

Exploring the Newspaper Representation on Victim-Blaming in Bangladesh: A Recent Case Study

By Md. Raisul Islam & Sk. Abu Raihan Siddique[‡]*

The study investigates the depiction of victim-blaming culture in Bangladeshi newspapers in the context of a specific suicidal case, employing content analysis to explore the representation of the particular incident on a grander scale than previously thought. Using the “Social Representation Theory,” this research focuses on the representation of the victim in Bangladeshi newspapers and attempts to establish the blaming culture prevalent in the country through a specific instance. This mixed-methods study analyzes 27 selected news items regarding the particular case. Data is gathered from five major newspapers (The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, KalerKantho, Samakal, and DeshRupantor) and evaluated using a range of statistical methods. This study describes the victim’s linguistic representation in society through textual analysis of four major elements. It is discovered in this paper that the involvement of a well-known figure was the most concerning issue, but that the print media, specifically newspapers, attempted to conceal that involvement by focusing on other factors such as the victim’s lifestyle, occupation, and identity, all of which were found to be of great concern by selective newspapers, resulting in negative public opinion toward the victim. According to the authors, even if they are subjected to ownership pressures or pressures from other perpetrators, the national dailies of Bangladesh should portray the actual situation as accurately as possible.

Keywords: explore, newspaper representation, victim-blaming, Bangladesh

Introduction

According to researchers and academics, victim-blaming is one of the most pernicious social problems. The blaming culture preserves social control relations and enables individuals to distance themselves socially from crime victims while absolving perpetrators or people of higher punishment status (Ryan, 1971). In this instance, we find the news media’s critical role in shaping society’s perception of crime and public opinion toward wrongdoers and victims. According to Kellner, electronic media play a significant role in shaping popular perceptions of the world, influencing “what we judge to be good or terrible, positive or negative, moral or evil” (p. 24).

Numerous reports in Bangladesh’s print and electronic media emphasized rape victims’ blaming experiences, encouraging additional discussion. Numerous feminist studies reveal that how women are portrayed reflects their social status (Croteau and Hoynes, 1997). According to scholars, only the media, above and

* Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Jagannath University, Bangladesh.

[‡]Lecturer, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Jagannath University, Bangladesh.

beyond all other social strengths, has a significant impact on individuals' behaviors and opinions (Chermak, 1995; Croteau and Hoynes, 1997). In this sense, by undervaluing victims and supporting perpetrators through victim-blaming language, the media conveys a clear message to its viewers that violence against women is not a serious crime and that, in certain situations, women are to blame for their victimization. Domestic abuse professionals and intimate friends and family members of the victims rarely use media sources to report on this type of situation (Bullock and Cubert, 2002; Byerly, 1994; Meyers, 1997; Taylor, 2009). As a result, journalists frequently reinforce preconceptions about victims and perpetrators and neglect to report on the underlying societal reasons for violence (Heeren and Messing, 2009, p. 208). Occasionally, the media generalize social culture and are always on the lookout for the victims' wrong approaches; if they discover any evidence of the victims' wrongdoing or unconsciousness, the real scenario then turns against the victims.

Several previous cases in Bangladesh demonstrated how women victims are undervalued, even though death does not shield them from the onslaught of misogynistic remarks from strangers. A more dangerous fact is the role of news organizations in playing a virulent and presumptuous role alongside others. Even after the perpetrator confessed, the case of a 17-year-old O-level student who was raped and died of her injuries in January 2021 was emphasized as a dramatic rape case, and she became the target of societal censure and defamation. The same thing occurred in another instance involving Shohagi Jahan Tonu, a second-year college girl who was raped and murdered by unidentified perpetrators, and in that case, her reputation was also placed on trial by several media outlets. Without sensationalizing reporting about a victim's lifestyle or previous relationships, the media is responsible for establishing the truth about a crime and the facts by avoiding unnecessary, irrelevant information that portrays the victim as someone who "deserves" what happened to her. By identifying these examples, researchers can ascertain the mainstream media's position on a recent case involving Mosharat Jahan Munia, a 21-year-old woman.

On April 26, Mosarat Jahan Munia, a 21-year-old college student, was discovered hanged in the capital's Gulshan neighborhood. This episode quickly made headlines when one of the country's business heavyweights, Sayem Sobhan Anvir, managing director of Bashundhara Group, filed a lawsuit alleging suicide facilitation. In this scenario, some media outlets chose not to publicize the incident, and as a result, the incident remained dormant for an entire day, even though the media covered it. Nonetheless, the incident was brought to light through social media, and then some of our news outlets began to cover the story, although they attempted to protect the accused by withholding their identity. Thus, a blame game ensues, with the media placing the responsibility squarely on the victim and her family. This research will explore how victim-blaming is depicted in society by using this specific example to comprehend better the media's role in establishing the blaming culture. Additionally, the study seeks to ascertain how the country's leading media sources addressed this issue and if the media attempted to unravel or exacerbate society's vicious, vulgar chatter.

Objectives

This study examines the social depiction of suicides linked with the suicidal case of Mosharat Jahan Munia in news articles, utilizing the content analysis to examine how these instances are portrayed on a larger scale. The mixed-methods approach of this study enables us to examine representations in detail and the frequency with which certain characteristics of those representations, which have been demonstrated in previous research to be particularly prominent in suicide coverage, appear in these news items. The research plan is based on thoroughly understanding the dynamic relationship between victim blaming and the social construction of victims based on the response of many actors in our society in the aftermath.

Literature Review

In the 1960s and 1970s, public opinion in the United States began to shift toward victimization and victim-blaming, adversely affected by the civil rights movement, the women's movement, which placed a greater emphasis on crime response and control, and the development of the mental health profession (Best, 1997, pp. 8–10; Karmen, 1956). Throughout the early 1970s, a number of feminist researchers in developed countries questioned concerns about victim accusation, particularly in the context of assault, arguing that by focusing solely on the victim's association, attention was diverted away from the root causes of women's victimization. Cliché depictions of female casualties imply that women who fall short of prescribed gender roles such as devoted husbands and mothers expedite their mistreatment (Belknap, 2007).

Jamieson et al. (2003) state that suicide contagion acts in one of two ways: by informing news audiences about viable tactics for self-murder or by lowering the barrier to action for vulnerable people. According to Stack (2005), research on the role of suicide news broadcasts as a cause for suicide is inconsistent. Roemer et al. (2009) revealed that media coverage of one suicide topic could persuade some people to end their lives, despite providing some protection for others.

Suicide impacts may be influenced by the altered substance of media suicide scope. In Austria, news reports about individuals who considered suicide but did not attempt it were associated with a decrease in suicide rates, but stories about suicides increasing were associated with an increase in suicide rates (Niederkrotenthaler et al., 2010). The WHO-sponsored Multi-Country Study on women's health and domestic violence against women stated Tanzania had a greater rate of women aged 15 reporting abuse than Ethiopia (11.5 percent in Tanzania and 0.3 percent in Ethiopia). Pallittoet al. (2012) Additionally, the variation in predominance rates reflects the sample type. Consequences and context of the research and structural patterns of violence.

On October 24, 2017, Tarana Burke introduced the #MeToo hashtag. After more than a decade, #MeToo became a global hashtag in 2017 when Alyssa Milano and other women began discussing the Hollywood producer Harvey

Weinstein's sexual assault allegations. The slogan and hashtag swiftly grew in popularity, becoming an international movement. Milano invited the public to expose the scope of the sexual harassment problem by using the hashtag # MeToo. The hashtag was used 12 million times in the first 24 hours alone, generating widespread public and media interest (CBS News, 2017).

Gould et al. (2007) conducted a study of the U.S. media and discovered that the term "suicide" was included prominently in the headlines of more than 60% of articles, with almost 50% of news pieces describing the procedure. Tatum et al. (2010) also discovered that 77% of newspaper articles in the U.S. referenced the suicide method, whereas 69% contained no material about suicide prevention, and only 1% featured news items focusing on suicide risk factors or warnings. Meyers' (1994) assertion is backed up by Bullock and Cubert's (2002) findings, which concern news coverage, which is viewed as highly sensitive to gender myths and stereotypes. Additionally, these researchers' findings emphasized the critical nature of adding feminist perspectives when examining how domestic violence is presented in the news media. Another study examined changes in suicide reporting in Hong Kong newspapers before and after the World Health Organization's media guidelines titled "Preventing Suicide: A Resource for Media Professionals" were published, as well as the commencement of an awareness campaign. The study discovered an increase in certain aspects of suicide coverage, which is especially visible in tabloid newspapers (Fu and Yip, 2008).

In some cases, victim-blaming was shown to be unaffected by inebriation level, although an alcoholic victim was viewed as more accountable for her attack than a sober victim (Richardson and Campbell, 1992). Additionally, social power appears to play a substantial influence in determining blame. Social forces, in particular, appear to play a considerable role in determining fault. Both kind sexism and the force relations subcomponent of the hostile sexism scale are concerned with maintaining an inconsistency in the force differential between individuals in the public sphere. Support for such beliefs contributes to an increase in notable victim-blaming (Abrams et al. 2003; Pederson and Strömwall, 2013; Viki and Abrams, 2002; Yamawaki et al., 2007).

Another study included interviews with journalists and discovered that journalists who cover suicide situations are more receptive to reporting on them as being in the public interest, and they firmly believe that an accurate portrayal of suicide could deter others from committing the same crimes (Collings and Kemp, 2010; Subramanian, 2014). This study paved the way for further research on suicide contagion. Indeed, it is a widespread belief that media publicity can readily trigger suicide (Collings and Kemp, 2010; Subramanian, 2014). Additionally, in a few news stories, exposing the subtle details of suicide is considered critical because it can help expose or hold accountable organizations such as hospitals or clinics that are perceived to have failed to protect high-risk individuals (Subramanian, 2014).

Additional research was conducted on suicide coverage in the Australian news media to determine whether the dissemination of the suicide reporting guideline document "Reporting Suicide and Mental Illness" enhanced coverage of this subject between 2000 and 2007 (Pirkis et al., 2009). The study discovered a

noticeable improvement in the quality of reporting across multiple dimensions, including a drop in the use of inapplicable terminology, a decrease in the detail of suicide methods, and an increase in the provision of information regarding support resources. Another study evaluating the outcome of suicide reporting guidelines in Austria found that the guidelines enhanced the quality of reporting, which indirectly reduced the suicide rate (Niederkrötenhaler and Sonneck, 2007).

According to Amin (2021), victim-blaming has always been a predicted outcome anytime a crime is committed against a woman. In a piece headed “Victim Blaming is a Crime,” he wrote in a piece titled “Victim Blaming is a Crime.” Who are its enablers? The author casts doubt on the mainstream media’s participation in a particular death case involving Mosharat Jahan Munia, who was discovered hung in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Following the filing of a complaint against a prominent business figure in a large conglomerate, it was discovered that the business personality engaged in loud character assassination of the young woman, who is unable to defend herself against the terrible charges leveled against her. When purported mobile phone conversations between the victim and the accused are leaked to social media and then picked up by mainstream media, mainstream media’s role becomes murky (Amin, 2021).

Blaming the victim is not a new occurrence; it appears to have been a part of human civilization throughout history. Rape victims, researchers, discover, experience a disproportionate amount of violence. As a result, scholars have classified rape into three categories: stranger rape, date/acquaintance rape, and marital rape. Stranger rape refers to a rape where the victim and offender have never met or worked together previously. When an individual is physically assaulted by someone she knows—for example, a companion, colleague, or someone with whom she has had a few dates—it is referred to as a date/ acquaintance rape (Calhoun et al., 1976; Check and Malamuth, 1983; Estrich, 1987; Johnson and Jackson, 1988; Quackenbush, 1989). In all of these instances, women experience social harassment, and society is more hesitant to place the entire blame on them, as society believes that women should be more cautious about fraternizing with males.

Research Questions

According to the most recent information of Bangladeshi newspaper representations of blame culture, the study investigates the news from the country’s most reputable newspapers, explicitly seeking to report the victim throughout this period. The following questions will guide our analysis:

1. How does the news coverage tend to blame the victim for her suicide through direct or indirect victim-blaming language?
2. How the newspaper tends not to highlight the issue? Moreover, if they were pushed to cover this incident, what would their (the news media) approach be?
3. How often do the articles portray the event as isolated as a societal issue?

Theoretical Framework

Serge Moscovici's theory of social representations has impacted scholars from various fields but is primarily unknown among media researchers. The theory proposes a new method for examining how the media and individuals build societal and political concerns that define our generation or a particular period in history. Social representations are about the processes through which aspects are considered that result in shared interests and sentiments that help to enhance the social bonds that connect societies, organizations, and communities. It concentrates attention on events that become the subject of passionate debate, high emotions, conflicts, and ideological struggle, and as a result, it transforms society's collective thinking. As a communication theory, it establishes a link between society and the individual and between the media and the general audience. The concept is relevant in various ways for media and communication studies. It describes several communication mechanisms that explain how ideas are transmitted and transformed into what is considered common sense in everyday contexts.

The SRT is a social bonding theory that clarifies what links us and teaches us how social bonds are formed (Rateau et al., 2012). The idea relates to the process of collective meaning formation, emphasizing phenomena that become the topic of debate, intense emotions, conflicts, and ideological struggle, hence altering society's collective thinking. A communication theory establishes a connection between society and individuals, the media, and the public. The idea applies to the media and communication (Hoijer, 2011), as it describes how media texts address and depict national, regional, and societal concerns and events to an audience. Bauer and Gaskell (1999) assert that "representations are embedded in communication and individual minds, shared in a manner comparable to language." Washer (2004) defines these representations as "pictures, phrases, descriptions, instances, models, and metaphors that form the world." The researchers seek to focus on media representations and measure what the public generalizes or believes, much like a "media effects" approach would. From a social learning perspective, this work may serve as a model for suicide behavior, influencing vulnerable readers who may attempt to replicate similar activities. According to preliminary research, Internet searches for keywords connected to techniques increase significantly following news coverage, including suicide methods (Chang et al. 2011).

The purpose of this paper is to present the theory and its communication principles and make them relevant for media studies theorists and researchers. Using the "Social Representation Theory," this research focuses on the victim's representation and uncovers a culture of victim-blaming in Bangladeshi newspapers. Rather than monitoring what the general public believes or even thinks, a "media impacts" strategy would focus on public perceptions of a specific instance rather than monitoring what the overall public believes or even thinks, as would be the case in this research.

Methodology

The research examined the first ten days following the case's discovery, from April 26, 2021, to May 5, 2021, to ascertain the early pattern of news coverage for this selected case in the country's top-tier publications. This timeframe was chosen based on current events to comprehend the incident's aftermath and become acquainted with the mainstream media's (Newspaper) discourse around the chosen case. This study will use a content analysis approach to investigate the print media's strategy for building a representation of this case by linguistically assessing all news items published within the chosen timeframe.

Based on their circulation, five prominent daily newspapers (The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, KalerKantho, Samakal, and DeshRupantor) were chosen to investigate how the mainstream print media in Bangladesh addressed this type of issue and what their position and motivations were in presenting this type of case to the general public.

The figures are derived from a survey of five nationally distributed publications. The "ProthomAlo" is Bangladesh's most prominent, extensively circulated, and widely read the newspaper, with over 6.6 million daily readers. It is owned by Transcom Group, one of its most prominent business conglomerates (Prothom Alo, 2018). The Daily Star is also included as a sample because it is the most widely read English daily in Bangladesh, with nearly 45,000 circulations (BD-INFO.com, 2020), and is owned by the same group as ProthomAlo, while the "KalerKantho" is one of the most widely read vernacular daily newspapers in Bangladesh, with 2.9 million circulations, and is owned by the same group as Prothom Alo (Wikipedia, 2021). It is a subsidiary of East-West Media Group, a subsidiary of the Bashundhara Group, Bangladesh's largest conglomerate. Due to its popularity, following Prothom Alo (Wikipedia, 2021) is also included as a sample. This illustrious vernacular daily is owned by Times Media Limited, a subsidiary of Ha-Meem Group, one of Bangladesh's major textile and textile companies. Furthermore, the "DeshRupantor" is regarded as one of the capital's most current daily publications, owned by the Rupayan Group. As previously stated, these newspapers were chosen as a sample based on their circulation and popularity, as determined by National Media Survey numbers (NMS).

The quantitative content indicates the data frequency for an inevitable occurrence, including articles about the victims, primary stories, and the number of topics. A total of 27 articles from Munia's news feed were chosen for examination. The content was culled from the selective daily's internet archive, where the printed issues are typically preserved. To gather the information, we used a combination of observation and note-taking techniques. According to the research, the Daily Star published ten articles in the first ten days following the tragedy. Seven, five, and five news stories have been published by Prothom Alo, Samakal, and DeshRupantor, respectively, about the topic. Research on the KalerKantho has yielded no information regarding the episode, which is unusual (Table 1).

Table 1. Sample of the Study

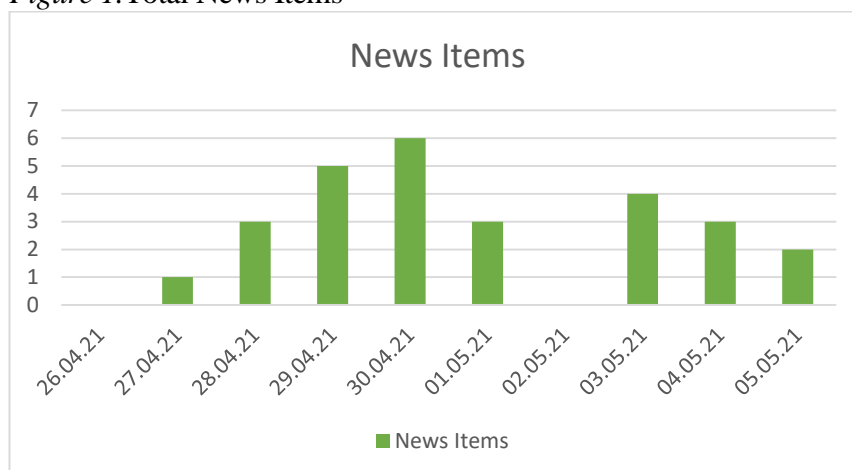
Name of the newspapers	Sample of the study	Percentage
The Daily Star	10	37.00%
Prothom Alo	7	26.00%
Kaler Kantho	0	0.00%
Samakal	5	18.50%
Desh Rupantor	5	18.50%

The purpose of this study is to identify some similar themes examined in the current literature on victim-blaming and the media's reaction to the victim. The researchers found four primary themes: protecting the accused, accusing the victim of suicide, blaming the victim's family, and fabricating narratives through perplexing tales. The qualitative analysis discusses how the victim's words, phrases, and images are formed in mainstream media stories to support the common societal ideology of blaming women and how the media's political economy is constructed. In general, this study attempts to identify the blaming culture generated by the Bangladeshi media by evaluating a specific case.

Results and Discussion

Between April 26 and May 5, 2021, 27 news items were discovered in five newspapers. The news contains standard pieces such as filling out cases from the victims' families and following the investigation's progress, but not a single story appears as an editorial or op-ed column. As indicated initially, the case becomes complicated and compounded by the media when one of the most prominent corporate personalities is charged. Due to the businessman's ownership of several media organizations, the KalerKantho did not publish a single news item on the subject during the designated period. Additionally, all five newspapers placed a lower premium on publishing suicide news, as researchers discovered no news items on April 26, even in these days' online editions. The following day (April 27), only Prothom Alo published a single news column. The Daily Star and Samakal, on the other hand, both published news about the incident on April 28, while the DeshRupantor did so on April 29. The researchers discovered that most news pieces (6 out of 27) about Munia's suicide attempt were published on April 30, with The Daily Star publishing 50% (3 out of 6) of the news items on that day. Furthermore, this study found that after May 4, publications appear to shift their focus away from the tragedies, with only two news articles discovered on May 5 (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Total News Items



The issue's lack of publicity could be due to a desire to conceal the name of the accused businessman, SayemSobhanAnvir, Managing Director of Bashundhara Group, and a pervasive societal mentality of blaming the female victims. According to this article, The Daily Star published the most items, while Prothom Alo published the second most. This may have occurred due to the struggle between two powerful conglomerates (Transcom and Bashundhara), as the Transcom group owns the two daily newspapers. Except for KalerKantho, the other two dailies have expressed their unintentional support for the accused businessman. The Daily Star placed seven things on the front page out of ten, while the Prothom Alo placed four items on the front page out of seven. On the contrary, Samakal's front page was devoid of news articles. Interestingly, while the DeshRupantor had three things on its front page, the daily news articles criticized the victim and her family.

Analysis

Identifying themes, the meaning of words, sense-making strategies, and images are the primary goals of textual analysis, adding more to the content analysis (Patton, 1990). Four themes will be examined to provide an answer to the first and second research questions, which are concerned with societal representation and the approach of the media in constructing a representation of suicide, respectively: a) Protecting the accused; b) Blame on the victim for suicide; c) Blame on the victim's family, and d) Creating stories through confusing tales. In this case, the involvement of a well-known figure was the most concerning issue for the media, so it is essential to observe the media's role in highlighting the incident to its readers or audience. From the quantitative perspective, researchers found the same items placed with different perspectives by different dailies. Researchers tend to identify the newspapers' linguistic representation of society through textual analysis by discussing the four major themes.

Representing the Accused

The newspaper is exceptionally effective at constructing social values and culture. Thus, it is up to print journalism to reconstruct the actual worth or negative value. Media outlets, specifically the print, must rely on their owners to address any difficulties in the present era. The political economy of the newspaper has become a familiar narrative, as very few media organizations are identified solely by their activities rather than by the group of companies to which they belong. When an incident occurs against the group or the group's owner, the particular media outlet has no other alternative to concealing the incident.

Additionally, it remains silent on portraying the issue to its audience or society. The researchers discovered that the KalerKantho engaged in the same behavior in the suicide case of Munia as they did with their managing director. Though the newspaper is the third most widely circulated daily publication, it has shown no interest in publishing-related stories. According to researchers, this form of quiet supports and protects the accused. The researchers discovered that The Daily Star and Prothom Alo regularly publish news on this subject. However, both media have highlighted a passage that is found in favor of the accused. On April 27, researchers discovered the first mention of the subject in Prothom Alo. However, the article highlighted the victim's relationship status, as in "the college student was in a relationship." Thus, the publication purposefully attempted to create a poor image of the victim, implying a desire to protect the guilty.

Additionally, both dailies (Prothom Alo and The Daily Star) have constantly emphasized the rent for the flat where the girl (Munia, the victim) used to live alone. After two days of investigation and adequate treatment, The Daily Star featured the occurrence on its front page on April 28. The terms "love affair" and "romantic relationship" were frequently used by the newspaper, which the researchers defined as a way to vilify the victim. On the other hand, the DoshRupantor was more active in defending the guilty and blaming the victim and her family. The newspaper was highly interested in publishing a feature story blaming the victim for his or her character flaws.

Assigning Blame to the Victim

Generally, when a crime happens, the offender's involvement and activities receive the most focus throughout the discussion of the incident. On the other hand, the media tends to do the same thing. However, when a sexual offense happens, the victim is thrust into the spotlight rather than the offender. Likewise, the media does. The media is fascinated by the victim role, and victims are frequently blamed for their victimization. The study discovered that newspapers were keen on blaming the victim in this instance. Even worse, several newspapers were so unconcerned about the culprit that they did not examine the current situation. The Daily Star and Prothom Alo were also found to carry regular follow-up news, such as the case's filing, the accused's bail petition, the autopsy report, and the police's overall assessment. However, both daily describe the victim, Munia, and exaggerate the accused's relationship issues. The researchers identified

this attitude as indirect blame directed at the victim. The Samakal published only five regular news stories about the occurrence, indicating that the paper paid little attention to the suicidal case. In addition to the daily frame, the paper emphasizes the importance of relationships. In its feature reporting, The DeshRupantor frequently finds reasons to blame the victim. According to the data in this study, DeshRupantor published only five publications during the sample period. No item is perceived to be published as hard news; instead, the daily intends to feature the victim somehow.

On April 29, the daily featured a story titled “Munia gets greedy due to her sister’s greed” on its main page. Additionally, the victim’s daily published images violate the editorial rules of media representation. The term “greedy” in the headline implies that the victim is responsible for her exploitation. The terms “uncontrolled lifestyle,” “targeting well-known people,” and “great ambition” are also used to place the victim’s responsibility purposely. As we all know, media outlets play a critical role in molding public attitudes (Hodgetts and Chamberlain, 2007).

Additionally, this study establishes that the media does not always present factual evidence. These distinctions in language are utilized to reinforce stereotyped beliefs. In this instance, this type of perception fosters social divisions and promotes the media’s unethical beliefs.

Place Blame on the Family

In our society, when an occurrence happens to women, society usually derogates the victims for being more responsible for having been victimized, and as usual, the family of the victims has to face negative responses from the society as our culture is highly male-dominated like other media the newspaper also shows its character by supporting the societal culture. Ultimately, the victims and their families are heavily blamed, and somehow their social lives have become congested. A content analysis of this study finds some stories highly blaming the victim’s family for the victimization. Researchers find the daily DeshRupantor more interested in blaming the victim and her family. On April 30, the daily highlighted the role of Munia’s sister in blackmailing the reputed wealthy person. The daily tends to present that Munia’s family are too responsible for her suicide, and their “over greediness” has made Munia more reckless in her lifestyle. Some of the images of Munia’s family that led to Munia as a bullshitter are described as “selfishness,” “unwise decisions,” and “blackmailing tendency.” There is evidence that the national daily DeshRupantor has been influenced by the accused or offender, using words and images to blame the victim and her family members in postings on social media. In this sense, the Daily Star researchers found the pictures and detailed family identification of the victim and her family were published with the news articles, while no related pictures of the accused were seen printed, and even the names of the offenders were concealed cautiously by the newspapers.

Creating a News Story Based on “Misleading Tales”

Contradictions abound in these stories, leaving readers perplexed as to the actual situation. Among the selected publications, the Prothom Alo, The Daily Star, and the Samakal all published regular news, but in some cases, all three emphasized the victim's link with the criminal and her lifestyle the most. As discussed, words or phrases that assign guilt to the sufferer were discovered. Those words might be used to characterize the purpose of the newspapers' highlighting specific articles. Additionally, when the victim's brother filed another complaint against another accused/offender on May 2, all three publications expressed a strong interest in publishing the news with great attention, as they discovered another narrative to share with the public to blame the victim. Such media attention is intended to divert attention away from the facts, making it more difficult to blame the actual criminal. The other daily, DeshRupantor, made prominently presenting some stories to defend the accused explicitly. On May 5, the daily published a headline captioned, “Is Nusrat (victim Munia's sister) about to face the accuser?” The daily attempted to blame the victims' family by fabricating several misleading stories, such as suggesting that the victim's family is more guilty of victimization and attempting to prove that the victim's sister may have orchestrated an assassination plot for the victim's suicide. This newspaper brought to light the attachment of another offender (SharunChowdury) with another plot of the narrative, as the paper underlined in its report that the victim had another relationship with Sharun, and her family was well informed about it. The victim was characterized in this case through some perplexing newspaper stories. Nowadays, anytime an accused person is discovered to be necessary, the media outlets endeavor to protect him/her, and as part of this, the media attempt to disarticulate the inquiry process by disseminating inflated stories about the victim's character.

Conclusion

The study examines the victim-blaming tendency evident in the significant Bangladeshi newspapers' reporting of the college girl Munia's suicidal death. This study discovered that the five national dailies devote less attention to even publishing the daily news. The subsequent reaction to the newspaper pieces varied according to the perspective taken by the various media outlets. Ownership is critical in this case, as the media's primary focus was on the involvement of a well-known media owner and corporate executives. As a result, the media outlet of the accused, KalerKantho, has shown no interest in publishing a single piece of news on the subject. The victim's socioeconomic and demographic status and the traits that accompanied it were the most contentious points. Among the five selective tier-1 newspapers, The Daily Star did its best to elevate the topic for publication, even though it took time to do so. The Daily Star did not use the victims' photographs due to editorial guidelines, but the most widely read vernacular daily, Prothom Alo, did. The DeshRupantor was discovered to be more

aggressive in blaming the victim and attempted to shield the accused by blaming the victim's relatives and fabricating inflated and confusing stories about the victim, Munia. The study discovers a resemblance between this issue and Social Representation theory in this area. As part of the social representations process, the newspaper conventionalizes the Munia issue, as well as the people and events that certain newspapers meet by giving the issue a characteristic shape, categorizing the issue, and gradually establishing the issue as a distinct and shared cognition. The patriarchal tradition of Bangladeshi society frequently depicts men in prominent and influential roles; this study demonstrates how this culture has been developed through the newspaper. Blaming the victim and family diverts attention away from the culprit, and the media's portrayal of the offender, as well as cultural factors, persecutes the victim's family. The victim's lifestyle, work, and identity are all deemed cause for alarm by the selective publications. This type of conduct generates strong public opinion against the victims, which hurts the victim's and her family's reputations as well as the larger society. This may incite the perpetrator to commit other acts of violence against girls and women.

Reflection

The media's role in establishing a violence-free, gender-equal society is more critical. If the media becomes more attentive to fulfilling this constructive function, the benefits will accrue to women, society, and the country's overall growth.

Additionally, this study recommended that the newspaper portray the true situation regardless of ownership demands or pressures from other perpetrators. From a societal standpoint, the news media should be more accountable and exercise greater authenticity. The victim-blaming culture must end, and the newspaper must reflect healthy communication through proper investigation.

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