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## **ROLE OF MEDIA IN REPRESENTATION OF FORCED MIGRANTS: A STUDY ON ROHINGYA CRISIS IN BANGLADESH**

### **Abstract**

Media plays a key role in forced displacement or refugee alike situation and help to generate public awareness and support. At the same time, it plays a direct or indirect role to influence the national policy and foreign policy of a state. The role of the media in covering the news on refugee or forced migration influences international, regional, national and local actors. For a long time, Bangladesh is going through a forced migration crisis. Bangladesh is a host country of persecuted Rohingyas from Myanmar. The most recent influx of the Rohingya community from Myanmar took place in August 2017. Considering agenda-setting and news framing methods of media, this article is an attempt to understand the role of national media in representing the Rohingya crisis. Moreover, Johan Galtung's peace and/or war journalism indicators help to find out the response of the national media towards the recent Rohingya influx. The purposive sampling method was followed to select the national media as a sample of this study which emphasized on versatility of news presentation style and acceptance among the mass people. Eventually, this article concludes that the agenda-setting and news framing of national media and its response in Bangladesh were peace journalism oriented.

**Keywords:** Refugee, Forced Migrants, Rohingya, Media, Agenda Settings, News Framing, Peace Journalism, War Journalism.

### **1. Introduction**

Media plays a key role in any humanitarian crisis<sup>1</sup> as it passes information, presents news, and helps to generate public awareness. Media coverage articulates public attitude and thus, media can influence policy making<sup>2</sup>. Through media, citizens get to know about the policies and how these policies are going to affect them. On the other hand, the government gets to know about the feedback of the citizens. Therefore, the role of media in covering the news of refugee or forced migration is influential in

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<sup>1</sup> Ulaş Sunata and Esra Yildiz, "Representation of Syrian refugees in the Turkish media," *Journal of Applied Journalism & Media Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 2018, pp. 129-151.

<sup>2</sup> Mrogers Everett, and James Wdearing. "Agenda-setting research: Where has it been, where is it going?," *Annals of the International Communication Association*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1988, pp. 555-594.

many aspects. From this perspective, the research question of this paper is to what extent does national media play role in the representation of forced migrants? That means, it is an attempt to analyze the role of media in the representation of forced migrants in national media or the media of a host state. As a case, Rohingya influx in Bangladesh has attributed over any dimension of national crisis. To analyze the role of media in Bangladesh as a refugee host country, this study adopts two of the prominent theories of media studies. The agenda-settings and framing theory were used to categorize the role played by the media of the host country. Agenda-setting refers to the idea that there is a strong correlation between the emphasis that mass media places on certain issues and the importance attributed to these issues by the mass audience.<sup>3</sup> Robert M. Entman defines framing as the process of deliberately choosing certain aspects of reality and then laying more stress on them.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the response of the media was analyzed through the lens of Johan Galtung's Peace/War Journalism theory.

The objectives of this study are to find out the key understanding of the Rohingya crisis through the lens of the media based on the agenda setting and news framing theory; and to find out the approaches the media follow while responding to the crisis based on peace journalism or war journalism theory. Overall, this article is an attempt to analyze responses from the national media of Bangladesh in representing persecuted Rohingya community living in Bangladesh.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

Agenda settings theory is a suitable theory that concerns people's role in any particular context. The theory was first put forward by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw. They initially proposed that the media sets the public agenda, in the sense that the media may not exactly tell someone what to think, but the media may tell what to think about. In their first article where they brought this theory into light, McCombs and Shaw put it in the explanation as:

“In choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. In reflecting what candidates are saying during a campaign, the mass media may well determine the important issues—that is, the media may set the “agenda” of the campaign”.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, “The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media”, *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1972, pp. 176-187.

<sup>4</sup> Robert M. Entman. “Framing: toward clarification of a fractured paradigm”, *Journal of Communication*, 1993, pp. 51-58.

<sup>5</sup> Maxwell E. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, op. cit.

Ever since their introduction of agenda-setting theory, there has been a surfeit of investigation regarding its uses, and so, now there exists an extension of the theory, known as “Second Level Agenda Setting”. When mass media emphasizes on any particular topic, the audience and the public receiving the news have a common tendency to consider this topic as an important one. Many of the researches have done on this issue and appeared that the media agenda has a substantive influence on the public agenda. This shows that the media holds strong agenda-setting effects on mass people. The influence from agenda-setting of the news media is not only limited to its focus on a particular issue. Within the whole communication process, the media also influences people’s understanding and perspective on the issues, raised in the news contents.<sup>6</sup>

Framing theory is considered as the second stage of agenda setting where the media specifically focusses on some of the attributes among many others, of any particular context. This theory is well defined by Erving Goffman and is stated as “The concept of framing is related to the agenda-setting tradition but expands the research by focussing on the essence of the issues at hand rather than on a particular topic”.<sup>7</sup> In this way, the media focuses its attention on certain events and then places them within a field of meaning. According to this theory, the news could be construed as a form of second-level agenda-setting – they not only tell the audience what to think about (agenda-setting theory), but also how to think about that issue (second-level agenda-setting, framing theory).<sup>8</sup> Apparently, the choice of journalists is the key factor to set the priority attributes of any news. This theory examines the concept of frames, which has its task to “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described”.<sup>9</sup> McCombs has argued that in the aspect of the second-level of agenda-setting, “framing is the selection of a restricted number of thematically related attributes for inclusion on the media agenda when a particular object is discussed”.<sup>10</sup> Similarities between framing and second-level agenda, both are more focussed on how issues, framing and agenda-setting focusses on the most significant aspects, themes, or descriptions of the objects of interest.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Maxwell McCombs, *The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion*, Austin: University of Texas at Austin, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Ervin Goffman, *Frame Analysis an essay on organization of experience*, Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1974.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> David H. Weaver, “Thoughts on Agenda Setting, Framing and Priming”, *Journal of Communication*, 2007, pp. 142–147.

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Hammarberg, *Human rights and a changing media landscape*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publications, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

The concept of peace journalism was originated by Norwegian professor Johan Galtung, the founder of “Peace and Conflict Studies” and “Peace Research”. Peace Journalism entered the academic and professional arena during the late 1990s and the theory was championed by former journalists Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick.<sup>12</sup> Galtung’s model of peace journalism builds on the dichotomy between what he calls “war journalism” and a “peace journalism” approach. The model includes four main points which contrast the two approaches: war journalism is war/violence-oriented, propaganda-oriented, elite-oriented, and victory-oriented. On the other hand, peace journalism is peace/conflict-oriented, truth-oriented, people-oriented, solution-oriented.<sup>13</sup>

**Table 1: Itemized Category of War/ Peace Journalism**

War Journalism Elements	Peace Journalism Elements
Waits for war to break out before reporting.. <b>Reactive</b>	Starts reporting long before war breaks out... <b>Proactive</b>
<b>Visible</b> aspects of war (casualties, dead and wounded, damage to property)	<b>Invisible</b> aspects of war (emotional trauma, damage to society and culture)
<b>Elite-oriented</b> ( focuses on Leaders, uses elite sources)	<b>People-oriented</b> (focuses on common people as actors or sources)
Focuses mainly on <b>differences</b> that led to the conflict	Reports the areas of <b>agreement</b> that might lead to a solution to the conflict
Focuses on the <b>here and now</b>	Reports <b>causes</b> and consequences of the conflict
Dichotomizes between <b>the good and the evil</b>	<b>Avoids labeling</b> of good and bad sides
<b>Two-party</b> orientation (one party wins, the other party loses)	<b>Multi-party</b> oriented (solution, multi-facets oriented)
Partisan	<b>Neutral</b> or not taking sides
Winning-oriented ( <b>zero sum</b> game)	<b>Win-win</b> oriented ( solution, multi-facets oriented)
Stops reporting with the peace treaty signing and heads for another war elsewhere ( <b>after peace</b> )	Stays on and reports <b>aftermath of war-</b> the reconstruction, rehabilitation, and implementation of peace treaty
Uses <b>victimizing language</b> (e.g., destitute, devastated, defenseless, pathetic, tragic, demoralized) that tells only what has been done to people	<b>Avoids victimizing language</b> reports what has been done and could be done by people, and how they are coping
Uses <b>demonizing language</b> (e.g. vicious cruel, brutal, barbaric, inhuman, tyrant, savage, ruthless, terrorist, extremist, fanatic, fundamentalist)	Avoids demonizing language, uses more precise descriptions, titles, names)
Uses <b>emotive words</b> , like genocide, assassination, Massacre, systematic raping, etc	Objective and moderate, <b>Avoids emotive words</b> , Reserves the strongest language only for the gravest situation, Does not exaggerate.

Source: Adapted from Galtung (1986;1998)

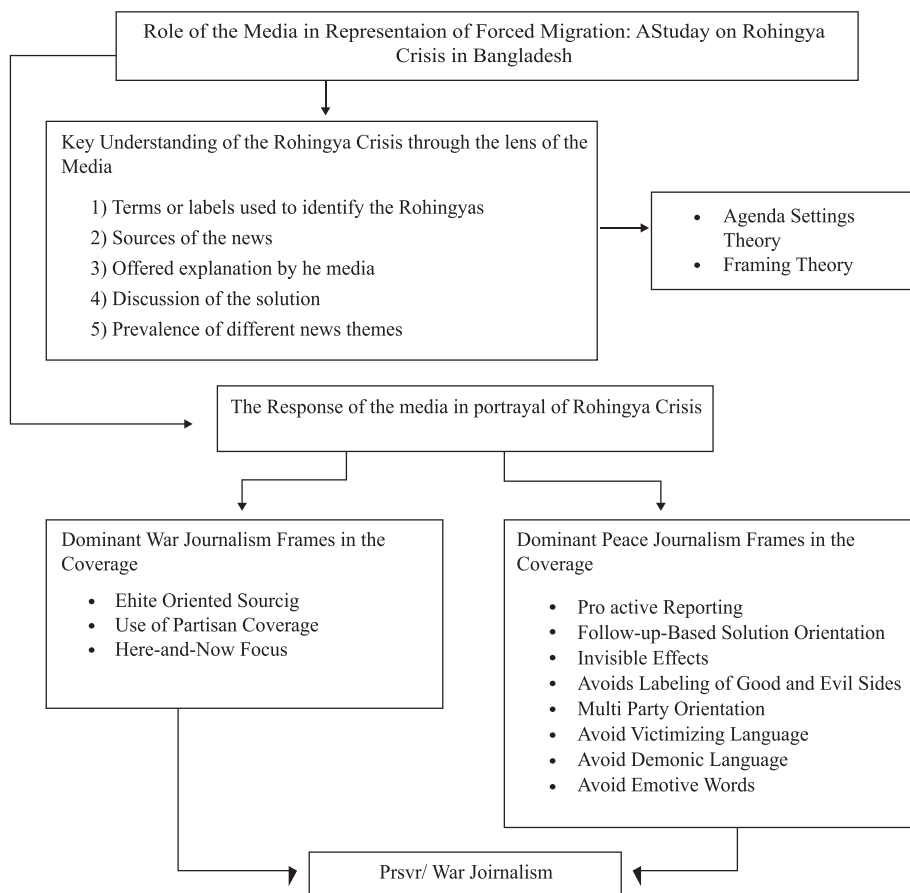
<sup>12</sup> Vasvi Çiftcioğlu, *Peace Journalism : A Practical Handbook for Journalists in Cyprus*, Nicosia: Naci Talat Vakfi and IKME, 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Jake Lynch, and Annabel McGoldrick, *Peace Journalism*, Gloucestershire: Hawthorn House, 2005.

The coding categories are based on Galtung’s classification of war/peace journalism and adapted from categories created by Lee and Maslog,<sup>14</sup> Lee<sup>15</sup> and Fahmy and Eakin.<sup>16</sup> Among the thirteen indicators, ten of them have been restructured for this particular incident.

Based on the concepts discussed in this section, the analytical framework of this article is outlined below in a flow chart.

**Figure 1: Analytical Framework**



<sup>14</sup>Seow Ting Lee and Crispin C. Maslog, “War or Peace Journalism? Asian Newspaper Coverage of Conflicts”, *Journal of Communication*, 2005, pp. 311-329.

<sup>15</sup> Seow Ting Lee, “Peace Journalism: Principles and Structural Limitations in the News Coverage of Three Conflicts”, *Mass Communication & Society*, 2010, pp. 361-384.

<sup>16</sup> Shahira Fahmy and Britain Eakin, “High drama on the high seas: Peace versus war journalism framing of an Israeli/Palestinian-related incident”, *International Communication Gazette*, 2014, pp. 86-105.

This framework determines the relationship between the media and forced migrants. The understanding of the media is to be analyzed by the agenda settings and news framing theory. The news media frames allowed us to determine the response of the media in light of the peace and war journalism model.

### 3. Methodology of the Study

This study examines the Rohingya influx “event” of 2017 in Bangladesh and analyzes the responses of national media towards the Rohingya crisis within a bounded time from 2017 to 2019. A content analysis method is chosen to understand the role of the media in particular crisis. This study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. At present, there are 34 television channels, including 4 state-controlled TV channels, and about 2,700 newspapers.<sup>17</sup> However, it was not possible to cover all the TV channels for collecting data which is a limitation of this study. Therefore, this study adopts purposive sampling method to select samples of the electronic and print media. In case of selection of TV channel, this study purposively emphasizes on 24 hours news channel, the Target Rating Point (TRP) of news channels, mass acceptance and diversity of news presentation style. From this point of view, ‘Jamuna Television’ and ‘Independent Television’ have been taken as the sample of electronic media. On the other hand, in selection process of print media, this study purposively emphasizes on media outlets that mean top circulation of paper and operation stand. *The Daily Ittefaq* has been taken as one of the oldest Bengali newspapers of Bangladesh, while *The Daily Star* is the top circulated English newspaper of Bangladesh.

Newspaper articles of *The Daily Star* and *The Ittefaq* from August 2017 to December 2019 have been analyzed in this study to find out the role of the media. The selected electronic media samples are investigated through a keyword search which contains words, such as “refugee”,<sup>18</sup> “migrant”,<sup>19</sup> “forced migrant”,<sup>20</sup> “asylum

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<sup>17</sup> Farida Yasmin, “The challenge of women in journalism”, *Bangladesh Pratidin*, 16 March 2021.

<sup>18</sup> Refugees are people outside their country of origin because of feared persecution, conflict, violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order, and who, as a result, require “international protection”; UNHCR, “Refugee or Migrant? Word Choice Matters”, *The UNHCR Representation in Cyprus*, Nicosia: UNHCR, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> A uniform legal definition of the term “migrant” does not exist at the international level. Some policymakers, international organizations, and media outlets understand and use the word “migrant” as an umbrella term to cover both migrants and refugees. For instance, global statistics on international migration typically use a definition of “international migration” that would include many asylum-seeker and refugee movements. For more, see *ibid*.

<sup>20</sup> Forced migration is a migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes (e.g. movements of refugees and internally displaced persons as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects); IOM, “Key Migration Terms”, *International Organization for Migration Agency*, 2018, available at <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>, accessed on 19 September 2021.

seeker”<sup>21</sup> or “Rohingya”. Print versions, online archive of the newspapers and online archive and Youtube channels of the electronic media were the key sources of information for this study. The content analysis of newspaper articles itself is a part of quantitative analysis. Whereas, at the qualitative level, specific themes were used for making explanations. The common theme to collect and analyze data were terms or labels, which were used to identify them, explanations of the situation, innocence, vulnerability or criminality, national security, sources of the news and personal or group tragedies. After specifying the themes, data were collected to ensure results. This is a research paper based on secondary data from open sources. At the same time, it uses different journal articles and book chapters for the study. However, this study never undermines the ethical consideration of a research paper. Thus, it emphasizes on proper referencing of different sources.

#### 4. Literature Review

This section is an attempt to understand the debate of refugee and forced migration studies and the definition of media as a source of information to mass people. It also reveals how refugee events are covered and presented in the media based on existing literature. Lastly, it focusses on literature that sheds light on Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh. This literature further helps us to understand how national media portrays the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh.

According to the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Refugee is

“A person who, “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his or her nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country”.<sup>22</sup>

The development of Refugee Studies occurred when the end of the Cold War had undermined the non-humanitarian method of reasoning of the worldwide refugee system. According to B. S. Chimni, four phases of refugee studies can be categorized.<sup>23</sup> The first phase was from 1914 to 1945 in which specific inter-war problems were addressed. The second phase from 1945 to 1982 saw studies of the refugee camps left after the displacements of the two World Wars, as well as work on the interwar International Refugee Organization and its post-war successor, the

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<sup>21</sup> “Asylum seeker is someone who’s request for sanctuary has yet to be proceed”, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/asylum-seekers.html>, accessed on 19 September 2021.

<sup>22</sup> UNHCR, *The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol*, New York: UNHCR, 2008.

<sup>23</sup> B. S Chimni, “The Birth of a ‘Discipline’: From Refugee.”, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 2009.

UNHCR.<sup>24</sup> In the third phase from 1982 to 2000, the Refugee Studies Programme (RSP) was established in Oxford in 1983 followed shortly afterwards by the publication of the *Journal of Refugee Studies* in 1988. The expansion of refugee studies to the fourth wave has been an attribute of the anxieties and concerns of Western states in the wake of increasing movement of asylum seekers from the South to the North. It is therefore no accident that Refugee Studies is now witnessing a relative decline and is being replaced by Forced Migration Studies to come to grips with current preoccupations of the western policy makers with the asylum–migration nexus or the fate of growing numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).<sup>25</sup> This debate in the field of refugee and forced migration studies further helps us to understand the different labelling<sup>26</sup> of displaced persons in the media.

Media is the medium that connects the government with mass people. It often plays the role of the messenger, provocateur to agenda settings, advocates to public interests and so on. Mass media is a combination of satellite television channels, newspapers, online portals, radios that specifically broadcasts news. According to Hammarberg “the media plays an enormously important role in the protection of human rights. Media expose human rights violations and offer an arena for different voices to be heard in public discourse”<sup>27</sup>, that indicates media offers explanation of a situation. Louw mentions that media is a viable source of information and there are two types of media, one used by the “information rich”, the other by the “information poor”.<sup>28</sup>

There are some studies and documents on media coverage of refugee issues. Most studies reveal that these refugee events are covered and presented in two different ways- preset political and media-house agenda. In the report, named “Press Coverage of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in the EU: A Content Analysis of Five European Countries”, the authors mentioned the two ways of media coverage on refugees—“humanitarian” and “unsympathetic”.<sup>29</sup> Humanitarian type of journalism typically covers refugee issues focussing on the humanitarian requirements and social security of displaced people. On the other hand, other studies present refugees as

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<sup>24</sup> Richard Black, “Fifty Years of Refugee Studies: From Theory to Policy”, Center for Migration Studies of New York, 2001.

<sup>25</sup> B. S Chimni, *ibid*.

<sup>26</sup> Maria Hussain, “Forced Migration and Protection: A Study on Rohingya Forced Migrants in Bangladesh”, *Social Science Review, The Dhaka University Studies, Part-D*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 2019, p. 147- 167.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas Hammarberg, “Human rights and a changing media landscape”, *Council of Europe Publications*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> P. Eric Louw, “The Media & Political Process”, London: Sae, 2010.

<sup>29</sup> Mike Berry, Inaki Garcia-Blanco and Kerry Moore, “Press coverage of the refugee and migrant crisis in the EU: A content analysis of five European countries.”, 2016, available at <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjs4bmZ9NnzAhUMzgzGHSZyC3UQFnoECAQQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.unhcr.org%2F56bb369e9.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1Ok8Yc4UJlIp-oDedjyL6>, accessed on



threats to country's security and economic growth.<sup>30</sup> According to Georgiou and Zaborowski<sup>31</sup>, media in non-receiving countries, especially the right-leaning ones, are more likely to present refugees in ways those lack in humanitarian attitude and efforts. Even if they are presented from a humanitarian perspective, media does not usually present them directly through the cameras or microphones; they are usually narrated by the reporters. Women and minors are even barely mentioned in most of the reports. They identified media coverage of refugee events as "scattered" and shallow attentions.<sup>32</sup> However, the contemporary studies prove that refugees are often victimized or dehumanized by the media<sup>33</sup> in diverse ways regarding its interests, while it can play a leading role in deviating the wounds upon refugees by delegating them and presenting their miseries through peace journalism which can lead the situation to an effective solution. As media has direct and indirect impact on its receivers and in the protection of humanitarian crisis<sup>34</sup>, this article found it time worthy to analyze the role of the media in the case of Rohingya crisis by prevailing different news themes.

Another study illustrates the diverse initiatives of states based in three periods: before the 1990s, after the 1990s, and with a particular focus on the riots after 2012. This study attempts to verify the state policy in different terms as well as basic principles of political realism and classical liberalism in order to trace Bangladesh, Malaysia and Thailand's policy towards the Rohingya refugees.<sup>35</sup> Caitilin Wake and Brena Yu discussed about the Rohingya's arrival to Bangladesh; the repatriation deal between Bangladesh and Myanmar and the minimal political and diplomatic progress to address the crisis in Myanmar; China and Russia, as they have blocked action at the United Nations (UN); and the role of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) which has been unable to develop a coherent position.<sup>36</sup> This paper focussed on the Rohingya crisis as a protracted social crisis that may create further long-term issues in the hosting state but failed to mention the social instability or possibility of terrorism in the country.<sup>37</sup> Another study by Iftekharul Bashar has shown concerns about how the exploitation of the ongoing Rohingya crisis by jihadist groups can potentially undermine Bangladesh's hard-earned counter-terrorism

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<sup>30</sup>Jakub Idzik, and Rafał Klepka, "Media Coverage of Refugee Crisis. Some Evidence from Poland", *International Relations Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2018, pp. 59-68.

<sup>31</sup>Myria Georgiou and Rafał Zaborowski, "Media coverage of the "refugee crisis": A cross-European perspective", *Council of Europe Report*, Vol. 1, No. 13, 2017.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Nick Haslam, "Dehumanization: An integrative review." *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 2006, pp. 252-264.

<sup>34</sup> Ulaş Sunata and Esra Yildiz, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Sultana Yesmin, "Policy towards Rohingya Refugees: A Comparative Analysis of Bangladesh, Malaysia And Thailand", *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum.)*, Vol. 61, No. 1, 2016, pp. 71-100.

<sup>36</sup> Caitilin Wake and Brena Yu, "The Rohingya crisis: Making the transition from emergency to longer term development", *Humanitarian Policy Group*, 25 March 2018, available at <https://odi.org/en/publications/the-rohingya-crisis-making-the-transition-from-emergency-to-longer-term-development/>, accessed on 5 August 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

achievements.<sup>38</sup> This study discusses how the terror group lost territory over the Middle Eastern region and want to occupy the territory now on the South Asian area.<sup>39</sup> These pieces of literature help us to understand the ongoing research in this field, especially response of different stake holders including media to the Rohingya community.

Based on the reviewed literature, this article has selected five key indicators to collect and analyze data from national media: i) labels used to identify the Rohingyas, ii) sources of the news, iii) offered explanation by the media, iv) discussion on viable solution, v) prevalence of different news themes. These indicators for data analysis are to support the main research question.

## 5. Background of the Rohingya Crisis

Rakhine State (also known as Arakan State) is in western Myanmar, east of the Bay of Bengal and on the border with Bangladesh. The largest ethnic group in Rakhine State is the Rakhine, a predominately Theravada Buddhist community. The next largest ethnic group is the Rohingya, a predominately Sunni Muslim community.<sup>40</sup> The MaBaTha, the Association for the Protection of Race and Religion, an organization led by the two Buddhist monks Ashin Wirathu and Ashin Wimala, made claims of a Muslim plot to take over the country and accused Muslims of marrying and converting Buddhist women. These extremist narratives led campaigns that triggered the anti-Muslim drive which was responsible for the Rohingya mass exodus of people totaling almost 800,000 into Bangladesh throughout decades.<sup>41</sup> This ethnic tension within Myanmar has given birth to a new armed organization names the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) that called for an all-out resistance for Rohingya population and the Myanmar army had launched a counter offensive, triggering one of the largest influx of forced migrants into Bangladesh in decades.<sup>42</sup>

The initial influx of the Rohingyas to Bangladesh dates to 1978, with another large arrival back in 1991-1992.<sup>43</sup> The recent Rohingya influx in Bangladesh started on 25 August 2017. This violence in Rakhine State has driven an estimated 5,37,000 Rohingya across the border into Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The people who have arrived in Bangladesh since 25 August 2017 came with very few possessions. They are now reliant on humanitarian assistance for food, and other life-saving needs.

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<sup>38</sup> Iftekharul Bashar. "Exploitation of the Rohingya Crisis by Jihadist Groups Implications for Bangladesh's Internal Security", *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyzes*, 2017, pp. 5-7.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Michael F. Martin, Rhoda Margesson and Bruce Vaughn. "The Rohingya Crises in Bangladesh and Burma", *Congressional Research Service*, 2017.

<sup>41</sup> BIPSS, "Rohingya Refugee Crisis in Bangladesh: A Security Perspective", *Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies*, Special Report, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Population movements within Cox’s Bazar remain highly fluid, in Ukhia. Later, the Bangladesh government has established the extension of the camp in Kutupalong<sup>44</sup>. The Myanmar and Bangladeshi governments agreed upon a procedural framework for the Rohingyas to return, which was supposed to have started on 23 January 2018 and be completed “preferably within two years”.<sup>45</sup> It has been observed that the major obstacle to repatriation is “fear”.<sup>46</sup> However, Myanmar has done little to create an environment conducive to the return of the Rohingyas. In late December of that year, Bangladesh suggested it would send an initial list of 1,00,000 Rohingya people to be verified by Myanmar for repatriation. The list was to be drawn from a biometric database of refugees compiled by the Bangladeshi authorities.<sup>47</sup> During the visit of the Myanmar Home Minister to Dhaka from 15 to 17 February 2018, Bangladesh handed over a list of 1,673 Rohingya families (8,032 individuals) “to start the first phase of repatriation”. Myanmar nevertheless announced in early April 2018<sup>48</sup> that it had verified 675 from the list as eligible for repatriation, although it is unclear if or when these people will return, and they were not asked if they are willing to do so.<sup>49</sup> The Myanmar military and the political establishment are unlikely to be persuaded easily on the Rohingya issue internally. The Rohingyas are not accepted as Myanmar citizen by rest of the communities within the province.

The background study indicates a clear message that the repatriation of the Rohingyas to their country of origin will not be an easy task for the host country, Bangladesh. Therefore, to get humanitarian and legal response from the international community, the displaced Rohingya community needs recognition and labeling regarding their livelihood in the host country. Here, the media can play a vital role to draw the attention and convince respective stake holders to respond in this critical situation.

## **6. Key Understanding of the Rohingya Crisis through the Lens of Media**

This section is an attempt to answer the first objective of this article that is to find out the key understanding of the Rohingya crisis through the lens of the media. Five indicators were set up on the basis of the research question to address the understanding of the media. The gathered data on the basis of those indicators allowed

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<sup>44</sup> ISCG, “Situation Report: Rohingya Refugee Crisis”, *International Sector Coordination Group*, 2017.

<sup>45</sup> The bilateral framework consists of “Arrangement on Return of Displaced Persons from Rakhine State”, 23 November 2017; terms of reference for a “Joint Working Group”, 19 December 2017; and, “Physical Arrangement for Repatriation”, 16 January 2018; including a verification form that prospective returnees must fill out in advance.

<sup>46</sup> International Crisis Group, “The Long Haul Ahead for Myanmar’s Rohingya Refugee Crisis”, *International Crisis Group - Asia Report N°296*, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> “100,000 Rohingya on first repatriation list”, *The Dhaka Tribune*, 27 December 2017.

<sup>48</sup> “Flawed return deal offers no way back for Rohingya refugees”, *France News*, 17 April 2018, available at <https://www.france24.com/en/20180417-flawed-return-deal-offers-no-way-back-rohingya-refugees>, accessed on 05 August 2021.

<sup>49</sup> Zeyar Maw, “Myanmar to accept over 600 refugees from Bangladesh”, *Mizzima*, 05 April 2018.

to draw the lines of agenda settings and news framings of the media in portrayal of refugee situation.

### **6.1 Terms or Labels used to Identify Rohingyas**

Bangladesh is neither a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees nor to its 1967 Protocol and has not enacted any national legislation on asylum and refugee matters.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, there is no obligation for Bangladesh to accept this immense flow of Rohingya people. Still, Bangladesh accepted the Rohingyas based on humanitarian ground.

However, the terms or labels used by the mass media to identify the Rohingyas were varied though they had a similar pattern of reporting. After analyzing all these articles from these two widely circulated newspapers and two satellite television channels news title, it can be said that, the media have had a tendency to avoid these debatable terms such as “Refugee”, “Forced Migrants” or even “Immigrants”. Instead of all these, they preferred to address this influx by their native name “Rohingya”.

This study has identified a total of 928 articles in *The Daily Star*, 881 of them addressed this influx with labelling as “Refugee”, “Rohingya”, “Migrants”, “Immigrants” etc. A total of 777 newspaper articles mentioned these people as “Rohingya”, 102 articles addressed them as “Refugee” and two of these articles addressed them as “Migrants”. The rest 46 articles reported without any kind of labelling. Another newspaper, *The Daily Ittefaq* made a total of 605 news articles that represent the Rohingya issue, where 357 of them used labelling. Among these 357 articles, 353 of them used the term “Rohingya” to address the crisis and four of the articles called them as “Refugee”. The rest of the 248 articles used no labelling to address the crisis. Among the 151 news that was telecast, the Jamuna TV used the term “Rohingya” 149 times to address the crisis and two of the news referred to them as “Refugee”. Among 92 telecast news, *The Independent Television* used the term “Rohingya” 70 times to address the crisis and four of the news referred to them as “Refugee”.

### **6.2 Sources of the News**

The sources of the news that was published and telecast in the mass media are mostly based on information collected from political leaders. Information was

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<sup>50</sup> UNHCR, *Universal Periodic Review: Bangladesh for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Compilation Report*, 2012.

collected from political leaders, local government authorities and non-government organizations’ activists.

As this study tried to find out the sources of the news regarding the Rohingya crisis, thorough analysis of the news media showed that most of the news were from political sources. In *The Daily Star*, a total of 935 articles regarding Rohingya crisis were analyzed, 609 of them were based on the information provided by political leaders. In another newspaper, *The Daily Ittefaq*, 434 among 605 total articles; 90 among 151 news in *The Jamuna Television* were of similar kind. 55 among a total of 92 news concerning the Rohingya crisis in *Independent Television* portrayed the situation, the Rohingya crisis, conditions of the camps, allotment of international aid etc. through the reference of political leaders.

### 6.3 Offered Explanations by the Media

Under this frame, reports that tried to give any sort of description or explanation on the Rohingya issue were being analyzed. This section focusses on the editorials of newspapers, letters and public opinions, especially talk shows, which provided explanation of the overall crisis including geopolitical and other fundamental analysis.

**Table 2: Offered Explanations of the Rohingya Crisis by The Media**

News Themes	Number of the Article			
	<i>The Daily Star</i>	<i>The Daily Ittefaq</i>	<i>Jamuna TV</i>	<i>Independent TV</i>
Explanation of the situation	35	2	4	0
Analysis of the situation	35	9	0	0
Geo-political Analysis	11	10	3	4

Table 2 has shown the data on news presentation on the explanation of the Rohingya crisis by the media. For instance, the editorial of *The Daily Star*, titled “Rohingyas pouring into Bangladesh” of 06 September 2017 referred to the Rohingya influx, the context of the crisis and the situation of the host country. Analysis of the Rohingya situation is mostly published in the editorial section. Such as, 09 editorial reports were published in *The Daily Ittefaq* with critical analysis of the Rohingya situation in their “state of origin” and their engagement in criminal activities. An article published in *The Daily Star* states, “Myanmar, on its part, must realize that blaming all the current atrocities on the so-called terrorists and claiming that its security forces had nothing to do with the crimes committed, in spite of unvarying

accounts of thousands of refugees to the contrary, is neither credible nor helpful in solving the situation.”<sup>51</sup> This is how, the media tried to offer an explanation regarding the crisis. Furthermore, the news channel talk shows analyzed the geopolitical scenario of the Rohingya crisis. This news includes the interest of China to engage in the repatriation process, the role of the international community, etc. However, after a thorough analysis, the authors have found that the cover page news of print media hardly published any news on the origin of the crisis and other important aspects.

#### **6.4 Discussion on Viable Solution**

Only a few of the articles and news reports were published addressing the solution to the crisis. Among print and electronic media, the electronic media was less likely to address any solution to the Rohingya crisis.

A total of 49 articles were found in *The Daily Star* which addressed the solution to the existing crisis. Solution-oriented news was mostly published in the editorial section of the newspaper. The role of the international community and transnational organization regarding this crisis also came under evaluation of this study. An editorial published in *The Daily Star* on 03 January 2018, titled “Rohingya repatriation must be sustainable”, focussed on the repatriation process and ensuring peace and sustainability to Myanmar so that no further conflict escalates that brings back the Rohingya influx. On 17 October 2019, another news article published in *The Daily Star* titled “A roadmap to sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis.” This article also focussed on the sustainability of the repatriation process of the Rohingyas and added that their homeland should have been a safe place to stay. This article mentioned, “We asked China to mediate or at least put maximum pressure on Myanmar. Can China be an honest broker?”<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, on 08 March 2018, an editorial published in *The Daily Star*, “What will the world do about Rohingya?”, the role of the international community and transnational organization and how the international community can focus on the protection of the Rohingya people were mentioned. This article states, “Despite irrefutable aerial footage of Rohingya villages being pillaged and destroyed, all we are left with are statements of condemnation. That will not have any effect on a government that can stoop to ethnic cleansing.”<sup>53</sup>

A total of 17 news articles were found in *The Daily Ittefaq*. The idea of repatriation of the Rohingyas has been the dominant attribute of triggering the solution. Editorials focussed on the role of the international community and the repatriation process. An article was published in *The Daily Ittefaq* titled, “The Rohingya repatriation requires regional solution: ASEAN”. It stated that, “South-east

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<sup>51</sup> Mahfuz Anam, “Rohingya Crisis: A Concern for the Region”, *The Daily Star*, 09 September 2017.

<sup>52</sup> Dr, Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman, “A roadmap to sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis”, *The Daily Star*, 17 October 2019.

<sup>53</sup> “What will the world do about Rohingya?”, *The Daily Star*, 08 March 2018.

Asian regional alliance ASEAN foreign ministers call for regional solution to the Rohingya crisis”.<sup>54</sup> There were some of the opinions in the latter section addressing the local and international community to support the Rohingyas. The solution offered by the daily was to draw the attention of the international community, regional superpower and transnational organization to impose Myanmar for taking Rohingyas back.

The electronic TV channel *Jamuna Television* telecast three news focussing on a long-term solution for the Rohingya community. The only news that focussed on the solution in satellite channel *Independent TV* was “The Rohingya crisis cannot be solved by bilateral discussion: Expert” which was telecast two years ago in 2017. This showed the lack of electronic media in making a move of addressing a solution to this crisis.

This solution-oriented news published in the editorial section and the role of the international community and transnational organization to make the solution came under the evaluation of this study. After analyzing all these data, it can be said, the media was defining the solution as their repatriation. Since the Rohingya influx in Bangladesh is a protracted refugee situation, apart from addressing the repatriation issue, a long-lasting framework should have been proposed by the media.

## 7. Prevalence of Different News Themes

Two of the widely circulated national print media and two electronic media sources portrayed different types of news regarding the Rohingya issue. National security-related issues, environment-related issues, individual or group tragedies, criminal activity and vulnerability related to the Rohingyas, sympathetic news, local community cohesion, Non Government Organization (NGO)-related and vilifications have been revealed as dominant themes of news reporting in the national media.

Firstly, from Table 3, it is evident that Rohingyas were being considered as a threat to national security since some reports were published claiming that armed militias were also taking the entrance in the guise of the Rohingyas and, inside the Rohingya camps, armed militias were getting trained. This sort of news made the Rohingyas a threat to national security. Moreover, environmental degradation by cutting down hills and trees for making residence of the Rohingyas is identified as another issue from Table 3. An article published in *The Daily Star* states, “The

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<sup>54</sup> “The Rohingya repatriation requires regional solution: ASEAN”. *The Daily Ittefaq*, 20 January 2019.

**Table 3: Prevalence of Different News Themes**

Name of the News Themes	Number of the Articles/ News Clips			
	<i>The Daily Star</i>	<i>Daily Ittefaq</i>	<i>Jamuna TV</i>	<i>Independent TV</i>
National Security Related Issues	9	12	10	5
Environment Related Issues	1	6	0	0
Individual or Group tragedies	8	9	1	0
Criminal activity and vulnerability related to Rohingyas	30	47	5	13
Sympathetic News	76	37	19	7
Local Community Cohesion	2	1	2	1
NGO Related	1	3	7	3
Vilifications	17	3	5	0

anthropogenic footprints of refugees on the local forests are growing larger day by day. If Bangladesh fails to develop comprehensive conservation strategies immediately, the local forests, wildlife and biodiversity will be irreversibly damaged.”<sup>55</sup> Very few news articles and reports were made to address this issue. This frame of barely sketching the environmental fact allowed the media to avoid public hate speech towards the Rohingyas. Furthermore, criminal activity and vulnerability related to the Rohingyas referred to the news where the Rohingya people happen to be the perpetrator. Many news reports, mentioned in the data analysis part have talked about the Rohingyas engaging in different social crimes such as drugs and illegal arms trafficking, using SIM cards for communicating with militias while having restrictions to communicate, bribing officials to get National Identity (NID) Card or even trying to get Bangladeshi passport to go abroad. An article published in *The Daily Star* says, “Trafficking and drug rings that include Rohingya men have become notoriously active in these camps, adding to the lack of security. And it goes without saying that the most vulnerable groups in these camps are the Rohingya women and girls who fall victim to violence either inside their makeshift homes by their partners or outside by other Rohingya men.”<sup>56</sup> This was news published in the media that allowed the Rohingyas to be seen as perpetrators to some extent. An article titled “Traffickers preying on Rohingyas” published in *The Daily Star* states, “Traffickers sometimes transport Rohingya girls within Bangladesh to Chittagong and Dhaka and transnationally to Kathmandu and Kolkata for sex trafficking. Some traffickers “trade” these girls over the internet, the US State Department said in its “Trafficking

<sup>55</sup> “The devastating ecological impact of Rohingya crisis”, *The Daily Star*, 25 November 2018.

<sup>56</sup> “Crimes in Rohingya Camps”, *The Daily Star*, 31 March 2019.



in Persons Report 2019”.<sup>57</sup> An editorial published in *The Daily Ittefaq* states that, “Besides repatriating the Rohingyas from Bangladesh to Myanmar, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal has proposed to stop the smuggling of yaba by destroying 49 yaba factories established alongside the Myanmar border. From these yaba factories set up in Myanmar, millions of pieces of yaba worth crores of taka have entered Bangladesh through the border every day”.<sup>58</sup>

However, apart from highlighting their criminal activity, conclusion can be reached after analyzing the mentioned data that the media was overall sympathetic towards the Rohingyas. The media never mentioned them as perpetrators rather addressed them as victims of the situation. A number of editorials and news reports were published indicating consolation for these forced migrant groups. Further, the sufferings faced by the Rohingyas inside the camp were shortly portrayed in the newspaper and print media. News of Rohingya girls getting raped inside the camp or intra-group fights among themselves were also sketched lightly throughout the media coverage.

On the other hand, local community cohesion was another theme that was portrayed in the media. How the local inhabitants of Cox’s Bazar reacted to the Rohingya influx, what inconvenience they faced after Rohingyas’ arrival were a matter of sketching in the media. Comparing to the other news frames, this frame could not dominate much of the news. Additionally, NGO-related controversy was another issue that received the most coverage in the electronic media rather than print media. The media drew the public attention to the fact that, NGOs working at the Rohingya camps are gaining profit in the name of collecting funds for the forced migrants. Such news was published to criticize the role of the NGOs.

Finally, rational vilification of the respective authority was another issue that has been used as a media theme. Media made criticism of regional superpowers and the international community failing at coming to a settlement of this crisis. Several editorials were found addressing the solution of the issue, yet none of those addressed any hate speech or hate comments against the Rohingya people. The media criticized the crisis and role of the international community while avoiding any hatred against the Rohingya community.

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<sup>57</sup> Mohammad Al Masum Molla, “Traffickers preying on Rohingyas”, *The Daily Star*, 21 June 2019.

<sup>58</sup> Professor Arup Ratan Chowdhury, “Rohingya Problems and Drug Addiction: Special Precautions Needed”, *The Daily Ittefaq*, 26 December 2017.

### **7.1 *Understanding of news in light of Agenda Settings and News Framing Theory***

To understand the news in the media in presenting the Rohingya crisis has been the first objective of this study. Both the agenda settings and news framing theory can be used for the analysis of the media coverage of the Rohingya crisis. While reporting, both the print and electronic media did not point out any particular issue on what to think about, yet they allowed specific aspects of the news; such as, right after the recent Rohingya influx, the media put emphasize on their arrival, they made their news on the cover pages, editorials. Special articles were being seen in the newspapers. This is how the media made the Rohingya crisis as one of their agenda of reporting. Seeing the news on this issue, people started to put their concern on this particular issue.

The news framing theory allowed the media to set up some of the attributes as the main focus of the story. News framing theory offered a huge space while considering the Rohingya refugee crisis. In the previous section on media reporting, it has been revealed that, media houses—both the print and electronic media, set up some of the news themes that dominantly addressed the Rohingya crisis. Such as—they focussed on the crimes done by the Rohingyas, most of the news was based on information collected from political leaders and other local authorities. It is also clear from media reporting that the frame set by the media was to focus on the sympathetic values at the beginning which later shifted into focussing on the criminal activity done by the Rohingyas after a year of their arrival. The prevalence of different news themes section also reveals that news themes representing environmental issues and local community cohesion between the Rohingyas were barely portrayed in the media. The political aspiration of the crisis was the dominant frame of the news coverage in both print and electronic media. After analyzing the presented data with the agenda settings and news framing theory, this article reveals that the news themes in many extent are affected by the concept of ‘securitization’ which is described earlier in the literature review section. The farming of the news is a reflection of many of the securitization’s aspects.

### **7.2 *Analysis the response of Media in light of the theory of Peace and War Journalism***

To find out the response of the media in terms of addressing the Rohingya crisis has been the second objective of this study. Response analysis has been guided by the theory of Peace and War Journalism by Galtung in 1998. Analyzing the data through the indicators of Peace/War Journalism allowed us to know the guiding factors that determine the media’s response. Guided by Galtung’s Peace/War journalism, this study intends to find the understandings of the Rohingya crisis and its response to the crisis through the lens of the media. In the previous section, the understanding of the media was guided by the agenda settings and news framing

theory. Now, analyzing the new frames through the lens of peace/ war journalism will allow us to know the response of the media.

According to the analytical framework of this study (see Table 1), among the 13 war journalism and thirteen peace journalism indicators, three war journalism indicators resemble the response of the media of Bangladesh, and eight peace journalism indicators resemble the response of the media of Bangladesh.

### 7.2.1 *Elite-Oriented Sourcing*

The elite-orientation frame in war journalism refers to primary news sources that include members of elite segments of society.<sup>59</sup> Elite sources, in this case, were government officials and people from the administration, advocates from interest groups, spokespersons from human rights organizations, and political leaders. Though the area was not restricted to the journalists, limited access to the victims due to security aspects may have partly contributed to the dominance of this frame in the coverage. Female refugees' and migrants' voices were hardly ever heard or they were never given the opportunity to speak. Interviews with local civilians and the Rohingyas themselves were barely found in the study. The data presented in the section, titled "sources of the news" pointed out that most of the sources of the news was elite-centric.

### 7.2.2 *Use of Partisan Coverage*

The second most dominant war journalism frame was the partisan framing of the news. While most of the reports avoided direct bias to any of the parties, it created an aura of confusion by maintaining neutrality and sourcing only quotes from different political leaders. They partially covered the local community cohesion-related issues while these inconveniences of the local inhabitants could be brought under the light (see Table 3). Table 3 also reveals that news reporting partially focussed on the environmental degradation issue, the suffering Rohingyas of the camps, etc. Thus, the partial coverage of the media allowed the framing similar to war journalism indicator.

### 7.2.3 *Here-and-Now Focus*

Both the newspapers and television channels focussed primarily on the acute, breaking news aspects of the conflict with inadequate background information or historical context. The data presented in the "offered explanation by the media" reveals that very few editorial articles were found to be addressing the root of the

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<sup>59</sup> Zin Mar Myint, *Peace Journalism and Framing in the Northern Rakhine State of Myanmar*, MSS Thesis, Yangon: University of Pharmacy, 2009.

conflicting situation that created the Rohingya influx. Thus, the existing media avoided addressing the origin of the conflict. Focusing on only the incident without addressing the root allowed the news frames to follow the war journalism indicators.

On the other hand, the analytical framework presents, among the thirteen peace journalism indicators (see Table 1) provided by Galtung, seven of them resemble the response of the media of Bangladesh.

#### 7.2.4 *Proactive Reporting*

Proactive reporting was among the most salient peace journalism indicators in the analyzed coverage. It is obvious that this indicator is a somewhat strong indicator for peace journalism framing. In proactive coverage, the media does not wait for any particular incident to be happened; rather they make a regular follow-up of any particular agenda. *The Daily Star* and *The Daily Ittefaq*, *Jamuna TV* and *Independent TV* included a proactive approach in the construction of their stories. Rather than writing in response to a situation, stories reflected a proactive role by journalists actively covering the aftermath of the incident. Right after the very recent Rohingya influx of 25 August 2017, especially the print media set the crisis as one of their agenda and wrote a follow-up on the stories. On the other side, the coverage of the electronic media was not as likely as print media yet they also played a significant role. Thus the proactive nature of news reporting allowed the media to adopt the attribute of peace journalism.

#### 7.2.5 *Follow-up-Based Solution Orientation*

Regarding the solution-oriented frame indicator, there was no clear demonstration of journalists' actively taking a solution-seeking approach. They simply focussed on newsworthy stories that happened to include peace initiatives by power elites. As mentioned earlier in the "discussion on viable solution" section, the media tried to provide a solution-oriented news approach. In the editorial section, mainly the print media provided a number of articles on how to address the root of the problem and what can be the possible solution. In the solution-oriented news, the media put emphasis on the role regional superpowers and the international community can play to solve the crisis. Thus, the random follow-up of the news provided a solution-oriented atmosphere in the media section.

#### 7.2.6 *Invisible Effects*

Despite not taking any approach for justifying the government's initiatives regarding the crisis, the media allowed itself avoiding hate comments and hate speech came from different individuals and groups.

From the above discussed “Prevalence of Different News Themes” section, it is evident that the media did not portray the Rohingyas as a problem or perpetrator rather the victim of the situation. The media criticized the Myanmar government and its army, regional organizations and superpowers and the international community for not coming up to a settlement on this issue. This attitude of the national media allowed avoiding hatred and hate speech toward the Rohingyas. Thus, the media allowed itself to put invisible effects followed by the peace journalism process.

### 7.2.7 *Avoids Labeling of Good and Evil Sides*

Dichotomizing between the good and evil sides of any incident is another key attribute of peace journalism. This dichotomy was also followed in the media of Bangladesh while reporting the Rohingya crisis. As mentioned earlier, none of the media sources directly addressed any of the parties as a perpetrator of the situation. Labeling any contradicting party with a good or evil tag can allow the situation to turn violent. Thus, by avoiding the good or evil tag metaphor, the media is following the peace journalism code.

### 7.2.8 *Multi-Party Orientation*

Here, the media avoids focussing only on two contradicting parties; rather, it allows different voices. In the case of the Rohingya crisis, our media avoids the two-party orientation facts which later lead to a win-lose situation. Rather than that, as per the “Key Understanding of the Rohingya Crisis through the Lens of Media” section, Bangladeshi media allowed multi-party orientation by further mentioning the role of different neighbouring states and regional superpowers and the international community for a sustainable settlement of the crisis. Apart from only addressing Myanmar for the solution, news articles also focussed on the role of the regional and international communities for a sustainable solution.

### 7.2.9 *Avoid Victimized Language*

The media following the peace journalism method avoids victimizing language such as “pathetic”, “devastating” etc.<sup>60</sup> They only focus on the incidents on what happened, how the situation is coping. It is mentioned earlier that, in the case of the Rohingya crisis, the news media of Bangladesh avoided any sort of victimizing language. Rather, data reveals that media focussed on the incident, what fueled the Rohingyas to cross their border, how is their lives in the camps, what further measures are to take by the authority for repatriation, these were the issues that came under

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<sup>60</sup> Kimberly Kelling and Beverly Horvit, “The viability of peace journalism in Western media environments”, *Conflict & Communication Online*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2017.

media coverage apart from the victimizing language. This follows the peace journalism indicator.

#### 7.2.10 *Avoid Demonic Language*

Following this pattern, demonic language such as vicious, cruel, brutal, barbaric, inhuman, etc. should be avoided by the media while covering news. Rather the media is to use precise descriptions, titles, or names in reporting in peace journalism.<sup>61</sup> Following this attribute, the data analysis section showed that the national media of Bangladesh, while reporting the Rohingya crisis avoided the use of such demonic language to address any of the conflicting party or tagging as a perpetrator. None of the news articles or video clips found in the data analysis section was seen to use any demonic word. This shows another attribute of peace journalism.

#### 7.2.11 *Avoid Emotive Words*

Emotive words such as genocide, assassination, massacre, etc. and avoiding exaggerated news is an aspect of peace journalism.<sup>62</sup> This has been followed by the media as the entire crisis has not been tagged by any emotive word, rather, the media only focussed on the intensity of the crisis and framed the news as to focus the attention on the severity of the situation. Thus, media followed the core of peace journalism.

Above mentioned indicators of peace and war journalism helped to find out the response of the media. Though the analysis revealed that the media was both affected by the peace and war journalism indicators, yet the dominant field is peace journalism. The national media of Bangladesh followed the peace journalism methods during agenda setting, framing and reporting of the Rohingya crisis. During the news coverage of the media, among the total of thirteen indicators of peace/war journalism, seven resembled peace journalism and three reflected the aura of war journalism. Therefore, this study shows that, agenda-setting and news framing of the Rohingya issue was dominated by peace journalism.

## 8. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to analyze the role of the media in reporting the forced migration crisis. The case of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh has been taken as the case for the study. News reports both from the national print media and electronic media were collected as data from the time period of about two years started from August 2017 to December 2019. Data were analyzed through the agenda-settings and framing theory to find out the understanding of the national media

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

regarding the issue. Thereafter, the concept of peace/war journalism explains the response of the national media related to the Rohingya crisis.

In conclusion, a few observations concerning the commonalities in the agenda-setting and news framing of two newspapers (*The Daily Star* and *The Daily Ittefaq*) and two TV channels (*Jamuna TV* and *Independent Television*) are worth mentioning. As far as labels were concerned, in most coverage, journalists from all these media sources used the term “Rohingyas”, rather than “forced migrants” or “refugees”. There is an academic debate about labelling them as refugees or forced migrants. The country’s media avoided creating this type of further debating issue. In terms of themes, there was again unanimity to some extent across the media sources. Though all the four news sources were similar as their sources of the news were political, avoided direct involvement of the Rohingya interviews and most of the news were based on information collected from political leaders. On the question of solutions to the crisis, the four news sources were in a relatively common place. The most frequently cited solution was the repatriation of the Rohingyas to their homeland and the engagement of regional and the international community for a sustainable solution to the crisis. Moreover, the national media of Bangladesh followed the peace journalism methods during agenda-setting, framing and reporting of the Rohingya crisis. The study reveals that, during the news coverage of the media, among the total of thirteen indicators of peace/war journalism, seven resembled peace journalism and three reflected the aura of war journalism. Therefore, this study shows that, agenda-setting and news framing of the Rohingya issue was dominated by peace journalism rather than war journalism.