. Usually, residents of a country are more concerned about the happenings in their nation than others because the events can directly affect the residents. For example, the news "GM Quader tests COVID-19 positive" received more attention than the news "Canadian PM Trudeau tests COVID-19 positive" due to its proximity to Bangladeshi people (Naymuddin, Shamera, et al.; Shamera and Al).

Consequence: Consequence refers to a news piece's potential impact on individuals, society or country. To specify, news regarding war and conflict has always been crucial because it can significantly impact national security, economy, politics and demographics. During my internship, Russia invaded Ukraine. The intensity of the conflict would have repercussions on Bangladesh's economy. Therefore, I frequently shared war-related news articles on the website.

Prominence: Prominence refers to the significance of a news story regarding someone or something well-known. News consumers are more likely to locate information about renowned figures or things than someone or something obscure. To illustrate, the death news of the legendary Indian singer Lata Mangeshkar and Rayan, the young Moroccan boy stuck in a well, dominated the international headlines on the same day. However, the news "'Queen of Melody' famed Lata Mangeshkar dies" received about twice as many shares on social media as the news "Moroccan boy trapped in well for four days dies" because the readers felt a closer connection with the singer than the child (Shamera and Al).

Oddity: The oddity of a news story denotes the story's bizarreness. Sensational news fascinates the audience more. Due to this, the media often reports on such occurrences to enhance views and readership. One example of sensational news would be "Actor Riaz's father-in-law commits suicide on Facebook live" (Maksud, Shamera, et al.). Since it was an

unusual incident, the audience shared the news around 2400 times across various social

media platforms.

Chapter 7

Personal Account

My internship at *Risingbd.com* provided me with nine-to-five job experience. This internship taught me how to behave professionally and foster relationships with co-workers. Everyone respected me despite being the youngest employee in the office. A few colleagues became my friends, and I enjoyed sharing lunch breaks and occasional after-work activities with them. However, my happy hours at work were balanced out by some challenges.

I was under tremendous stress from the beginning of my internship because I could not concentrate on my work and academic courses simultaneously. Due to the pandemic, the semester was held online, so I attended classes from my office. I often found myself rushing through my assignments to meet deadlines so that I could attend my classes on time. The solid 7:30 hours of work a day would leave me too exhausted to study. This intense stress caused me to have frequent breakdowns. Fortunately, my supervisor and colleagues were more accommodating than I had anticipated. They reduced my workload and approved brief study breaks so I could balance work and study.

Moreover, I struggled to write a ten-word news headline that would captivate readers. For over a month, I employed this strategy of brainstorming two or three headlines for my stories and having my seniors choose the best one for me. Similarly, when I translated articles, nothing was more discouraging than not understanding words or sentences in the source language. When dictionaries could not solve my problems, I sought assistance from my seniors. They recommended reading news daily, which in fact, helped me expand my vocabulary and understand journalistic writing style. Since then, whenever I encountered an unfamiliar word or format, I jotted it down so I would not have to struggle again.

Lastly, the most formidable challenge I confronted when I translated the 'Risingbd Special' news "Breast cancer screening project cost increasing by 4 times" (Hasibul,

Shamera, et al.). That day, I went to work despite having a high fever with severe physical discomfort. The article was about a specialised field, so it was enriched with jargon. The article contained information that I did not comprehend, so the translation process took the entire day. However, this experience enhanced my ability to work under pressure. It taught me to be resilient and adaptable to unexpected circumstances.

I am immensely grateful to *Risingbd.com* for allowing me to complete my internship with the organisation. I greatly appreciate the insightful advice and guidance from my supervisor and co-workers. They taught me from scratch and spoon-fed me when I sat in front of my computer, clueless about what I was doing. They instructed me with patience despite my incorrect translations and repeated mistakes. Without their assistance, I would not have been able to overcome my shortcomings and have fond memories of this internship.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

In my view, after four years of academic study, an internship is crucial for building a solid professional foundation. My time as an intern at *Risingbd.com* was challenging yet rewarding. I took on multiple roles that taught me to analyse events through different lenses. This three-month experience enabled me to assess my strengths and weaknesses. I started this journey knowing next to nothing about journalism but ended it with a much more profound understanding of this discipline. I finally have a grasp of how the media industry operates. As a bonus, my communication and time management skills vastly improved. Apart from this, the office's long hours and overwhelming workload gave me insight into corporate jobs. This experience, I believe, will assist me in working zealously at a professional level.

Overall, I am deeply indebted to *Risingbd.com* for the opportunity to acquire hands-on experience in journalism. In light of this experience, I am confident in seeking and accepting a position as a news writer, translator and sub-editor in the news media industry.

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