Exploring the World of Journalism as a Central Desk Intern at Dhaka Tribune

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Declaration

I hereby declare that,

- 1. The report submitted is my/our own original work while completing Degree at BRAC University.
- 2. The report does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
- 3. The report does not contain material that has been accepted or submitted for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
- 4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The report titled "Exploring the World of Journalism as a Central Desk Intern at Dhaka Tribune" submitted by Fahmida Haque Nourin (17103054) of Summer 2022 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in English and Humanities.

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Dedication

To my Mother, Farida Yasmin Ritu and Brother, Late Mahmudul Haque Shiplu

Acknowledgement

I am thankful to the Almighty for everything. Secondly, I would like to thank my parents, my elder brother for their immense love and support in everything. It is their encouragement and trust that helped me to complete my journey of graduating from Brac University. One thing I would like to mention is due to an accident I lost my biggest support and idol of my life last year, which was my elder brother. Though he is not between us, his positive energy remains in my heart and it helps me to cope-up with every difficulty in my life.

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Introduction

The Dhaka Tribune is a well-known national English-language broadsheet daily newspaper published in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The paper was introduced in 2013. The founding editor of this newspaper is Zafar Sobhan.It has both print and online versions to reach the readers in Bangladesh and internationally. The head office is situated at Panthapath.

Dhaka Tribune has lots of sections such as Media broadcasts, prints, 24 hours online newspaper. It updates all kinds of news from time to time to the readers. The people who work in this paper always keep their eyes on recent news and serve the latest news to the readers. Dhaka Tribune keeps people aware of recent news to let them know what is happening around the world. As we know media and newspapers are the major source of showing people what is around the world. In this digital age newspapers have also become digital. Therefore, in this contemporary world it is almost impossible to hide any news from the world. Dhaka Tribune is a digital newspaper and it serves people with genuine news and gives assurance of authenticity of any news as they don't compromise with the source of any news before publishing to the readers.

There are various types of news readers. Everyone searches for different types of news or have interest in reading different types of news. There are readers who will search for topics like national, international, war, entertainment, lifestyle, sports, politics, business, technology, literature, lifestyle, career, etc. Every newspaper tries to organize their newspaper with the stories of those topics. They also have sections such as op-ed, editorial cartoons, comics, poems, feature etc.

Nowadays newspapers are not only read by the older generation. The Younger generation also read newspapers everyday on the digital Media. Mobile phone, internet are handy and people can

easily read newspapers just with one tap anytime, anywhere on their mobile and definitely it is a good influence of media as it influences the young generation to read newspapers and keeps them updated.

As I am doing my major in cultural studies and media, I was required to do my internship in a place which would be related to media such as newspapers, TV channels or media agencies. I dropped my CV at Dhaka Tribune and fortunately got a chance to do my internship at their place. It was a wonderful experience. I would say it was a roller coaster journey where I got the opportunity to develop my skill and have learned uncountable new things. It was my first ever official job experience and I would cherish this experience forever.

A Brief History of - "Dhaka Tribune"

Dhaka Tribune is an English daily newspaper. It was first launched on April 19, 2013. The publisher of the newspaper *Dhaka Tribune* is Kazi Anis Ahmed and the founding editor of the Dhaka Tribune is Zafar Subhan. The owners of the Dhaka Tribune are Gemcon Group and Kazi Farm Group. Dhaka Tribune has printed the traditional newspaper version as well as online version. Both publish the same news. Dhaka Tribune also has a Bangla version named Bangla Tribune. Dhaka Tribune is not only a newspaper it is a platform. Its main motto is to keep people connected with the world and inform them of all the updated news that is happening around the world.

Moreover, the Bangla tribune is the online platform for news. It is almost similar to Dhaka Tribune's main site. Most of the news is the same but the difference is in language. One is written in English and another one is in Bangla. The Dhaka Tribune Bangla started its journey in June 2018.

Basic Terminologies of Newspaper

There are many terminologies that are followed by the newspapers in the field of journalism and media. Almost all the news agencies use these basic terms. I did not know these terms before completing my courses at the university and gaining real experience at *Dhaka Tribune*. Here I am mentioning some of the terms that are used in the newspaper:

- Headline: The main title of the story
- Home Title: Shorter than the headline and must be within 60 words. Most of the time they are catchy words to grab the reader's attention.
- Stand First: Summary of the story written in one open ended sentence
- Shoulder: Positioned above the main headline if there is no enough space in the headline to put in all the information
- Byline: Name of the journalist or the news agency written at the beginning of the story
- Cutline: Words under the caption of any photo
- Dateline: To mention the date at the beginning of the story
- Subheads: Additional title or heading in the news article
- Caption: Headline over the image to describe the image
- Follow-up: Updates about the story

- Correspondent: A journalist or an agent who is appointed to collect news stories and deliver them to the newsroom.
- Staff Reporter: Who collects, analyzes facts and takes interview.
- Editor: A journalist who is in charge of a specific section of a newspaper or magazine
- Sub-Editor: A journalist or writer who supervises the substance, accuracy, layout, and design of newspaper and magazine articles.
- Attribution: It gives the information of the source of the news and source of statements
- Category: Identify the type of the news
- Op-Ed: Article or opinion written by any specialist or columnist employed by the newspaper
- Press Release: Official statement or story given to media with accurate information

My Journey as a Newspaper Intern

While joining as an intern at Dhaka Tribune, I was asked about my preference regarding the choice of work section. I showed my interest towards working in the central desk. I also mentioned my preference to work in Dhaka Tribune-English. It has both English and Bangla versions. I started my internship as a newsroom intern at the central desk of Dhaka Tribune from November 16, 2021. I joined the news editing department under the supervision of Assistant Editor. I started working as a sub-editor. I was required to learn and trained up as a sub-editor of the team and asked to perform as a full time employee.

The department has a large number of desks. The news editing department plays a very important role at the newspaper. It has many news desks such as national desk, international desk, sports desk. They did not specify any particular desk for me. I joined the morning team which is from 9am to 4 pm. I was instructed to work 7 hours daily and can take a day-off once in a week according to my preference. They also mentioned that sometimes there might be some extra hours of work and they expect me to contribute on those special days; for example if there is breaking news and the department is in need of some extra manpower to run the office.

I worked with a team of 5 members. The group had three sub-editors including me and one assistant editor. Since the covid-19 crisis was not erased yet and a new variant of corona virus named Omicron was emerging worldwide therefore, in the office there was option for both online and offline. As an intern the team preferred an offline office for me because I needed some training sessions to understand how the news editorial team works and it was not possible

for them to teach through online. However, I was also doing two courses at the university and I could attend an online office if I was having any exam.

4.1: My daily tasks in Dhaka Tribune

First day at the office I collected my appointment letter and completed all the formalities. After collecting the appointment letter I was introduced to the team head who is currently the assistant editor of the central desk news editing department of *Dhaka Tribune*. After the introduction, he informed me of the rules and regulations of the office. I was also introduced to the other members of the group. They guided me with the news format of Dhaka Tribune and the writing style they follow for this newspaper. A style guide was provided which contained all the rules, regulations and formats they follow to edit the stories of Dhaka Tribune. It could be said as a guide to maintain the Dhaka Tribune's writing standard. The members were very cooperative toward each other. My daily tasks were: Editing news, Translating News Stories, Uploading stories on the website, Selecting and editing pictures for the News Story, Scanning news Agencies and local media for updated news.

4.2: Editing and translating News Story

I was handed over to one of the sub-editors to learn how they run the websites, CMS, backend and news portals. She introduced me to the websites of the news portals and guided me how they publish news on their own website. I tried to catch up as much as I could. As a fresher in this news editing group, I enjoyed learning these new things of how to work in the central desk. (Appendix 1)

After that the supervisor gave me news of the road crash and asked to translate the news. I translated it and submitted it to him. After that he taught me how to write the stories, not just translating them. He also taught me some techniques and style to write stories for news portals. It gave me a little idea of how to edit stories and the difference between translating a script and editing a news script. As it was my first day at the office, therefore it was just a briefing of how they work and get the knowledge of the workplace.

After that I gradually learned how to write news reports and how to translate stories for newspapers. In the first 20 days, I worked on more than 35 reports. First few days I made mistakes and they taught me very patiently. I think those small mistakes helped me to be more polished at my work. Though I was in the learning phase, I worked hard and got appreciation from my teammates sometimes. It motivated me to learn more sincerely. I took a gap during my midterm exams and they acted very kind during those days. I joined later again and worked really hard to execute what I learned from them. I tried my best to maintain the office hours and follow the regulations.

4.3: Uploading Stories on website

My first 20 days of working at *Dhaka Tribune* gave many good experiences. I have experienced practical knowledge of professional works at the newspaper office. It enhanced my knowledge about the media and print industry. I had learned plenty of new things such as editing, collecting news, team work, maintaining the standard of a news portal and making it worth reading to the readers. I was experiencing a new learning platform and I would like to mention that my academic courses are helping me a lot to learn fast. My faculties have taught me most of the editorial and translation theories and these are helping me to cope- up with my work place. There are still lots of things to learn, I believe it was just a beginning.

Every Newspaper has many different sections to cover all types of news around the world such as national and international, sports, entertainment, lifestyle, business, etc. Dhaka Tribune also follows these news sections and for this it has some departments. Central desk is one of them and it is one of the most important departments which is also called newsroom. News are edited, written and published from this department of *Dhaka Tribune*. There are several parts in this department and people are appointed to work in selected section. Again these sections are divided into national, international, lifestyle, features etc. I applied for an internship at Dhaka Tribune then they asked me through an email that in which department I have my interest to work as an intern. I replied I would like to work in the central desk, as I felt I could work well in this sector. Then they confirmed me to join as an intern and also gave me a chance to work in the central desk as a sub-editor. Central desk holds diversity and people can choose from their own preference but have to take approval from the senior editor. The senior editor of the newsroom appoints the sub-editors in a suitable section to maintain the quality of the work.

Previously I have mentioned that *Dhaka Tribune* has two versions of the newspaper one is Dhaka Tribune which comes in English language and another one is Bangla tribune which serves almost similar kind of news stories but the language is Bangla. Both the newspapers publish breaking news, education, Law, weather, entertainment, opinion, op-ed, PR etc. To balance the work graph, the central desk has several staff and shifts. Also they are obliged with different responsibilities. There are sub-editors, apprentice sub-editors, and reporters.

To be a part of this current fast moving world *Dhaka Tribune* also produces news online. *Dhaka Tribune* can be marked as a fast growing popular print and online newspaper in Bangladesh. Right now Dhaka Tribune's online news portal is one of the most popular news portals in Bangladesh. Nowadays online newspapers are quite popular as it keeps people updated and they easily can search and get to know what's happening around the world within just a second. It is the age of technology and the internet. No one would prefer to wait for tomorrow's newspaper to read any breaking news; rather than that they would pick up their Smartphone and stay updated with the latest news. Thus the online newspaper needs to work hard to stay updated all the time. The online news time all time works under pressure because as soon as they get the news they immediately make the news ready for the readers. Time management and quick response are must in this section. I worked on the online news section of the central desk and learned a lot of things from that work experience. I got good skills of how to work under immense pressure and quickly edit news for the newspaper.

I also learned that after writing news copies, how to upload them on social media platforms and also learned how to write a news title to catch the reader's attention. There is also a team who only works to promote or spread the news on social media platforms and monitor the online newspaper. As a new intern I was appointed to write and edit news on national and international

news. I chose to work in the morning shift. During my internship period I used to join the office every morning. I used to write the global Covid-19 situation news and also used to write war news, breaking news around the world and nation. These were topics about the world. I also used to cover national news such as election, rape, accident, political issues, foreign relations, education, weather etc.

I used to feel super excited every day to work as a sub-editor in the central desk of Dhaka

Tribune. I joined the Dhaka Tribune on 16th November of 2022. First 2 months I used to work

for 6 days a week for eight hours a day. I used to work the morning shift from 8am to 4 pm in the

Dhaka Tribune's online news. My department used to cover almost everything from national

news to international, politics, law and order, economics, lifestyles, entertainment culture etc.

Dhaka Tribune was running the home office due to the Covid-19 situation but I felt unlucky

because when I joined Covid-19 situation was in a moderate position and the office was running

offline. So I had an offline official experience of working with my colleagues. I used to work

four days offline and two days online because I had to attend classes of my undergrad courses.

There was one senior editor and 2 sub-editors including me during the first month. Later on the
second month another sub-editor joined our team.

On my first day there was an introductory segment with my co-workers and one of them explained to me the rules and regulations of the office. I got my roster time which is the shift time actually and I was asked to read the Dhaka Tribune's style guide carefully because I was required to follow DT'S guideline while writing a news story. They gave me access to the daily entry log sheet and all the credentials that I need to know while working as a sub-editor.

Later I started working on the stories given by my seniors and upload those stories after they revise them and give feedback. At the office most of the time I used to edit news, copy-write, translate and publish stories from different media outlets and daily road accident stories I used to write on my own after collecting the data from the reporters of *Dhaka Tribune*. I was given a list which had numbers of all the reporters. I often used to call them if there was any need for a query about news. I also used to keep an eye on various media agencies and notify my seniors if there was any news that we should publish on our paper. So, these were almost the daily routine of my work as an intern in the central desk of *Dhaka Tribune*.

Dhaka Tribune follows many renowned media agencies for collecting news like the other newspapers. They have legal subscriptions from those media agencies. They use pictures and news stories from them; editors rewrite the stories on their own and give credits to those agencies on the newspaper. The process of creating news stories from agencies is followed for both national and international news. Dhaka Tribune has a subscription of Reuters, BSS, UNB and Agency France-Press AFP. Reuters and AFP are mostly used for collecting international news. They collect and keep updating news from all around the world and pictures are also available to collect from their page. United News Bangladesh (UNB) and Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) are mostly to collect national news.UNB also provides International news (Appendix 8) but BSS only shares national news (Appendix 6,7) One thing I must mention is that I have learned It is very important to give proper credit while taking a news story from any news agency. Dhaka tribune strictly follows this rule of giving proper credit. This credit giving task is called by-line of a news story. When we read any newspaper, we can find the by-line at the beginning of the story on the left side. Every newspaper follows this rule that is they must need

to mention a by-line which purifies the authenticity of any news story so no one can claim plagiarism.

Besides rewriting stories from news agencies Dhaka Tribune also writes stories in their own style by collecting stories from the correspondent. On the very first day one of my teammates instructed me to follow the guideline and read old stories of *Dhaka Tribune*. By reading those stories I gained an idea of how to write stories that match Dhaka Tribune's writing style. I also learned how to create a story angle. I have also noticed writing a story from Bengali text for a newspaper is not only translating the story. The appropriate way is to read the Bengali text carefully, make a gist of the story and pick the vital information then write it in English as simply as possible. In this to draw attention to the reader's mind and they do not lose the interest of reading the story. Unnecessary information should be avoided while writing a news story. There are instructions which are followed while writing a story. These are starting the story with Headline, home title, by-line, subhead, stand first etc. While uploading the story on site, there are also other things that need to be added in a news story and these are appropriate tags or keywords so that readers can easily search and find the news, category, region, image etc.

To continue, In *Dhaka Tribune* most of the short news stories are in between 100-300 words. International news from Reuters, AFP mostly carries 400-1000 words. While working I used to recall my media studies and kept them in mind. These are five news value factors and these are proximity, prominence, timeliness, consequence, and oddity. Therefore, I would like to say that the courses I have completed before as a cultural studies and media major at my university helped me a lot at my workplace. I have experienced and learned practically by working in a newspaper office.

Earlier in the paper I have briefly discussed how a newspaper functions when it comes to collecting stories from different agencies. Besides, they also keep their eyes on many popular newspapers around the world such as Times of India, BBC News, NDTV, Hindustan Times, Ananda Bazar, Guardian etc. In our country newspapers also take Indian news seriously as it is our neighbouring country and people have interest in reading the stories related to India.

Mostly I used to rewrite 5-6 stories on average every day (Appendix 2, 3). I also used to translate stories every day from Bangla to English. In this translating story part, my course ENG465 has helped me a lot. ENG465: Translation studies. It is a major course for cultural and media studies students. It is designed to understand the theories of translation and become skilled in writing any text. After getting assigned to any story writing I used to read the information of the story properly, take my notes and write it in my own way along with following *Dhaka Tribune's* guideline.

Apart from that I have also learned how to translate stories with a great speed. I have learned how to maintain a website. I also learned how to use Photoshop tools, different software etc.

I was taught how to use a backend manager which is a website to upload stories. I was given an ID and password to enter the CMS (Content Management System) where I used to add the story, customize options, add photos, tags, category and upload on the online newspaper. I have also learned to use Photoshop for editing photos, resizing a photo which is 1024 by 650 in *Dhaka Tribune's* style guide and making photo collages according to the preference of the news. (Appendix 4)

I started my internship in November 2021 when the fourth wave of Covid-19 was surging all around the world. The name of that fourth wave variant was Omicron. People were scared of the

new variant, scientists and researchers were still finding a solution of how to prevent this new Covid-19 variant and there was no valid research about this threatening virus. Lock down started all around the world. Borders were closed again, and many countries called for emergency lockdown. The Covid-19 situation got worse day by day. Booster doses were announced which is a third vaccine as previous vaccines failed to fight against this new virus. The infection rate got higher day by day. I have written a lot of news on Covid-19 during that time. My office went totally online as there was an issue of health concern. Authorities decided to move back to an online office from December 2022.

Dhaka Tribune produced a lot of health-related news at that time. There was news to build awareness among people and how to stay safe from this new variant. The awareness was spread through all the media platforms of Dhaka Tribune. The government's steps and rules to protect people from Covid-19 published every day in Dhaka Tribune. During that time Dhaka also became the most polluted air city in the world. Its AQI was the worst in that situation. People were suffering from air pollution related diseases. The Omicron and poor air quality situation came together in Bangladesh.

In that period, I realized social media and the internet are so important for us nowadays. If we know the proper use of social media, it has immense benefit for us.

4.4: Selecting and Editing pictures for the news

After Editing and uploading the story the most important part is adding an appropriate picture for the story. For this it is vital to select and edit the story and add a caption with courtesy. I had the responsibility to select relevant pictures for stories before uploading them on website. I used to take pictures from Dhaka Tribunes media storage, from agencies such as Reuters, AFP, BSS etc. Few times I had to take pictures from Google. After selecting appropriate picture I used to attach date, give courtesy and resize them according to *Dhaka Tribune's* style before publishing them on social media.

Sorting News for the Print

In the last week of my Internship I got a chance to work with the print department of *Dhaka Tribune*. I think I was fortunate to get another experience of working under another department of *Dhaka Tribune* which was completely different from the central desk. I got the chance because I had to change my shift due to a new class schedule at my University. For sorting news, I was given instructions to download news stories from *Dhaka Tribune's* website and upload them on the file which was dedicated to hold the list of news that are selected to get printed. I was given a list by my supervisor to download those stories. I also had to mention on which page the news story will be printed. This instruction was also provided by my supervisor. Also after uploading the stories I had to edit them according to print format. I also had to download and upload pictures in a different file. The pictures I used to keep in a file and add the news title on top of the file. It was a short time experience but I believe it made me more versatile and I liked working in the print department also.

Related Theories to My Work

As a student of media and cultural studies, I was introduced with theories and concepts that helped me to do my work during the internship period. I followed and could relate to many theories that were taught by my respected faculties. Here I will be discussing some of those theories which I could relate with my work at *Dhaka Tribune*. I found it relatable with the term called "Globalization". I did a course at my university named ENG331: Globalization and media. I could relate with Michel Foucault's "Surveillance Theory" which I was taught in ENG331. ENG331 is a course named Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice course. Also I could relate to Baudrillard's "Concept of Hyperreality". These are the theories that I found relatable during my internship journey and I must say these theories helped me a lot during my internship journey as I was familiar with them and could relate with my work.

Also while working on stories, I had 5Ws and 1H techniques on my mind which I was taught in ENG401: Editing Course. The 5Ws and 1H, is "Who?", "What?", "When?", "Where?", "Why?" and "How?".These are vital things while writing a story for the newspaper. An ideal news article should have these 5WS and 1H. I used to keep these things in mind while writing a story. Moreover I also followed the 5 news value factors, i.e. proximity, prominence, timeliness, consequence, and oddity. These 5 news value factors are needed to make news newsworthy to the readers.

While pursuing my internship at the *Dhaka Tribune*, I realized interns are treated as similar as full time employees. But the only difference is the workplace will invest plenty of time to teach the office workers to an intern which might not be the same with the permanent employees as

they are expected to be experienced enough. Therefore, it was a real time experience for me to work in *Dhaka Tribune* learning new things every day. I have gained a lot of experience. I got an opportunity to develop my skill of editing news stories and translating while working as a subeditor intern at *Dhaka Tribune*.

Moreover, during my internship at the newspaper *Dhaka Tribune*, I gained a lot of knowledge and experience from the newsroom which is called the central desk. These knowledge and experience came along with challenges. I had to go through some challenges and I learned to cope-up with them which I think was a beneficial aspect of my working experience. At the beginning I had no prior expertise on how to write a news report and edit news stories. My supervisor and colleagues helped me to learn it. At my first day in the central desk I could manage to write only two news stories but after 1 week I could write and edit 7-10 or more stories in a day.

My office work was fixed to follow a hybrid method which means I had to join the office both online and offline. I used to attend the office online for 2 days and offline for 4 days in a week and had a day off every Tuesday. As a student of Brac University I was aware of how to join online classes and attend exams through online as my university's all activities went online during the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, I was familiar with online working experience. It helped me to understand and perform my duties online at *Dhaka Tribune*. My supervisor used to provide instructions online and I had to work by following his instructions. I did not face any obstacle during the online office unless there was any network issue. The only thing I felt is our government should work on developing the internet network system in Bangladesh so that remote jobs can be more helpful and hassle free as it saves our time and energy both at the same time.

A Personal Account

I was given an account in Dhaka Tribune's CMS account. As I was an intern I did not have any account with my name. I was instructed to use an account named Imran (Appendix 5). To write about it more I would like to add that when I joined *Dhaka Tribune*, they were working on their new website and CMS (Content management system). They were planning to shift to a new developed CMS. For this I had to upload both my stories on old CMS and new CMS. I was instructed to upload all the stories of every editor on both the CMS. I found it difficult sometimes as I had to write my own copies also. Uploading all the stories and collecting pictures from the archive to upload again on the new CMS was quite difficult as there were some technical issues which did not have any solution at that time. Along with that I had to find previous stories from the archive and upload them on the new CMS following the dates. While doing multiple tasks sometimes I used to commit mistakes then my colleagues were there to help me to correct those mistakes. I would say doing multiple tasks at the newsroom made me more eligible to work under pressure. However, I discovered my own hidden talents of how to manage work within a short time and I felt it was because of the academic knowledge which helped me to cope-up with every situation at my work. The practical knowledge I have gained from *Dhaka Tribune* is incredible and I hope it will help me in future.

Conclusion

This internship report is the reflection of my studies and experience as a Media and Cultural Studies student of BRAC University. I tried to write how my journey was as an intern at the Central Desk department of *Dhaka Tribune*. It was a phenomenal experience for me to do an internship at the most renowned newspaper of Bangladesh named *Dhaka Tribune*. I have experienced how to deal with several duties within a limited time and how to deal with work pressure. I think it made me hard working and versatile. This internship experience has boosted up my confidence and enhanced my communication skill which I could not get from any book. Lastly, I would like to show gratitude from the core of my heart to all my respected faculties, my supervisor and the whole team of Dhaka Tribune for their love and support throughout the journey. I will cherish their guidance and support forever.

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