An Overview of Digital Media Literacy in Digital Bangladesh[*]

Barek Hossain,[1] Mobassera Jahan Fatima,[2] Valerii L. Muzykant,[3] Cut Fitri Indah Sari Hoesin,[4] Md Nahiduzzaman[5]

[1, 3, 4, 5] Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Russian Federation

[2] Ankara University, Turkiye

Abstract

The emergence of Web 2.0 has had an immense impact on the worldwide communication system, including the media. Therefore, traditional media outlets have shifted their focus exclusively to digital platforms. As a blessing of the rise of social media platforms, presses have been able to disseminate information swiftly, solicit reader criticism, and engage in two-way contact. However, gaining literacy, media, and digital media literacy competencies are crucial to benefiting from these information technologies. Besides, by acquiring these literacy skills, citizens of a developing country such as Bangladesh can significantly impact that country's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Moreover, these competencies can help a country's citizens be more aware of fake news, misinformation, disinformation, and malformation. In this regard, the main objective of this article is to give an overview of digital media literacy in Bangladesh. For this purpose, the secondary data analysis method has been used to shed light on the digital inclusion process and development of information and communication technologies (ICT) in Bangladesh. Also, a literature review has been conducted on existing research on digital media literacy in the country. Finally, this research concluded that although the digital Bangladesh process has achieved great success in the short term, the supply of reasonable access to ICT for all the country's citizens will need more time. Thus, Bangladesh's government and non-government organizations and citizens need to go the extra mile to minimize this digital divide. Therefore, some potential components considered in the digital divide are citizens' position in rural vs. urban areas, literacy and income status gaps, and age range.

Keywords: Media Literacy; Digital Literacy; Digital Media Literacy; Digital Divide; Bangladesh

Barek Hossain, Mobassera Jahan Fatima, Valerii L. Muzykant, Cut Fitri Indah Sari Hoesin, Md Nahiduzzaman

Tinjauan Literasi Media Digital di Digital Bangladesh

Abstrak

Kebangkitan Web 2.0 telah memiliki dampak besar pada sistem komunikasi global, termasuk media. Oleh karena itu, media tradisional telah memindahkan fokus mereka secara eksklusif ke platform digital. Sebagai berkat dari munculnya platform media sosial, pers telah dapat menyebarkan informasi dengan cepat, meminta kritik pembaca, dan terlibat dalam kontak dua arah. Namun, memperoleh keterampilan literasi, media, dan media digital sangat penting untuk mendapatkan manfaat dari teknologi informasi ini. Selain itu, dengan memperoleh keterampilan literasi ini, warga negara negara berkembang seperti Bangladesh dapat secara signifikan mempengaruhi Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan negara itu. (SDGs). Selain itu, kompetensi ini dapat membantu warga negara lebih menyadari berita palsu, informasi yang salah, dezinformasi, dan malformasi. Dalam hal ini, tujuan utama artikel ini adalah untuk memberikan gambaran tentang keterampilan media digital di Bangladesh. Untuk tujuan ini, metode analisis data sekunder telah digunakan untuk menyoroti proses integrasi digital dan pengembangan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi (ICT) di Bangladesh. Selain itu, penilaian literatur telah dilakukan pada penelitian yang ada pada literasi media digital di negara ini. Akhirnya, penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun proses digital Bangladesh telah mencapai kesuksesan besar dalam jangka pendek, penyediaan akses yang wajar ke ICT untuk semua warga negara akan membutuhkan lebih banyak waktu. Dengan demikian, pemerintah Bangladesh dan organisasi non-pemerintah dan warga negara perlu pergi mil tambahan untuk meminimalkan kesenjangan digital ini. Oleh karena itu, beberapa komponen potensial yang dipertimbangkan dalam jurang digital adalah posisi warga di daerah pedesaan vs. kota, kesenjangan status literasi dan pendapatan, dan rentang usia.

Kata Kunci: Literasi Media; Literasi Digital; Digital Media Literacy; Digital Divide; Bangladesh

Обзор цифровой медийной грамотности в цифровом Бангладеш

Абстрактное

Появление Web 2.0 оказало огромное влияние на мировую систему связи, включая средства массовой информации. Поэтому традиционные средства массовой информации сосредоточили свое внимание исключительно на цифровых платформах. В качестве благословения роста социальных медиа-платформ, пресса смогла быстро распространять информацию, привлекать к критике читателей и вступать в двусторонний контакт. Тем не менее, приобретение навыков грамотности, средств массовой информации и цифровой медиа грамотности имеют решающее значение для того, чтобы извлечь выгоду из этих информационных технологий. Кроме того, приобретая эти навыки грамотности, граждане таких развивающихся стран, как Бангладеш, могут существенно повлиять на достижение целей устойчивого развития в этой стране. (SDGs). Кроме того, эти компетенции могут помочь гражданам страны быть более осведомленными о фальшивых новостях, дезинформации, дезинформации и деформации. В этой связи основная цель этой статьи состоит в том, чтобы дать обзор цифровой медийной грамотности в Бангладеш. С этой целью метод вторичного анализа данных был использован для освещения процесса цифровой интеграции и развития информационно-коммуникационных технологий (ИКТ) в Бангладеш. Кроме того, был проведен обзор литературы по существующим исследованиям в области цифровой медийной грамотности в стране. Наконец, это исследование привело к выводу о том, что, хотя цифровой процесс Бангладеш достиг больших успехов в краткосрочной перспективе, обеспечение разумного доступа к ИКТ для всех граждан страны потребует больше времени. Таким образом, правительству, неправительственным организациям и гражданам Бангладеш необходимо сделать дополнительный шаг, чтобы минимизировать этот цифровой разрыв. Таким образом, некоторые потенциальные компоненты, рассматриваемые в цифровом разрыве, включают положение граждан в сельских и городских районах, различия в уровнях грамотности и доходах, а также возрастные диапазоны.

Ключевые слова: Грамотность в средствах массовой информации; Цифровая грамотность; Digital Media Literacy; Digital Divide; Бангладеш

A. INTRODUCTION

When COVID-19 emerged, we learned about two phenomena: pandemics and infodemics. However, an infodemic refers to the availability of a high volume of accurate and false information regarding a pandemic, such as COVID-19, that spreads through various media, mainly social media (Greenspan and Loftus, 2021). As we observe in different complex situations of the world, digital platforms, for instance, various social media platforms, are becoming the hub of accurate and non-accurate information. However, unfortunately, no precise information is the most circulated one. For example, during the pandemic, there was a vast circulation of fake news and misinformation through digital platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok, and other popular social media platforms. Therefore, we observed the incidents of hatred and violence against minority groups, mainly spread through social media in different countries. In this circumstance, some competencies, such as media and digital literacy, have gained more importance. Digital and social media experts have started raising their voices about these competencies. More importantly, utilizing this massive expanse of digital platforms and new media is complex without those competencies. Significantly, during the pandemic, the world and developing countries like Bangladesh have suffered a lot because of the digital platform users' lack of digital media competence.

Moreover, now we live in a digital world, which affects almost all sectors, including our daily lives. We no longer rely on traditional media outlets to inform, educate, and entertain us. Various intelligent, portable devices quickly took these positions. As a result, traditional media organizations are also embracing audience-friendly broadcasting methods. For instance, media organizations increasingly use various mobile applications and social media tools to convey their news stories and interact with their intended audiences. Besides, traditional and online-only publications employ QR codes, instant messaging, and social networking to disseminate their content to a broader audience. Thus, journalists can quickly produce and disseminate material for digital-only platforms using affordable digital technologies.

On the other hand, the Bangladesh government launched a program in 2009, the "Digital Bangladesh," to eradicate poverty and advance effective governance by using ICT to ensure all people have a quality of life, including law enforcement, healthcare, and education. Besides, it targets to turn Bangladesh into a digital and knowledge-based economy by 2021 and 2041, respectively (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2022:3).

In this regard, Bangladesh is moving forward to reach this vision, with all its pros and cons. Therefore, by emphasizing the motto, such as "expand and diversify the use of ICTs to create a transparent, responsive, and accountable government," the National ICT Policy 2018 vision also supports this program. Besides, this policy aims to develop competent personnel, strengthen social equity, and confirm the transmission of expenses for citizen services through public-private partnerships. Also, it supports the future vision to transform into a middle-income country within 2021 and become a developed country in 2041."

In this circumstance, through this article, we tried to have an overview of the digitalization process in Bangladesh. Besides, tried to understand the general condition of academic works on media, digital, and mainly digital media literacy in Bangladesh. Also, tried to shed light on digital divinity in Bangladesh.

B. METHODS

The secondary data analysis method has been used in this study to comprehend the research topic. First, a review of previous studies on digital media competence in this nation has been done. Second, we attempted to define and compare similar terms like media literacy, digital literacy, and digital media literacy. Thirdly, the growth of information and communication technology (ICT) in Bangladesh has been examined. Finally, we tried to debate the conclusions, restrictions, and recommendations. Various documents, including books, articles, and theses, are considered study sources when conducting research. The materials are primarily available in English, Bengali, and Turkish languages.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. An overview of related works

Around the world, a plethora of research has been founded on different literacies such as media, news, health, digital, and digital media literacy. Besides, these competencies are related to each other, and some competencies require professional learning and training. Researchers continue to argue and translate the idea of media and digital literacy in Bangladesh in a variety of ways, leading to concepts like media literacy (Quarmal and Sultana, 2018; Karmakar, Talukdar, Kayyum; Hoque, 2022; Muzykant et al. 2022), online

media literacy, news literacy (Chowdhury, 2020; MRDI, 2016), digital literacy (Shadat et al., 2020; Browcn, et al., 2022), digital media literacy. As well as Shadat et al. (2020) emphasize that the existing research focuses on digital proficiency at the individual level. Besides, most conceptual frameworks were primarily developed in the context of developed nations and frequently contain indicators at the upper and tertiary levels. Nevertheless, the concept of digitalization is new in Bangladesh, which is different from the most developed countries in the world. More empirical and comparative research on digital and digital media literacy from Bangladesh's perspective still needs to be done. Here, we discussed digital and digital media literacy in Bangladesh, emphasizing the difficulty of using digital tools and public services. However, researchers highlight the significance of digital literacy in preventing the transmission of harmful information, enhancing societal abilities, and shielding kids from online dangers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides we also address the idea of media and digital literacy in Indonesia. Developing digital literacy is essential in preventing hoaxes, especially those involving health information.

In 2019, the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) launched a research project called "Digital Literacy and Access to Public Services" to evaluate the level of digital literacy among rural residents of Bangladesh and their ability to use digitally delivered public services. This research analysed the uses of access to and proficiency with digital technologies in rural Bangladesh as indicators of digital literacy. In contrast, an in-depth survey and suitable literacy metrics are used as research methods (Shadat et al., 2020). Shadat et al. (2020) indicate that mobile phone abilities among respondents varied greatly, with SMS literacy being among the most common. Only a tiny portion of the participants could use government websites successfully. Those that were successful took substantially longer than anticipated, which suggests a need for additional digital literacy instruction.

Furthermore, Kass-Hanna, Lyons, and Liu (2021) investigated the relationship between fostering financial resilience through digital and financial literacy in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the study, developing economic resilience in the context of digital financial services (DFS) requires both financial and digital literacy. The effects of monetary and digital literacy, which have seldom been studied together, were also addressed. A multidimensional index of digital literacy was created, and its results were examined. The findings demonstrated that, within the context of DFS, digital literacy is likely to be just as significant as financial competence, if not more so, in encouraging resilience-building financial practices. The results indicate that

traditional financial literacy activities focused on enhancing the financial integration of vulnerable groups, particularly the poor, those residing in rural regions, and women, can be strengthened by digital literacy initiatives.

Looking from the perspective of other Asian countries, Indonesia, the media and digital literacy concept is still being debated and translated differently by literacy researchers (Limilia & Aristi, 2019). There are different uses of the term including media literacy, digital literacy, digital media literacy, and internet media literacy. If grouped, Limilia and Aristi (2019) divide them into two broad categories, namely, media literacy which focuses on conventional media and new media.

Despite the differences in terms related to media literacy, several researchers (Sutrisna, 2020; Rochadiani, Herlina, Santoso, & Dazki, 2020; Purnama, Ulfah, Machali, Wibowo, & Narmaditya, 2021; Fitriarti & Anjar, 2019) agree on the importance of digital literacy, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Sutrisna (2020) argues for the importance of digital literacy movements, especially among families and society. Using a systematic review, Sutrisna (2020) emphasized that digital literacy is essential to anticipate the spread of negative information.

In line with Sutrisna (2020), Rochadiani (2020) uses participatory research to emphasize the importance of sustainable activities to improve digital literacy skills in society. Purnama (2021) also emphasized the importance of digital literacy in the family sphere, especially online risks to Indonesian children during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, Fitriarti (2019) through literature study research explained that society is not only an object but a subject in communication, so it is important to increase digital literacy in warding off hoaxes, especially health information.

On the other hand, Park (2011) looks explicitly at the 'device literacy' component of digital media literacy. She emphasizes that proficiency in digital media is a multifaceted notion and that, often, young people learn these abilities through informal networks rather than official education. However, the study emphasizes the necessity for access to technology and formal and informal education to achieve proficient levels of digital media literacy. The study intends to explore the connection between access to technology and the usage and understanding of digital information.

Zhang & Zhu (2016) used a subjective digital media literacy measure to evaluate the digital media literacy of elementary school children. The study involved 796 Beijing primary school pupils, and the findings supported the

validity and reliability of the scale. Students in the fifth and sixth grades reported having advanced technical and analytical knowledge. The study also showed that parental mediation and students' prior digital media use impacted their level of digital media literacy. Despite variances between grades and age groups, male and female students did not significantly differ in digital media literacy levels. According to the study, improving pupils' digital media literacy is essential, and parents should take a big part in this effort.

Ramadhan et al. ([2019](#)) evaluate West Sumatra's Indonesian language instructors' proficiency with digital media. When they surveyed 112 teachers, the findings revealed that most of them used digital media to help teach, which was confined and uninteresting. Both positive and dire consequences of using digital media were there, and it took competent teachers to optimize the positive benefits and reduce the negative ones.

2. Theoretical Discussion: Development of different literacy concepts

To understand digital media literacy, we must know about other literacies, for instance, literacy, information, media, computer, digital, and digital media literacy. These literacies are related to each other, but there are some distinct ones among them. However, different literacy theory paradigms include general and critical competencies. In most circumstances, though these phrases flap and are frequently used interchangeably, each is based on presumptions about the range and connections between emerging technologies ([Park, 2011](#); [Zhang & Zhu, 2016](#)). Therefore, the more technology advances, the more critical competencies become inevitable.

Literacy

Literacy has changed over time from primarily concerned with technical abilities to a more comprehensive perspective considering language competence, numeracy, and social behaviours. In 1956, UNESCO used the phrase "functional literacy" to explain the connection link literacy and employment/economic growth. Digital technology is the most recent distinguishing development in the history of technology's influence on literacy. Despite being overused as a synonym for competence and proficiency, "literacy" has always had some status. Thus, a "social shift" in literacy practices during the 1990s focused on critical literacy, which obscures cultures and textual knowledge ([Gee, 1999](#); [Luke, Comber, & Grant, 2003](#); [UNESCO Education Sector, 2004](#); [Martin, 2006](#); [Buckingham, 2008](#); & [Mills, 2010](#)).

Information literacy

Information literacy has evolved since Paul G. Zurkowski first proposed it in 1974 as an advanced ability required in the job to its acknowledgement at the beginning of the 2000s as a critical skill in all facets of life. Information literacy was underlined as a critical component of social, cultural, and economic growth and a requirement for successful engagement in the information society in the Prague Declaration of 2003 (Lloyd, 2017). The ability to access and produce information via information and communication technology came under more and more scrutiny in the late 2000s.

Media Literacy

Although media education has been around for years, proponents of this notion made the phrase "media literacy" well-known in the 1970s (Buckingham, 2013 in Brown et al. 2016; Durur, 2016:15; Uddin, 2018, p. 51). According to different expert definitions, media literacy is a collective ability that enables people to access the media, retrieve, analyze, evaluate it, and produce material for various forms of media (Durur, 2016:15; European Commission, 2007; Koltay, 2011; Uddin, 2018, p. 51). Meanwhile, "Media" indicates various communication outlets, including film, television, radio, video, photography, advertising, newspapers, magazines, computers, and the Internet. Media literacy requires crucial, moral, and practical examination of media information to participate and be involved in one's private, professional, and societal activities. (Aufderheide, 1992 in Brown et al., 2016; Koltay, 2011; Uddin, 2018, p. 51)

Computer Literacy

According to UNESCO (2011), computer Literacy refers to a set of stoner chops that allow for active involvement in a society where products and artistic immolations are supported by computers and made available online. More specifically, I need knowledge of how to use computer-related technology.

Defining Digital Literacy

Paul Gilster published his work "Digital Literacy" around 1997, one year after Don Tapscott published "The Digital Economy." More people are engaging in online activities due to the growing availability and cost of digital technology. However, long-term use is necessary to grasp the complexities and potential perils of the digital world, whereas not all users are adept at using the tools at their disposal. Even seasoned users are susceptible to hackers and may have difficulty protecting their online identity. (Lankshear & Knobel, 2008)

Paul Gilster first used the phrase "digital literacy" 1997 to refer to the capacity to comprehend and utilize data supplied through a computer in various formats and from multiple sources. It involves more than just technological proficiency; it also entails critically analyzing information in multiple forms and choosing how to use it in various real-life circumstances. Digital literacy is the ability to continually keep up with and incorporate technological advances into daily life. Digital literacy is essential today for business and education and to better understand the wider world. (Martin & Grudziecki, 2006; Gilster, 1997)

Digital Media Literacy

Generally, "studying" and "composing" in a digital context are known as digital media literacy. However, this literacy comprises four hierarchically arranged parts: technical expertise, critical comprehension, Production and connection ability, and citizenship involvement (Zhang & Zhu, 2016). Technical proficiency is required to use various internet technologies and media, whereas critical comprehension entails critically analyzing and assessing digital content. Citizenship involvement implies using technology in a manner that is ethical and responsible. Production and connection refer to the capacity to create texts for digital media and engage with people through media. Digital media literacy requires the use of critical thinking.

Why Digital Media Literacy?

When we already have many literacy concepts, why do we need other new concepts? How is digital media literacy different from other literacies? Well, "digital media literacy" refers to a broader array of technologies beyond the basic concepts of "media literacy." The idea of media literacy is that it prioritizes providing individuals with the resources they require to grow as better-informed media consumers. To elaborate, digital media literacy includes using gadgets and software to promote spreading messages and enhance connectivity and social engagement (Park, 2011; Zhang & Zhu, 2016). It focuses on the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and produce media content using digital platforms and technology. (Zhang & Zhu, 2016)

Critical concepts on different types of literacies

The distinctions among these four literacies, such as information, media, computer, and digital, are shown in a table (see Tab-1.2). The ability to efficiently acquire, process, and use digital information is a component of information literacy. The critical analysis and production of content from the media in many situations are the main goals of media literacy. Computer

literacy requires the skills to use computer-related technology. However, digital literacy requires many competencies, including innovation, teamwork, and lifelong learning. These qualities are necessary for surviving, studying, and functioning digitally.

Table 1.2: Summary of critical concepts on different types of literacies. (Adapted from Brown et al., 2016)

	Information Literacy	Media Literacy	Computer Literacy	Digital Literacy
Definition	The capability to detect, identify, recoup, process and use digital information optimally (UNESCO, 2011)	The ability to access the media, to understand and critically evaluate different aspects of the media and media content, and to create communications in a variety of contexts (European Commission, 2007)	A set of stoner chops that enable active participation in a society where services and artistic immolations are computer-supported and distributed on the Internet (UNESCO, 2011)	Those capabilities fit an individual for living, learning, and working in a digital society (JISC, 2015)
Primary Focus	Information retrieval and assessment of quality	Evaluation and production of media texts	Skills in the use of computer-related technology	Innovation, collaboration, lifelong learning

3. The Scenario of digitalization and digital Inclusion Process in Bangladesh

Bangladesh had a citizenry of 172.1 million as of January 2023, 66.94 million of whom used the internet and 44.70 million of whom used social media (see Fig-1). (Kemp, 2023)
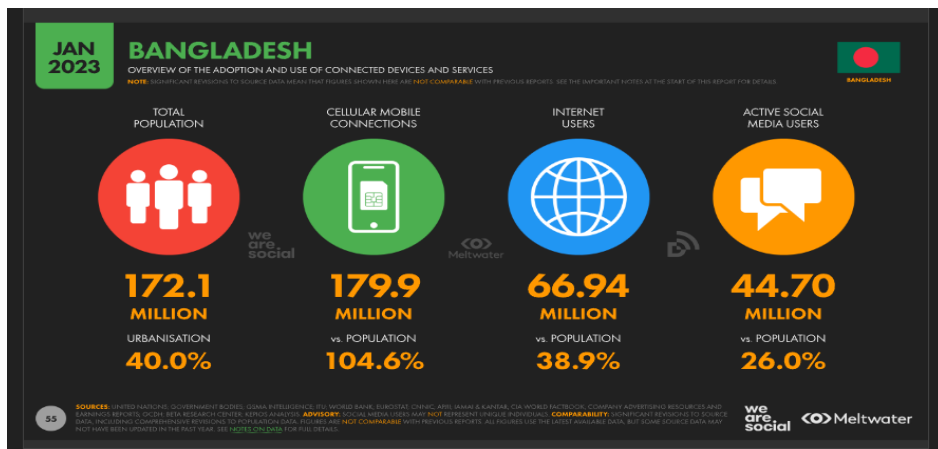
Figure 1: A review of how interconnected devices and services were adopted and used in the nation in January. ([Kemp-2023](#))

According to Kamp ([2023](#)), at the beginning of 2023, Facebook had 43.25 million users, compared to YouTube's 34.40 million, Instagram's 4.45 million, Twitter's 1.05 million, and LinkedIn's 5.90 million "members" in Bangladesh (see Fig-2). Additionally, statistics found in Meta's advertising tools show that Facebook Messenger has 20.35 million users in Bangladesh at the beginning of 2023, with a gender split of 30.3% women to 69.7% men ([Kemp, 2023](#)). However, between the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023 (October 2022-January 2023), Bangladesh's Facebook Messenger ad audience shrank by 1.5 million (-6.7%).

YouTube (34.40)
Facebook Messenger (20.35 million)
LinkedIn (5.90 million)
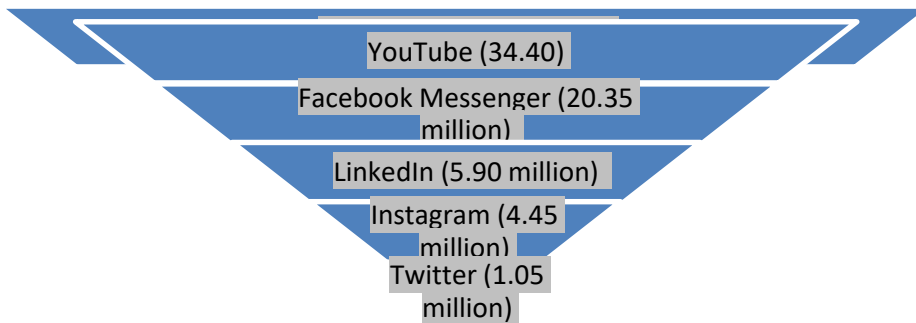Instagram (4.45 million)
Twitter (1.05 million)

Figure 2: Latest social media stats in Bangladesh. ([Kemp, 2023](#)) The figure made by the authors.

Indeed, modern mobile technology has significantly boosted internet users in Bangladesh. In contrast, the nation launched the 4G era in 2018, and an increase in demand for data transmission speeds has fuelled the growth of internet usage ([Begum, 2022](#)). There were 179.9 million active cellphone connections overall as of 2023, a rise of 2.1 million (+1.2%) in the number of mobile connections (see Fig-1). ([Kemp, 2023](#))

Shadat et al. ([2020](#)) indicate that, even with owning phones, computers, and networks, rural households' capacity to profit from modern technology, such as online schooling and financial transactions, is limited by a lack of problem-solving and valuable digital skills. Additionally, while most rural dwellings in the survey had cell phones, the project discovered that most needed smartphones. It also found that households with computers had higher computer literacy levels than those without 37% of residences had internet access, which was a tiny percentage. ([Shadat et al., 2020](#))

Nevertheless, until January 2023, 32.6 of the total social media users in Bangladesh were female, and 67.4% were male, accounting for 66.8% of the country's overall internet users. Additionally, the percentage of people using social media was 26.0 per cent overall and 34.5 percent among adults 18 and older. However, digital information is frequently censored or blocked due to the growing observation of digital platforms and the government's power to prohibit or stop apps or websites. (Begum, 2022; Mizan & Ahmed, 2019)

The rise of digital technology is an unstoppable trend that has altered cultures everywhere. Due to the excellent work of media and processor technologists, the development of camera technologies, and the widespread availability of fast internet, the chance to democratize digital media platforms has been made possible. Hence, while digital technology has limitless potential to better people's lives, it also has the potential to exclude those who cannot participate in this platform. The difference begins with its implementation and use. Despite the considerable focus on digital media and its democratization regarding Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), this discipline still has many obstacles, especially in engagement and proper utilization of this platform in developing countries, such as Bangladesh.

For instance, according to O'Neill et al (2016), individuals in the Global South rampantly adopted digital portable technologies like cellular mobile and smartphone. However, most individuals who use these mediums for content consuming and sharing rarely actively participate in creating digital content. For some communities that are falling behind in the production of digital content, socioeconomic background differences and disparities regarding schooling, income, ethnicity, and gender stand out as significant barriers. Overall, the results show that simply having access to technology does not democratize the production of creative works; rather, the ability to produce digital works depends on an individual's social and fiscal circumstances.

In Bangladesh, like in the rest of the developing world, the proliferation of mobile phones and the Internet on these devices has increased access to digital technologies and expanded the scope of what was previously possible in terms of commerce, communication, and information sharing (Rifat, 2022). Besides, the four main priorities of Bangladesh's digitization process are human resource development, citizen connectivity, doorstep service delivery, and expanding ICT-based commercial prospects (Prime Minister Office, 2009). On the other hand, according to Islam and Inan (2021) to date, Bangladesh has implemented several ICT initiatives to help the nation go digital, including land record digitization, security and general services (such as immigration support,

case filing and status checking, etc.), telecommunications services (line connection and complaint management, utility bills), transport services (such as registration of automobiles, bus-train tickets, licensing, and renewals), and educational services (such as e-learning and online registrations).

According to Hoque et al. (2016), embracing ICT in Bangladesh's remote businesses of all sizes needs the support of the government, top management, and the economy. So, digitalization might exacerbate pre-existing disparities while generating new types of marginalization. Furthermore, Aziz and Naima (2021) examined Bangladesh's National ICT Policy (NIP) using a qualitative methodology, policy goal-means analysis, and the analytical framework for digital inclusion. The study revealed that the strategy ignores more significant aspects of digital inclusion, such as skills and use, and is technocentric and limited in its emphasis on digitization and access.

Generally, ICT access by families typically comprises computers, the Internet, telephone, television, and radio, whereas ICT use by individuals typically includes mobile phones, computers, and the Internet. For instance, Bangladesh has eight districts: Khulna, Mymensingh, Rangpur, Rajshahi, Barishal, Chattogram, Sylhet, and Dhaka. Here, the data in Table 1.1 displays the percentage of households in various Bangladeshi areas that use various forms of technology. Data shows that Barishal has the highest percentage of households with radios (29%), while Rangpur has the lowest percentage (4%) (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics-BBS, 2022). Besides, Dhaka has the most significant percentage of households with televisions (68.1%), while Khulna has the lowest percentage (54%). Still, the percentage of homes with telephones is almost universal, with Rangpur having the lowest percentage at 94.8% and Dhaka and Sylhet having the highest at 98.6% (BBS-2022). In comparison, the percentage of households with computers is 8.7%, with Barishal having the lowest percentage at 4% and Dhaka having the most at 15%. Accordingly, the percentage of homes with internet access is 38.1%, with Rajshahi having the lowest percentage at 19.7% and Dhaka having the most at 58.2%.

Table 1.1- ICT Access to Bangladeshi Households by Region. (BBS, 2022)
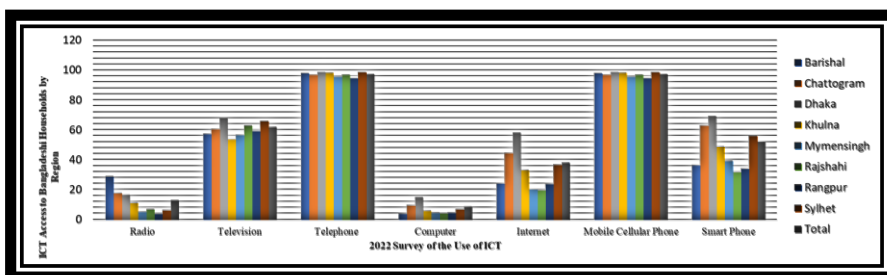
Finally, 97.4% of households have a cell phone, with Rangpur having the lowest percentage at 94.8% and Dhaka and Sylhet having the highest at 98.6%. Additionally, 52.2% of households have smartphones, with Rajshahi having the lowest percentage at 32% and Dhaka having the highest at 69.4%. Waughen et al. (2015) focused on Bangladesh's progress toward establishing a Digital Bangladesh by 2021 when they researched the digital divide and how it affects a nation's technical position. However, people must have access to and be able to use digital technologies like mobile devices and the Internet to reap the benefits of digitization. Individuals might be unable to use digital services efficiently without these tools and information. In addition, the digital divide (differences in access to technology and digital skills) is anticipated to lead to disparities in access to and inefficiencies across the wide range of digital services (Rifat, 2022). Ahmed (2023) stresses that digital literacy is essential for societies to be open, inclusive, and secure. It enables us to evaluate news critically and steer clear of false information while assisting us in understanding privacy and cybersecurity dangers.

4. Significance of Digital literacy in Bangladesh

The availability and use of personal computers, mobile phones, access to the web, and high-speed connectivity have all increased due to the ICT sector's development in Bangladesh. According to Koly (2022), due to the voluminous search engine outcomes and the need for more knowledge on what sites to explore or what search terms to utilize, people with low levels of digital literacy may find it challenging to acquire specific information online. Although many Bangladesh individuals need help to comprehend fundamental internet ideas, developing ICT skills could significantly impact the country's economy. Access to more resource centres and inexpensive instruction may be beneficial. Thus, both success and confidence-building can achieve by fostering creativity. Though it is illegal and immoral, patent theft is a widespread problem in the country, with people taking ideas and disseminating them as their own. While safeguarding intellectual property rights, the digital sphere must foster creative expression more. (Al-Zaman, 2021)

Digital creativity can be expressed in various ways, including writing, editing photos and videos, creating educational content, and making unique music. Vlogs are utilized on social media sites like YouTube to display life, creativity, and self-expression, while blogs are becoming increasingly common for individuals to share their creative works. Besides, people can use the YouTube platform to express their thoughts and opinions. According to Al-

Zaman (2021), this variety of viewpoints might inspire people to cultivate their creativity and produce unique art pieces rather than merely plagiarizing others.

In Bangladesh, there needs to be more public knowledge of the value of digital literacy, which is crucial for the nation's development toward digital inclusion. Cyberbullying, harassment, and crime are on the rise and can negatively influence daily life and mental health. People of all ages need digital literacy, which requires practical abilities, including device and application expertise. These abilities should be taught to children early and letting them explore and try new things can help them become independent and develop their capabilities. Furthermore, these concepts ought to be more widely accepted in the nation.

Mizan and Ahmed (2019) argue that the ethical utilization of digital media may contribute to building a society that upholds human rights in Bangladesh. To exploit the advantages of digital platforms while reducing irresponsible internet use, governments, as well as non-governmental organizations, must collaborate. Whereas on the other hand, effective communication is essential for coexistence and avoiding disputes, and selecting the appropriate communication method is vital. Digital literacy is particularly crucial in the modern world since it enables people to use technology for various things, including data storage, virtual gatherings, and public speaking. Therefore, Bangladesh is looking more and more into emerging communication technologies. Also, to become digitally literate, one needs to keep learning about technology, online platforms, and ethics.

Due to the impact of young people and the present epidemic, digital marketing is now more in demand in Bangladesh than it once was. In the corporate sector, digital marketing has become more of a complementary talent than an essential one. Nova (2021) highlights the need for skilled digital marketers and advises graduates interested in marketing jobs to become familiar with digital marketing strategies and tools in Bangladesh. Furthermore, young people frequently have an advantage in understanding and using digital content, but companies looking for specialized help need a wider talent pool with experts in their sector. According to Munshi (2018), several digital marketing firms have sprung up in Bangladesh that serve a variety of market niches. One such firm is Scratchboard, which creates commercials for companies and employs freshly graduated students in the digital media industry. Although there is always room for improvement in people's talents, Bangladesh is beginning to see growth in information and communication technology (ICT). Due to a large amount of data available, digital literacy—

which involves locating, filtering, and analysing material online—is crucial. (Koly, 2022)

When looking for information online, it is critical to distinguish between biased and trustworthy sources. Nonetheless, the adoption of IT in the field of journalism has had a significant impact on Bangladesh's news generation, dissemination, and processing. However, inadequate digital literacy across media professionals poses problems for the media sector. Young internet users increasingly use social networking sites as their primary news source, emphasizing the need for traditional news outlets to change how they operate. Newsrooms should concentrate on creating a diversity of genres and storytelling and train workers to enhance their online news output. Bangladeshi journalists must put their readers' and viewers' needs first to succeed. So, Bangladesh must have an established basis in digital literacy to realise its objective of becoming a smart nation (Ahmed, 2023). With it, the nation can avoid falling backwards in the digital age.

5. View of Bangladesh's digital gap

According to Avgerou, 2010; Dijk, 2006; Heeks, 2010; and Romke, 2013, information and communication technology (ICT) does not magically solve complex social problems and may worsen social disparity. Instead, Hilbert (2011) emphasized that the digital gap makes low-income families, rural areas, and ageing or marginalized individuals more socially excluded. Romke (2013) has also concluded the same for Bangladesh's digital divide scenario. According to her, the digital divide can be seen chiefly between urban and rural regions, varying between income and education statutes. This situation has marginalized the citizens' access to ICT and the competency of ICT technologies.

In addition, a recent study shows how the digital shift, with algorithmic modelling, digital monitoring, big data, and the Internet of Things, generates new inequities and enhances the dominance of expensive industrial firms in digital media (Trappel, 2019). However, Rahman (2008) has emphasized that limited access to internet resources and energy supplies are the barriers to developing telecommunication infrastructure in the countryside and residential in Bangladesh. Besides, digital literacy is considered one of the critical elements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As the Economist Intelligence Unit (2012) reported, developing a country's entire population's competency to facilitate internet services is pivotal in overcrossing the digital divide, which

needed to be a prime concern of policymakers (Shadat, et al. 2020). Furthermore, Babar's (2017) study discovered that the nation's ICT infrastructure and facilities needed to be improved on the digital gap in Bangladesh for the development of an information society. The report suggests modifying the rules and regulations governing ICT and telecom, increasing government and outside investment in ICT, establishing connectivity both inside and outside the country, and cooperating with and regulating various ICT firms and ISPs to achieve a just information society. The report also emphasizes how critical it is to bridge the digital divide to build an inclusive information society.

Moreover, Sayed and Mamun-Ur-Rashid (2021) suggested that e-health service providers in Bangladesh need to concentrate on minimizing the gender and geographic divide and enhancing the population's digital literacy skills. They found in their report that the most important variables influencing the use of e-health services are age, gender, location, e-health awareness, and mobile phone skill. Besides, males and older individuals are more likely to use e-health services than females and residents in rural areas, who tend to be less likely to do so. Finally, 60% of Bangladesh's population resided in rural areas as of the beginning of 2023, compared to 40% who resided in urban areas (Kemp, 2023). In this regard, to narrow this digital gap, the "skills" or "knowledge" of citizens in using information technology, often known as "digital literacy," needed to be improved.

D. CONCLUSIONS

The limitation of this study is the methodology. We only used a secondary research method; however, qualitative and quantitative research should be conducted to understand the whole scenario of the country. Digital media literacy comprises various advanced competencies regarding all cutting-edge technologies and tools. In Bangladesh, about 60 per cent of the population still lives in rural areas. Thus, access to digital devices is unsatisfactory for most regions. However, limited individuals have proper digital device access. In this regard, finding proper data and research on digital media literacy is difficult in Bangladesh.

Moreover, during the Pandemic, education in rural schools had hampered because of proper digital device access and skills. Nevertheless, most digital and digital media literacy research is conducted in developed societies. As a result, the measuring scale of these competencies is also complicated and

ambiguous. Therefore, more research should be conducted based on this country's socio-economical condition. Bangladesh is making tremendous progress toward digitalization and sustainable development goals. However, it requires more time to reach its goal. Besides, as we live in a complex technological era as a newly rising country with a vast young population, Bangladesh needs to take convenient policies and steps to stay caught up on this journey.

Finally, individuals must be active learners and UpToDate to be digitally literate. We hope this research will shed light on further study on media, digital and digital media literacy. Furthermore, it will provide clear theoretical and conceptual views of these competencies to the new scholars.

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