Mass Media, Communication, and Culture in Bangladesh in the Shadow of a Big Neighbor

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Mass Communication

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**Mass Media, Communication, and Culture in Bangladesh in
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Abstract

This thesis claims that one-way media content flow from one country to the other affects the culture and cultural industries in the recipient country. It establishes this claim by examining the media content flow from India to Bangladesh from the political economy perspective of communication. It shows that media content flow from India to Bangladesh is one-way and the availability of Indian media content in Bangladesh affects the culture and cultural industries. It also compares the India-Bangladesh situation with the US-Canada situation in the context of media content flow. Like Bangladesh, in Canada, media content predominantly flows from the United States. Both Bangladesh and Canada are the victims of mass media development which occurred in their neighboring countries. However, the victimization was not imposed unilaterally on these countries. Ruling elites as well as business entrepreneurs in these countries have invited media materials from the neighboring countries through their actions. This thesis raises questions regarding one-way media content flow from one country to another and advocates two-way flow between states.

Acknowledgements

The idea of this thesis originated in a graduate seminar on the political economy of communication, offered by Professor Vincent Mosco, in Fall 2000. In the class, I raised a point regarding the similarity between the Canadian situation in North America and the Bangladeshi situation in South Asia in the field of communication, and Professor Mosco quickly picked the point and suggested me to look into the issue in details in my M.A. thesis. I appreciate the support he provided at the time and his contribution as a supervisor throughout the project.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This thesis deals with India-Bangladesh relations in the field of communication. It looks at two things: first, it investigates the media content flow between India and Bangladesh, and Indian influence on mass media and culture in Bangladesh; second, it compares the media content flow between India-Bangladesh with the same between the USA and Canada.

Bangladesh is geographically surrounded by India on three sides, is 1/22 of India in size, and is ranked as one of the poorest countries of the world. On the other hand, the Indian economy is the 14th largest in the world, and India is the 12th largest global power in terms of industrial production and has the third largest pool of technical and scientific personnel in the world. India, a regional superpower and a key player in South Asia, has a significant influence on its small neighbors in different fields including economics, politics, culture, mass media, and communication. As one of India's close neighbors, Bangladesh also demonstrates her influence on different sectors including communication.

Before 1947, Bangladesh was a part of Bengal, a province of India. In 1947, the Indian subcontinent was divided into two independent states—India and Pakistan—on the basis of religion. During the partition of India, Bengal was also divided into two parts—West Bengal and East Bengal. East Bengal joined Pakistan in

1947 because its majority people were Muslim and since then it was called East Pakistan. Although the people of East Pakistan and the people of the other part of Pakistan called West Pakistan belonged to the same religion, Islam, they were different from each other in other areas of culture. The physical distance between the two parts of Pakistan was 1,600 km. East Pakistani people, however, were close to the people of West Bengal by speaking the same Bengali language and sharing the same culture. The unity of Pakistan, then, was felt to be vulnerable after independence in 1947.

Immediately after the birth of Pakistan, East Pakistani people began to realize that the West Pakistani ruling elites were exploiting them. This feeling of exploitation led to a struggle of 24 years and ultimately a war of nine months. These struggles resulted in the emergence of independent Bangladesh in December 1971. During the liberation war of Bangladesh, India became a great friend of the former and through the active help of India Bangladesh emerged as an independent nation. Despite some problems regarding the demarcation of land and maritime boundaries between Bangladesh and India, they have been maintaining a good relationship since 1971.

Mass media emerged in the Indian subcontinent during British rule and grew significantly on the Indian side, as Calcutta (West Bengal) was the so-called capital of the British Empire in the region. Communication media, like other sectors of the state under the control of British colonial rule, first grew in the present Indian territory and then spread to other parts of the region including East Bengal and West Pakistan. The

development of mass media in the subcontinent had always been related to the political development in the region. Since the independence of India and Pakistan, these two countries have never seen eye to eye because of a dispute over the control of Kashmir. Due to political rivalry, the government of Pakistan banned Indian newspapers and movies in both East and West Pakistan. The ruling elites of Pakistan made attempts to develop mass media independent of Indian influence as they considered Indian media threatening to the existence of Pakistan.

Mass media in Bangladeshi territory also emerged during British rule and received further development during the subsequent Pakistani regime (1947-1971). The governance pattern of mass media and media policies in Bangladesh still bear the impression of British and Pakistani rules. Since 1971, the Bangladeshi government has been considering mass media a tool for nation building and national development. While the ban that was imposed on the access of Indian movies to united Pakistan was not withdrawn in Bangladesh, Indian newsmagazines (Bengali and English) were exempted, perhaps because of the thought that Indian newsmagazines have limited or no impact on the mass audience. Due to the popularity of film as an entertainment medium, Bangladesh does not allow public exhibition of Indian films in its cinema halls.

However, with the development of satellite television in South Asia in the early 1990s, Bangladeshi people could access Indian films and entertainment programs through satellite television channels. The economies of scale achieved by

India in broadcasting, as well as, absence of protective measures on the part of Bangladesh made Indian satellite television channels available to Bangladeshi audiences. There is no restriction on viewing any TV program in Bangladesh whether it is Indian or American in origin. The state-owned television channel, Bangladesh Television (BTV), also broadcasts foreign made television serials.

Because of geographical and cultural proximity between India and Bangladesh, Indian newspapers, films, and satellite television channels have a significant audience in Bangladesh. This thesis suggests that the media content flow between Bangladesh and India is one-way with Bangladesh at the receiving end. The availability of Indian media content affects the development of mass media and culture in Bangladesh. It investigates the impact of Indian media content on Bangladeshi audiences, and how Indian media content obstructs the growth of similar media in Bangladesh. However, the thesis also includes the forms of resistance against Indian media.

In recent years, India has significantly developed its communication sector and looked for markets across the border for its products. In the economic sector, Bangladesh is dependent on India because of its status as the major trading-partner of Bangladesh. Bangladesh's trade relations with India had historically been in deficit and the current official trade deficit between Bangladesh and India is around one billion US dollars. If the cross-border illegal trade is considered, it will be closer to two billion (Eusufzai, 2000). Rehman Sobhan (2000, p. XIV) observes, "Today every

person who buys Indian sarees, toothpaste, diesel engines or consumes beef or seeks medicare at Birala Heart Centre in Calcutta, or sends their children to colleges in India or goes for ziarat to Ajmer or watches Zee TV contributes to Bangladesh's payment deficit".

The thesis analyzes privatization and liberalization processes that have been going on in the field of communication in both India and Bangladesh, and explores the impact of these processes on the relationship between the two countries. It finds its inspiration from Dallas Smythe's seminal work—*Dependency Road*—on the relationship between US and Canada in the field of communication. Smythe discussed how Canadian laissez-faire capitalism allowed the dominant presence of US media content in Canada. According to him, the policies enacted by the Canadian government from time to time have facilitated the flow of media content from the United States to Canada. The thesis suggests that US-Canada relations in this area bear some similarities and differences to the India-Bangladesh situation and uncovers the similarities and differences.

This project is particularly important for two main reasons. Firstly, in the age of globalization, communication has become a field of business, and mass media play an important role in shaping relationships between nation states. Secondly, the literature review suggests that as of yet no study has been conducted on the relationship between India and Bangladesh in the communications sector. Most research on India-Bangladesh tends to focus on the economic and political

relationship between the two states. Bangladesh's close historical, political and economic ties with India lend themselves exceptionally well to a comparative study of their relationship in the field of communication.

Research questions

1. What is the nature of media content flow between Bangladesh and India?
2. What are the similarities and differences between the India-Bangladesh situation and the US-Canada situation in terms of media content flow?

Theoretical approach

The study uses the perspective of political economy in its approach to the study of communication. For the purposes of the thesis, therefore, it is necessary to define what is involved in the use of this approach. Mosco (1996, p. 25) defines political economy as the study of “the social relations, particularly the power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources”. The variety of political economy used here puts the question of power at the forefront. This entails a study of how the processes of production, distribution and consumption are shaped (Babe, 1993). Looking at these processes, political economy deals with a host of factors including the history of social change, the relations between different social organs—such as social class, economic and political organizations—the guiding principles and laws of social change, and the activities of

human agents (Golding and Murdock, 1991; Babe, 1993, p. 31; Mosco, 1996, p. 27-37).

The political economy of communication examines how communication processes and institutions work within society, who shapes them, under what conditions and with what purpose (Pendakur, 1993). The political economy perspective looks at the context of media production—how media production takes place, how it is organized politically, economically and institutionally, who produces it and why (Magder, 1989).

In communication studies political economy has been considered as one of the mainstreams of the critical approach (Meehan, Mosco, and Wasko, 1993). Political economists see the cultural industries as the same as other industries in a capitalist society: cultural industries are business enterprises producing commodities and surplus value. Raymond Williams (1977, p. 136) writes, “The major modern communication systems are now so evidently key institutions in advanced capitalist societies that they require the same kind of attention, at least initially, that is given to the institutions of industrial production and distribution.” Williams’ formulation about the transformation of media industries in advanced capitalist societies is now equally applicable to the situation in developing countries. Media industries in developing countries have been going through this transformation during the last three decades, since these countries have embraced the philosophy of liberalization and privatization

put forward by the Bretton Woods Institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and now the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Graham Murdock (1982) suggests that on the one hand, the products of the communication industries are commodities like goods and services, and on the other, they are more than commodities since they provide a contemporary worldview and perspective on social life. Media industries play a pivotal role in shaping social consciousness and it is this relationship between economic and cultural power that made the issue of their control and ownership a subject of academic inquiry and political concern, Murdock adds. For Murdock and the scholars in this line of thinking, the message is the commodity. This claim locates mass media between the economic base and political as well as ideological superstructure (Meehan, 1984).

Alternatively, Dallas Smythe (1977) argues that any political economy of mass media must be based on an analysis of its commodity form—audience labor. To him, audience labor is the prime commodity and the main function of mass media is not to sell packages of ideology to consumers, but audiences to advertisers. In Smythe's analysis, the message is bait just a 'free lunch' to lure the audience to the point of sale. After being attracted by the media, audiences spend their leisure time by viewing it. In the act of viewing, every audience produces some labor that is sold to advertisers as a commodity.

The Murdock-Smythe debate on media commodities uncovers two fundamental aspects of the political economic analysis of communication—the

message commodity and the audience commodity. A comprehensive analysis of the political economy of communication should deal with these two aspects. Embracing both ideas, Mosco (1996, p. 138-139) argues that for framing and analyzing the political economy of communication three processes should be considered as entry points. For him, the processes are commodification (the process of transforming use value into exchange value), spatialization (the process of institutional extension through the compression of space and time), and structuration (the process of constructing structures with social agency).

Briefly, commodification in communication describes how media produce commodities. Media industries produce primarily two main commodities—the message commodity and the audience commodity. Spatialization deals with the expansion of media industries throughout the world with the process of globalization. Media industries in recent years have expanded through vertical and horizontal integration both at national and international levels. Vertical integration occurs when a media company buys a company at a different stage in the production process, and horizontal integration takes place when one kind of media company buys another kind of media company (Mosco, 1996, p. 175-176; Compaine, 1979). Nation states have facilitated the concentration of media industries by privatizing and liberalizing their respective media markets. Structuration explains the relation between media and social class. In a capitalist society, media are controlled by the dominant class and reproduce the ideology of that class. Taking the above theoretical construction into

account, the thesis examines the historical development of mass media in Bangladesh and India.

To look at the media content flow between India and Bangladesh, and to perceive the influence of the Indian media on Bangladeshi culture and media industries, the thesis employs the political economic work done in the context of international communication. Political economic research in international communication developed during the 1960s and 1970s to study the relations between nation states in cultural and communication matters. The conceptual framework of this research tradition was developed in the works of Armand Matellart, Herbert Schiller, and Dallas Smythe. Cees Hamelink, Oliver Boyd-Barrett, K. Nordenstreng, and Tapio Varis further expanded the conceptual framework. In the 1960s and 1970s, the expansion of American capitalism to the South and the mass export of American media contents to other countries raised concerns among scholars. Scholars engaged themselves with the investigation of how industrialized countries, under the leadership of the United States, expanded markets for transnational media corporations in the name of free flow of information by creating a one-way media content flow between the North and the South. Early political economic research in international communication emphasized the ideological role played by cultural products to facilitate the expansion of western capitalism to developing countries. They were of the opinion that the media content exported from the North to the South was creating consumer societies in the South.

However, this theoretical position has received criticism for its strong emphasis on the impact of mass media content often overlooking people's response or reaction to them. The works of Katz and Liebes (1984, 1986) on the American TV serial 'Dallas' in Israel showed how people of different ethnic origins have different readings of a cultural text. Drawing on the findings of audience research conducted in western societies, Tomlinson (1991) believes that audiences are more active, aware, and complex. People accept those media messages, which have a link to their own experience, and social as well as cultural context. He claims that media may be analytically separable from the other aspects of culture, but they are intimately connected with other aspects of people's "lived experience".

The political economic research in international communication was concerned about the one-way flow of cultural products—the flow from the USA to other countries and the flow from the North to the South. However, it focused less on the development that took place in the 1980s and 1990s in global political economy shaping the communication sector in developing countries. In the 1980s, the concept of deregulation, stemmed from corporate America and supported by the Reagan administration in the USA and the Thatcher government in the UK, gained currency as a global agenda item. The main objective of this campaign was to foster privatization of nationalized industries and liberalization of market in developing countries so that multinational corporations get easy access. The IMF and the World Bank imposed deregulation on developing countries, changing their lending policy

(Mohammadi, 1997). The provision of aid was made conditional on adopting privatization and liberalization as policy goals. Following the prescriptions of the IMF and the World Bank, many developing countries have begun to privatize their industries (including communication industries) and liberalize their markets. The deregulation of telecommunications in the South has been managed under the supervision of the WTO.

As a result of deregulation, private entrepreneurs have become dominant in the communication sector in many developing countries and forged alliances with multinational media giants during the last two decades. For example, a number of countries in the developing world namely India, Brazil, Mexico, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, South Korea, Malaysia, and Singapore became important parts of the global political economy. These countries registered their presence in the world market by exporting media content and hardware including computer peripherals and accessories. Although their market-share in developed countries is insignificant, they have a sizeable market in other developing countries. For example, Indian media products, particularly Hindi movies and soap operas, have a monopoly market in Bangladesh. Whereas India is a developing country in comparison with the developed industrialized countries of the West, at the regional level it is a superpower. Taking the recent development in the communication sector in developing countries into account, the present study investigates the media content flow between Bangladesh and India.

Finally, to draw an analytical picture on the relationship of the USA and Canada in terms of media content flow, the thesis depends on the works of Dallas Smythe, Robert Babe, Dwayne Winseck, and K. Acheson and C. Maule. According to these authors, profit motives of business groups in Canada, the convergence of media industries across the border, the liberal policies adopted by the Canadian government, and the diplomatic pressure from the American side, all contributed to the dominance of American media in Canada.

Methodology

Unlike positivist paradigms, political economy tends to treat its methods and criteria implicitly; practitioners are expected to follow criteria implicit in the paradigm and then to select the method best suited to the problem. In studying media, political economists synthesize the methods of social research (e.g., sociology and history) with the analytic methods of Smith, Ricardo, Marx, Hilferding, etc. (Meehan, Mosco, and Wasko, 1993, p. 112-113).

Meehan, Mosco, and Wasko, three prominent scholars in the field of political economy of communication, believe that gathering and analysis of data is crucial for political economists. Drawing on Scott (1990), they are in favor of maintaining four criteria for assessing evidence in the political economic research of communication. The criteria are authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. For the analysis of data, the perception and observation of a researcher is valuable in political economy research because political economy considers the researcher as a part of social processes (Mosco, 1996, p. 79).

The present study employs the methods mentioned by the three political economists in examining media and communication. At the same time, however, the

study has been conducted on a country (Bangladesh) where almost all government documents are kept away from the public in the pretext of official secrecy, and where the private owners of the media are also reluctant to give information regarding their business. Taking this obstacle into account, the study depended on available local and international data sources, different Web sources, and personal contact with key figures in the field of communication in Bangladesh.

For the historical analysis of the evolution of mass media in Bangladesh and India, the study depended on published books and journal articles. The thesis relied on the statistics published by the governments of Bangladesh and India for the latest data. It also used UNESCO and ITU databases. To evaluate the impact of Indian media industries on mass media and culture in Bangladesh, the thesis depended mainly on the researcher's own observation, reports published by different newspapers in Bangladesh and India, and personal contact with key figures in the field of communication in Bangladesh.

The thesis develops an analysis on the US-Canada portion to compare US-Canada relations with India-Bangladesh relations in terms of media content flow. For this purpose, the thesis relies on existing literatures such as books and journal articles, and the databases of Statistics Canada, Canadian Heritage, and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC).

Thesis outline

The first chapter has introduced the thesis- what the study is about and why it is an issue of research. It has discussed the theoretical approach and the methodology of the research. In the theoretical section, the political economy approach to communication, the political economy perspective on international communication, and theories of Canada-US relations in terms of media content flow have been analyzed.

The second chapter will describe the growth of media industries (e.g. newspapers, broadcasting, film, and telecommunication) in Bangladesh and India. The chapter will look at the development of mass media in the Indian subcontinent since their emergence in the region during British rule.

The third chapter will deal with the media content flow between Bangladesh and India. It will look at how Bangladeshi people are exposed to Indian media content and what the influence of Indian media industries on the development of mass media and culture in Bangladesh is. It will also include an analysis of resistance against Indian media content in Bangladesh.

The fourth chapter will look at the differences and similarities between India-Bangladesh relations and US-Canada relations in terms of media content flow. This chapter will attempt an analysis of US-Canada relations in the field of communication and specifically how American media secured a dominant position in Canada. Then US-Canada relations will be compared to India-Bangladesh relations.

In the final chapter, a summary of the research findings will be presented. The chapter will include the present trends of the media content flow between India and Bangladesh, and the main differences and similarities between India-Bangladesh relations and US-Canada relations. The chapter will also outline some areas for future research.

Chapter Two: The history of communication media in India and Bangladesh

This chapter briefly discusses the historical development of communication media (e.g. newspaper, broadcasting, film, and telecommunication) in India and Bangladesh to prepare the ground for analyzing the media content flow between these countries. It looks at the evolution of modern communication media in the Indian subcontinent, comprised of Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan, since their emergence in the region during British colonial rule. Before the beginning of colonial rule, different forms of communication media already existed in the subcontinent; however, these forms and modes of communication are not discussed here, since the mass media began their journey in the region during colonial rule. This chapter provides a sector-by-sector analysis of the growth of mass media in India and Bangladesh. Mass media in these countries share a common history of development until the partition of the subcontinent in 1947. To look at the history of mass media in India, this chapter considers two phases of historical development—the British phase (1757-1947) and the Indian phase (1947-onwards). To describe the history of the similar media in Bangladesh, it considers three phases of historical development—the British phase (1757-1947), the Pakistani phase (1947-1971), and the Bangladeshi phase (1971-onwards).

Newspapers

The press, having more than 300 years of history, is the oldest mass medium in the Indian subcontinent. James Augustus Hicky, an Englishman and a former employee of the British East India Company, published the first newspaper from Calcutta (West Bengal) in 1780 (Hassan, 1986; Bhuiyan and Gunaratne, 2000; Wolseley, 1971; Eapen, 1982). The newspaper was known as Hicky's *Bengal Gazette* or the *Calcutta General Advertiser* and was a two-sheet English-language-weekly. Although Hicky was British, he was always a critic of the role of the East India Company and British administrators in India. He published malicious scandals of the East India Company and about the governor-general, his wife, and his retinue in his newspaper. For his anti-establishment views, Hicky suffered government harassment, imprisonment and deportation from India. However, Hicky's main interest behind publishing a newspaper was to make profit (Sankhdher, 1984).

After Hicky's newspaper, other English-language weeklies were published from different parts of the subcontinent. Some newspapers were published with the patronage of British rulers while some came to oppose the establishment (Wolseley, 1971, p. 269). The newspapers that supported the activities of the government received undue favor such as free printing as well as postal facilities and government advertising; the anti-government newspapers, however, faced repression. The first Indian-owned newspaper was the *Bengal Gazette*, also an English-language weekly published by Gangadhar Bhattacharjee in 1816. The first non-English newspaper in

the subcontinent was published by Christian missionaries in 1818 (J. Natarajan, 1954). It was a Bengali-language monthly called *Dig Darshan* and was published from Srerampur in West Bengal. The first published newspaper from what is now called Bangladesh was the *Rangpur Barta*, a Bengali weekly. It was published in 1847 from Rangpur, now a northern district of the country.

Ram (cited in Viswanath and Karan, 2000) observes that the period from 1818 through 1867 in the history of the press in the subcontinent is marked by the struggle against censorship, harassment, deportation, and persecution. At the time, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, a social reformer and an educational as well as religious leader, was the most notable figure among Indians in the newspaper arena. He published a number of newspapers and magazines in the Persian language. Besides Roy's ventures, many newspapers were published in different parts of the subcontinent in various languages including English, Bengali, Urdu, and Hindi. The Indian uprising against colonial rule also led to the birth of many newspapers. The revolt of Indian soldiers in the British Army in 1857, which is also identified as the first war of Indian independence from colonial rule, took the anti-British movement to a new height. In most cases, the Indian-owned newspapers highlighted the progress of the anti-British movements. Nevertheless, most newspapers owned by the British in India were in favor of the government. Calcutta, Mumbai, Lahore, Sialkot, and Karachi were the main newspaper centers (Viswanath and Karan, 2000, p. 87; Khurshid, 1971). During this time, newspapers that were critical of British rule faced censorship, and some editors

suffered imprisonment. British citizens who supported Indians and demanded press freedom were deported from India.

Being afraid of the role of the press in the anti-British movement, the colonial government enacted many laws and regulations to suppress the press. The laws include the *Regulation of the Press Ordinance, 1823*; the *Regulation of Printing Establishments, 1823*; the *Registration of the Press Act, 1835*; the *Press Act, 1857*; the *Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867*; *An Act for the Better Control of Publications in Oriental Languages, 1878*; and the *Official Secrets Act, 1889*. The first two of these laws initiated the licensing of printing presses as well as printed materials in the subcontinent. These laws required that anyone wanting to keep a printing press and print books or newspapers in British India would need to obtain a license from the government. These laws were enacted to check the unauthorized publication of any newspapers, books, newsheets, pamphlets, etc., since these materials were being used to spread anti-British sentiments. These laws came into being against the backdrop of the British government's observation that newspapers in India were spreading hatred against the government and disturbing peace and harmony. Under these laws, spreading "hatred" through printed materials was punishable. In fact, the main purpose of these laws was to bar newspapers from taking part in the anti-government movement.

The *Registration of the Press Act, 1835*, required that in order to publish newspapers and periodicals the printer and the publisher were required to appear

before a Magistrate and make a declaration for printing and publishing such materials. The *Press Act, 1857* was enacted to regulate the establishment of printing presses and to restrain the circulation of printed books and papers that had no license. This law came into being as a result of the already mentioned mutiny of native soldiers in the British army. Bishui (1967), citing Sanial (1908), writes that colonial rulers held the native press responsible for instilling discontent into soldiers and common people and opted therefore to exercise more control over the press.

The *Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867* came into force to regulate printing presses and periodicals containing news and to preserve copies of every book printed in British India. According to the law, the printer and publisher of any book had to submit copies to the local government immediately after publication. A historian of Indian journalism, Nadig Krishna Murthy, (1966, p. 441) describes, “The object of these provisions is to locate responsibility for the publication of books and newspapers so that in case they offended against law, action may be taken against the offender”.

The next act—*An Act for the Better Control of Publications in Oriental Languages, 1878*—was enacted to control publications in different Indian languages. This law restricted the publication of anything that excites disaffection towards the government or antipathy between persons of different races, castes, religions, or sects. This law also made the import and possession of any books, periodicals, and newspapers published or printed outside the territory of British India containing

hatred against the British government, or materials that might raise antipathy between people of any race, illegal and punishable. The *Official Secrets Act, 1889* was enacted to prevent the disclosure of official documents and information to stop the flow of news about government actions being leaked to newspapers.

By the end of the 19th century, Indians had become restless under British rule and the nationalist movement began to spread throughout the subcontinent. Nationalist political leaders, some of whom were active in journalism, formed the Indian National Congress in 1885 to spearhead the independence struggle. The establishment of this political party gave organized shape to the struggle of independence. Since public agitation against the British government was rising, colonial rulers adopted the policy of setting two major communities—Hindus and Muslims—against each other in order to weaken the independence struggle (Narain, 1970). The Anglo-Indian press played an important role in raising hatred between Hindus and Muslims in India who had lived together for centuries through mutual cooperation. In a political about-face, the British government adopted a favorable position towards Muslims and became concerned about their “backwardness”. Historically, however, since the beginning of the British rule in India, Muslims were excluded from the power structure while Hindus were preferred as the British East India Company initiated British rule in the subcontinent by defeating the Muslim ruler of Bengal. Narain (1970, p. 105) goes on to say that Hindu-Muslim riots are a particular feature in Indian history after the post-1885 period. Hindu-Muslim clashes

in Hindu-majority India led to the birth of the Muslim League in 1905 to safeguard the interests of Muslims. Al-Mujahid (1982) claims that the growth and development of the press in undivided India have always been inextricably linked to the crystallization of political parties and demands. He goes on to say that Muslim oriented newspapers, mostly in Urdu language, while they had existed since the 1830s, only developed their own tradition after 1910 when Muslims increasingly engaged in political agitation. Muslim leaders as well as Muslim-supported newspapers came out with a two-pronged demand for the end of colonial rule and for a separate homeland for Indian Muslims.

Press involvement in the anti-colonial movement also increased significantly from the 1920s through the 1940s since political leaders started to publish newspapers and use them to make people conscious about their struggle. Prominent leaders of India at that time—including Mahatma Gandhi, Jawharlal Nehru, Mohhammad Ali Zinnah—owned, or edited newspapers, or patronized newspaper publications. Gandhi was involved with the publication of the *Young India* in 1919, the *Navjivan* in 1920, and the *Harijan* in 1932. *The Hindustan Times*, a New Delhi based English newspaper, was published in 1923 with the support of prominent congress leaders including Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru, who became the first Indian prime minister after independence, founded the *National Herald* in 1938. Muslim League leaders including Zinnah, who is considered the founder of Pakistan, inspired the launching

of a pro-Muslim news agency, the *Oriental Press of India*, and the establishment of several dailies and weeklies in the 1930s and the 1940s.

However, the British government responded to the increased participation of the press in the nationalist movement, which had become more violent and strong at the beginning of the 20th century, enacting more comprehensive and strict press laws. The *Indian Press Act, 1910* and the *Indian Press (Emergency Powers) Act, 1931* were enacted to control the newspapers that were supporting the struggle of independence. Under these laws, any publications which would incite murder, violence, hatred, or contempt against the British government, encourage any person in a government job not to fulfill his or her duty or encourage any person to interfere with the administration of the law, was illegal and subject to punishment. Despite the enactment of these strict press laws, newspapers grew in number and circulation in different parts of the subcontinent between the 1930s and the 1940s as the freedom struggle became fierce (Hassan, p. 218). Another tragic development in the Indian social life during these two decades was the frequent clashes between Hindus and Muslims. These clashes substantiated the notion that these peoples cannot live in a same country. Muslim leaders in India strongly voiced the demand for a separate state for Muslims. As a result, the Indian subcontinent was divided into two states—India for Hindus and Pakistan for Muslims—in 1947 when the British left the region. As part of the partition of India, Bengal was divided. The Hindu-majority West Bengal

remained affiliated with India while the Muslim-majority East Bengal was joined with Pakistan as East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

At the time of independence, East Pakistan had no daily newspaper and most of the newspapers were Bengali language weeklies (Khurshid, p. 308). The press did not develop in the present day territory of Bangladesh during the period of undivided India since Calcutta was the main center of political, social, cultural, and economic activities in Bengal. Immediately after the independence of Pakistan, however, two dailies—the *Daily Purbo Pakistan* and the *Paigam*—started publication in East Pakistan (Bhuiyan and Gunaratne, 2000, p. 42). In 1948, two more dailies—the Bengali language *Dainik Azad* and the English language *Morning News*—moved from Calcutta to Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan. During the Pakistani period, 10 more dailies were published in East Pakistan. Among the dailies, the *Dainik Ittefaq* and the *Sangbad* were prominent and are still in circulation. Dhaka and Chittagong became the two important cities in terms of newspaper publications during this time.

After the birth of Pakistan, discontent among Bengali people in East Pakistan began to rise against Pakistani rule. Bengali people first confronted the Pakistani government between 1948 and 1952 to establish Bengali as one of the state languages of Pakistan. This was accomplished in 1952 when Bengali became a state language of Pakistan along with Urdu. The language movement gave rise to the movement for autonomy of East Pakistan. Following the pro-autonomy movement in East Pakistan, military leader Ayub Khan seized power in Pakistan in 1958 and declared martial law.

During the martial law, press freedoms were restrained. The military dictator enacted the *Defense of Pakistan Ordinance, 1965* and the *Defense of Pakistan Rules* after the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965 mainly to suppress newspapers in East Pakistan (Bhuiyan and Gunaratne, p. 42). During Ayub's rule, government took control of 11 leading dailies in East and West Pakistan and formed a national press trust. The national news agency, the Associated Press of Pakistan, was also taken over by the government and was placed under direct control of the Press Information Ministry. During the 10-year (1958-69) rule of Ayub, 21 dailies faced closure and the total number of weeklies and bi-weeklies showed a sharp decline. The number of weeklies and bi-weeklies dropped from 379 in 1958 to 260 in March 1969 (Khurshid, p. 314).

Meanwhile, at the time of independence from Britain, India had a strong base of newspapers. Krishna Murthy (1966, p. 113) observed that after the independence, the nature of newspaper ownership changed fast as newspaper owners began a race to build their individual commercial interest. It was a time for Indian capitalists in the newspaper arena to claim their stake as they put their weight in favor of the nationalist forces during the independence movement. As a result, "group" as well as "chain" ownership emerged with a new control of newspaper readership in India. The major groups include Kasturi and Sons (Private) Limited (KSPL), the Indian National Press (Private) Limited (INPPL), and Ananda Bazar Patrika (Private) Limited (ABPPL). The KSPL publishes the influential daily the *Hindu*, the *Sport and Pastime*, and the *Hindu Weekly Review* from Madras; the INPPL publishes the *Free Press*

Journal, the *Free Press Bulletin*, the *Bharat Jyothi*, the *Navakshakti*, and the *Janashakti* from Bombay; and the ABPPL publishes the Bengali daily *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, the *Hindustan Standard*, and the Bengali weekly *Desh* from Calcutta.

The big “chains” in newspaper ownership in India are: Express Newspapers (Private) Limited owned by Ramantha Goenka, Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd. owned by Shanthi Prasad Jain, and the Hindustan Times and its allied publications controlled by famous industrialist G. D. Birla. The Express Private Limited publishes the *Indian Express* from six places including Bombay and New Delhi. It also publishes a Marathi language daily from Bombay, a Tamil daily from Madurai, and the *Screen* from Bombay. The Bennett Coleman & Co. publishes the *Times of India* and the *Navabharat Times* from Bombay and New Delhi. It also publishes several other newspapers including the *Evening News of India*, the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, the *Filmfare*, the *Femina*, and the *Economic Times* from Bombay. The Birla-chain also publishes many newspapers including the famous daily the *Hindustan Times*.

Eapen (p. 294) writes that from 1960 through 1965 the common ownership of dailies rose by nearly 57 percent in circulation and it accounted for almost three-fourths of all of India’s dailies in 1967. Among the chain owners, the Express Newspapers had 21 newspapers including 14 metropolitan dailies and Bennett Coleman and Co. had 11 dailies. The Indian newspaper industry experienced enormous growth in the 1970s. In 1971, there were 12,218 newspapers in India with a circulation of 29.62 million copies. By the end of the 1970s, the number of newspaper

rose to 20,000 with a circulation of 55 million copies (Hassan, p. 219). According to Hassan (p. 220) the decade of the seventies was also the decade of the “magazine boom” in India. Many magazines were published in different Indian languages. The number of newspapers and newspaper circulation grew significantly from 1977 to 1980 following the liberal attitude of the Janata Party government, which came to power defeating Indira Gandhi. However, the newspaper industry had to pass a critical period during the state of emergency from June 1975 to March 1977, declared by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. During the emergency, civil rights were suspended, restrictions were imposed on free speech and the press, many journalists were jailed, and the press council was dissolved (Lent, 1982a). The Janata Party government reestablished press freedom and revived the press council. The press council was formed in India in the 1950s to preserve press freedom and improve the standard of journalism. Although India kept the *Press Registration and Book Act, 1867* in a modified form, today the press is largely independent of government control.

Meanwhile, the government established in Bangladesh after independence from Pakistan in December 1971 took the ownership of the trust owned newspapers—the *Morning News* and the *Dainik Bangla*—in East Pakistan. After a few days, the government also took the ownership of Observer group consisting of the English daily *Observer*, the Bengali daily *Purbodesh*, and the movie magazine *Chitralli*. A number of new newspapers also published from Dhaka, Chittagong, and Bogra in the newly emergent Bangladesh and political party affiliation was characteristic of many of the

newspapers (Lent, 1982b). Within two years of independence, anti-government sentiments and press criticism again began to rise against the new government. The government responded to the criticism in the press by enacting the *Printing Presses and Publications (Declaration and Registration) Act, 1973*, which replaced the press ordinance created during the Pakistani governance. According to this act, everyone has to make a declaration before a Magistrate in order to print and publish a newspaper and submit free copies of every publication to the government. The government also enacted the *Special Powers Act, 1974* to provide for special measures for the prevention of certain “prejudicial” activities (Hoque, 1992). Sections 16, 17, and 18 of the act enabled government to harass journalists and close down newspapers. By the early 1974, 31 dailies, 135 weeklies, 13 fortnightlies, and 76 magazines were published in Bangladesh (Lent, 1982b, p. 429-430).

The Bangladeshi press faced a severe blow to its growth in 1975, when the democratic government with an absolute majority in the Jaitya Sangsad (National Parliament) banned the publication of all newspapers except the four which were taken over by government. The four newspapers were the already government-owned the *Observer* and the *Dainik Bangla* and the previously private owned the *Bangladesh Times* and the *Dainik Ittefaq* (Lent, 1982b, p. 435). The activities of all political parties excluding the ruling one were also declared illegal and some journalists, along with many political activists, were jailed. The military ruler, who came to power following a coup in 1975, withdrew the newspaper ban and the political party ban.

The *Observer* and the *Ittefaq* were returned to their owners, but the *Bangladesh Times* and the *Dainik Bangla* were kept under government control. With the withdrawal of the ban, the country saw the re-emergence of a number of dailies in the 1980s (Bhuiyan and Gunaratne, p. 44).

Since the end of 1975 and throughout the 1980s, Bangladesh was directly or indirectly under military dictatorship. Democracy was re-established in the country in 1990 with the fall of the military dictator through mass uprisings. With the advent of democracy, Bangladesh saw a mushroom growth of newspapers (Begum and Bhuiyan, 1999). The interim non-party caretaker government and the subsequent democratic regime gave licenses profusely for newspaper ownership as the press had played a vital role in the anti-autocratic movement. The interim government, established after the fall of military rule in 1990, repealed the press related sections of the *Special Powers Act, 1974*. The democratic government, established in 1996, closed the government owned newspapers instituting the full private ownership of the press. Bangladesh committed to privatize all nationalized industries and to liberalize the market in the early 1990s because of pressure from donor organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank. Despite the move toward privatization and liberalization, government regulations are still a part of the industry. Newspaper owners have to take license from government and ownership is restricted to citizens of the country. However, the content of newspapers is generally unregulated. A press council formed with the participation of government nominees, newspaper owners'

representative, journalists' representatives, academics, and members of parliament, look after the maintenance of code of conduct and professional standards for journalists as well as newspapers. However, the council does not have the necessary power to take action against the violation of code of conduct. It has power only to warn, admonish, and censure the press as well as the pressman.

An analysis of newspaper ownership patterns in Bangladesh reveals that various interest groups, including politicians and business groups, own newspapers. During the last two decades, the newspaper industry in the country went through vertical and horizontal integration. In the 1990s, some prominent business groups extended their business to the newspaper industry by publishing new newspapers.

At least three vernacular dailies—the *Banglar Bani*, the *Dainik Dinkal*, and the *Dainik Sangram*—have direct relationship with three major political parties in Bangladesh. The *Banglar Bani* is owned by an influential leader of the Awami League (AL), the *Dainik Dinkal* is owned by a leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the *Dainik Sangram* is owned by the Jamat-e-Islami leaders. The widely circulating vernacular daily, the *Ittefaq*, with a circulation of more than 0.12 million and published by the Ittefaq group of publications, is owned by the family of its founding editor late Toffazal Hossain Manik Mia, a highly influential and prominent journalist of the 1960s. The *Ittefaq* started its journey as a weekly in the 1960s. Over the past two decades, the Ittefaq group became owner of an English daily, a Bengali weekly, a fortnightly, and a printing and packaging industry. Two

sons of Manik Mia hold the posts of chief executives in the newspapers. The eldest son is a member of the intellectual caucus of the BNP, now the ruling party in Bangladesh, and the youngest is a top leader of another political party—Jatiya Party (M)—and was an influential minister in the so-called “consensus government” of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001). Another leading vernacular daily, the *Dainik Janakantha*, is owned by a family. The Jankantha family also has large interests in the pesticide business.

The Beximco Group that is involved in a variety of industries like pharmaceuticals, fabrics, printing and packaging came to the newspaper business in the 1990s. It owns an English daily, a vernacular daily, and a fortnightly. The Beximco is now providing online Internet services on a commercial basis in Dhaka city. *The Daily Star*, published in the beginning of the 1990s, is currently the largest circulating English daily in the country. Its owner Mediaworld Ltd. has extended its media business by publishing a vernacular daily named the *Prothom Alo*. The *Prothom Alo* claimed itself to be the largest circulating daily in the country in its second anniversary issue in November 4, 2000. The first business daily of the country, the *Financial Express*, was published in the early 1990s with financial backing from the influential members of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI). This newspaper promotes the interests of business groups.

The major income of Bangladeshi newspapers comes from advertising. A study conducted on the circulation income of daily newspapers in Dhaka city by the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB), a government funded organization, two decades ago, identified three main sources of newspaper revenue (PIB, 1980). The sources are circulation, government advertising, and private advertising. The study revealed that government advertisements are the prime source of income for the newspaper industry. Although the study is a bit old, the situation is more or less same at the moment. In contrast, newspapers in India are more or less self-reliant and private advertising along with readers' subscription is their main source of income.

The government of Bangladesh has increased the annual allocation for newspaper advertising to TK 189.2 million in the year 2000 from TK 120 million in 1996 (DFP, 2000). Government advertisements are distributed on the basis of newspaper circulation. Nevertheless, some newspapers with less circulation get significant amounts of government advertisements because of their relation with the ruling party (Rahman, 2001/06/03). Distributing advertisements and newsprint at a subsidized rate, the government indirectly controls the newspaper industry. Rahman adds that if a newspaper criticizes the government frequently, it gets few advertisements.

In recent years, newspapers in Bangladesh have taken different initiatives to increase circulation, but the low literacy and the low income of people are the main obstacles to increasing newspaper circulation.

According to the latest data available on the publication and circulation of newspapers in Bangladesh, 222 dailies with a total circulation of 2.69 million copies and 194 non-dailies including weeklies with a total circulation of 1.28 million were published in the year 2000 (Goonasekera and Wah, 2001). The number of copies of daily newspapers for every thousand people was 22, and the number of copies of non-dailies for every thousand people was 10. Newspapers are published in Bengali and English languages. Data on the publication and circulation of newspapers in India were available up to the year 1998. In 1998, 4,890 dailies with a circulation of 58.4 million copies and 38,938 non-dailies including weeklies with a circulation of 68.5 million copies were published in India (India, 2000). The number of copies of dailies for every thousand people was 58, and the number of copies of non-dailies for every thousand people was 68. Newspapers were published in 100 languages and dialects. The highest number of newspapers was published in Hindi, the state language of India.

News agencies

New agencies began to function effectively after the introduction of the electric telegraph. The electric telegraph brought a radical change in the distribution of news by delivering news faster and at lesser cost than earlier. Paul Julius Reuter of Germany was the pioneer in establishing news agencies. He started a pigeon post service in July 1850 and transmitted commercial and financial news. To extend his

service worldwide, he relocated to London. After the availability of the telegraph, he established a telegraph-based service for foreign news. As part of the expansion plan of his news agency services, he contacted Indian newspapers to provide his services. A Reuter's office in India was established in 1866 and at the beginning it provided messages through messengers (Krishna Murthy, p. 66). Reuters in India enjoyed a good relationship with the colonial government and it was the only news agency to provide foreign news to Indian English-language dailies and vernacular dailies until the appearance of the Associated Press of America (AP) in India.

The Reuter's monopoly was broken by the emergence of AP and the United Press of America (UPA), both of which began to provide news services worldwide. Because of the high cost of foreign services, Indians contemplated establishing their own local news agencies. As a result, a local news agency, the Associated Press of India (API), was launched by K.C. Roy in 1910 in the style of AP. The API was connected to six local newspapers, and had collaboration with the Central Press News Agency in London. Reuters, to maintain its stronghold in the news agency business in India, became a partner of the API. The Reuters-API alliance in colonial India was so influential in government circles that the *Indian Telegraph Act* was amended to facilitate the transmission of press telegrams at a reduced rate, Krishna Murthy (p. 390-391) claims. This alliance also received further assistance from the government and acted in the favor of government.

At the beginning of the 20th century, amidst the rising anti-government agitation, the Indian leadership felt the need for a news agency without government connections to cover the news of the anti-British movement. In this context, a news agency named Free Press, fully owned and operated by Indians, began in 1927. The promoters of Free Press extended their activities by publishing newspapers in English and different Indian languages throughout India in the 1930s. The customers of Free Press, however, did not like the idea of a news agency launching its own newspapers (Krishna Murthy, p. 393). The Calcutta based newspapers, which were the main clients of Free Press, formally protested the venture and discontinued its services. After disconnecting them from Free Press, they were apprehensive about the government patronized Reuters-API alliance and the possibility that it might once again acquire the monopoly in news agency services. Because of this fear, they supported the formation of a new news agency called the United Press of India (UPI). B. Sen Gupta, the chief editor of Free Press, stepped down from his former post and started the new news agency.

In 1941, Syed Mohammed started another news agency named the Oriental Press of India. It was established to serve the interests of the Muslim League, which was fighting for the cause of Muslims in the subcontinent. It got support from Muslim businessmen and provided services mainly to the Urdu language press. The agency closed up in 1947 when India was divided.

The establishment of the Press Trust of India (PTI) is a milestone in the history of news agencies in India. The PTI was launched by the leading Indian dailies as a partner of Reuters. It began its operation in February 1949 and is now offering news services in English and Hindi. The PTI, a non-profit sharing cooperative, is the largest news agency in India with 1600 employees including 400 journalists (Goonasekera and Wah, 2001, p. 75). It has more than 100 bureaus across India and correspondents in major cities throughout the world including Beijing, Bonn, Cairo, Dhaka, Islamabad, London, Moscow, New York, and Washington. PTI delivers news services to 20 countries. It has arrangements with Reuters, Agence France Presse (AFP) for the distribution of their news in India and with AP for its photo service and international commercial information.

In addition to the PTI, another prominent news agency, the *Hindustan Samachar*, came out in India in the late 1940s. It provides services in Hindi. A British news agency named Near and Far East News (NFEN), formerly called Globe News Agency, began to operate in India in 1952 (Krishna Murthy, p. 398).

The United News of India (UNI), sponsored by 40 leading newspapers including the famous *Statesman*, the *Times of India*, and the *Hindu*, began its journey in 1959. It is a private multilingual news agency having more than 100 bureaus in India and abroad and delivers services to seven countries (Goonasekera and Wah, 2001, p. 75). Another multilingual news agency called the *Samachar Bharathi* was

inaugurated in 1966 and it became the main competitor of the *Hindustan Samachar* (Hassan, p. 224).

By comparison, the main local news agency in East Pakistan during Pakistani rule was the state-owned Associated Press of Pakistan (APP). The APP, one of the two news agencies in Pakistan in the early 1960s, was taken over by the government in 1961 (Ali and Gunaratne, 2000). The East Pakistan bureau of the APP was in Dhaka. After the liberation of Bangladesh, the APP Dhaka bureau was turned into the state-controlled news agency *Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha* (BSS). In the 1970s, two other privately owned news agencies provided news services to newspapers in Bangladesh. They were the Eastern News Agency (ENA) and the Bangladesh Press International (BPI) (Lent, 1982b, p. 431). Today, BSS is the largest news agency in Bangladesh having 150 employees including 50 journalists and several bureaus across the country. BSS has arrangements with many foreign news agencies including Reuters, AFP, PTI, Xinhua, IATR-TASS for the distribution of their services in the country.

In the 1970s, the operation of news agencies in India was hampered due to the state emergency mentioned earlier. At the time, the Indian government established a single news society named *Samachar*, merging four non-government news agencies—PTI, UNI, *Hindustan Samachar*, and *Samachar Bharathi*—to control the flow of news (Lent, 1982a, p. 400; Hassan, p. 224). The Janata Party government dismantled the news society in 1978 and the four news agencies began to operate

independently again. At the moment, out of the 21 local news agencies in India, the PTI and the UNI are the most prominent, and operate international news services. Likewise, in Bangladesh, the state-owned BSS and the privately run United News of Bangladesh (UNB), established in 1989, are the two main news agencies out of seven local news agencies. The UNB is the leading private news agency in Bangladesh with 95 employees including 30 journalists. It has arrangements with AP and the UNI to distribute their services in the country.

Broadcasting

Radio

Broadcasting began in the Indian subcontinent through private initiatives during the British colonial period. Chatterji (1991) mentions that amateur broadcasting began in India in November 1923 with the setting up of a radio club in Calcutta. However, Awasthy (1978) notes that amateur radio clubs were first permitted by the British government to operate in 1924. The Indian Broadcasting Company (IBC), a private enterprise, launched regular broadcasting in Bombay and Calcutta in 1927 under a license from the government (Awasthy, 1978, p. 198; Chatterji, 1991, p. 39). Rao (1986), however, believes that the IBC began its operation in 1926. The IBC wound up its business in 1930 after only three years of operation because of poor earnings from commercial services and radio license fees. The license fee, collected from the possessors of radio receivers, was the main source

of revenue of the company. When the company started its operation, there were less than a thousand radio sets in India. The number of radio sets rose to 7,775 by 1929, however, in 1930, the number of licenses registered a sharp decrease (Chatterji, p. 40). At the beginning of its operation in India, broadcasting was not popularly received among Indians since radio receivers were costly and the annual license fee for a radio set was high.

Following the bankruptcy of the IBC, the colonial government took over the responsibility of broadcasting and the Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS) came into being in 1930. Commercial services were closed. Chatterji (p. 41) writes that broadcasting services in India were at a low level because of financial constraints. Two important steps were taken to generate revenue for broadcasting. By the *Indian Tariff (Wireless Broadcasting) Amendment Act, 1932*, the duty on wireless receiving apparatus was doubled and fixed at 50 percent. In the following year, the *Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act* was enacted making the possession of a radio set without a license an offence. A senior official of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was given the charge of the ISBS for its operation and expansion. Lionel Fielden of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) became the first broadcasting controller in India, and because of his insistence the ISBS was re-designated as the All India Radio (AIR) in 1936 (Awasthy, p. 198, Rao, p. 102, Chatterji, p. 43). During the period between 1937 and 1947, the AIR extended its network to different parts of

India. The central transmission station was set up at Delhi and other major stations were in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras.

Radio began its operation in Bangladeshi territory in 1939 when a radio station was installed in Dhaka as part of the AIR network to complement the Calcutta station. The external services of the AIR developed during the Second World War when the British government used it as a propaganda tool. During the partition of India, six radio stations were in Indian territory, only three stations were in Pakistani territory including the Dhaka station, and five stations were under the control of princely states. The six stations in India and three stations in Pakistan were parts of the AIR network before the partition. Following the amalgamation of princely states into the Indian union immediately after Indian independence, the five stations were taken over by the AIR during 1948-50. The AIR network in Pakistan was named Radio Pakistan after the independence of Pakistan. In both India and Pakistan, radio networks were kept under government control.

In the newly independent India, radio was considered the prime mass medium and a tool for uniting a nation of different races, religions, and languages. Hindi became the prime language of the AIR services. The development of radio was included in different national development plans such as five-year plans beginning from 1951. The AIR has also been known as *Akasvani* since 1957. Awasthy (p. 199) observes that broadcasting in India is multilingual as the constitution of India recognizes 16 languages. Each language area has a broadcasting station in the capital

city or in important cities. The AIR provides services in 91 dialects from 17 stations, he adds. The AIR home service programs include news, *Vividh Bharati* (light entertainment), general cultural, drama, soap opera, and sports commentary. Commercials were introduced to the AIR in November 1967 on *Vividh Bharati*.

From 1930 through the mid 1990s, the AIR was a government-controlled body and became autonomous in 1997 (Viswanath and Karan, p. 100). By 1998, the AIR became a major network of 198 stations and 310 transmitters covering 90 per cent of the total land area of the country. According to Goonasekera and Wah (2001, p. 77), India had 100 million radio sets in the year 2000 with a density of 100 sets per 1000 people.

While the radio grew significantly in India and became an autonomous organization, radio in Bangladesh is still controlled by government and used as a government propaganda tool. During the early days of Pakistan, the Dhaka station of Radio Pakistan was in poor condition and was located in a small rented building with a 5kw station and no teleprinter of its own. It was upgraded between 1959-1963, installing 100kw short wave and 1000kw medium wave stations to build communication links between East Pakistan and West Pakistan. Relaying stations were set up in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Rangpur, and Khulna by 1971 (Bhuiyan and Gunaratne, p. 45; Al-Mujahid, 1978, p. 230). Al-Mujahid writes that except for national broadcasts of news and commentaries from Karachi (West Pakistan), the East Pakistani radio carried programs independently.

Bangladesh *Betar* (Radio Bangladesh) took its birth during the liberation war in 1971 when rebellious Bengalis seized a broadcasting station of Radio Pakistan in Chittagong. The station was named *Biplobi Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra* and was used by Muktibahini (the guerrilla force that fought for the liberation of Bangladesh) to gain support of the general population of Bangladesh toward the goal of independence. During the liberation war, many broadcasting stations in Bangladesh were damaged (Al-Mujahid, p. 230). Radio Bangladesh passed a critical period immediately after the liberation war because many of the senior and experienced broadcasting personnel were detained in West Pakistan along with other Bengali government employees. It also suffered from the shortage of spare parts because the central manufacturing units and the controlling center for broadcasting were in Karachi.

After the independence of Bangladesh, the development of radio broadcasting was included in different national development plans. Today, Bangladesh *Betar* has nine broadcasting stations, 16 transmitters, and three relay stations that cover 90 percent of the total geographic area. It covers 96 percent of the total population by day and 48 percent at night. In the year 2000, the country had 4.42 million radio receivers (Goonasekera and Wah, 2001, p. 13). The number of radios for every thousand people was 36.

The radio runs programming for 18 hours everyday from 6 a.m. to 12 a. m. It broadcasts general programs as well as specialized programs for different segments of

the society including peasants and soldiers. The programs include news, soap operas, music, sports commentary, and educational programs on agriculture, family planning and plantation. For news, the radio is dependent mainly on BSS and partially on the UNB.

Television

Television began in India and Bangladesh in the 1950s and the 1960s respectively. In India, television broadcasting began with the assistance of UNESCO in September 1959 as part of the AIR network and the first experimental center was launched in Delhi. Multinational electronic corporation Philips India Ltd. donated the TV instruments. The history of Bangladesh Television is embedded in the history of Pakistan Television. Television was introduced in East Pakistan in December 1964 with the opening of the Dhaka station of Pakistan Television as a pilot project. The Nippon Electric Company of Japan had partial ownership of the project. The Dhaka station began its regular broadcasting in 1968 with the installation of a 6kw transmitter. In the late 1960s, a satellite station was installed in Chittagong and two relay stations, one in Khulna and the other in Rajshahi, were set up to broaden the coverage of television.

India opened the second center of *Doordarshan* (Indian state-owned television) in Bombay in 1972. Two more centers were opened in Srinagar (Kashmir) and Amritsar in Punjab in the following year to counter Pakistani radio stations in Lahore and Islamabad, which were gaining popularity among Indian audiences. One

of the most important years in the history of *Doordarshan* was 1975 when television centers were opened in Madras, Calcutta, and Lucknow. In 1976, *Doordarshan* was separated from the AIR. Another milestone in the history of Indian television was the inauguration of the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE). Under an agreement between the Indian Government and the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), NASA loaned a satellite to beam TV signals to 2400 direct reception television sets in six Indian states. *Doordarshan* began regular satellite broadcasting in 1982 through the Indian satellite INSAT IA and for the first time the transmission was in color.

Doordarshan began to accept commercial spots in 1976 and began to broadcast sponsored programs such as soap opera serials in 1983. Pendakur observes (1991) that Indian television experienced a remarkable expansion from 1971 through 1985. The signal strength of television was extended from reaching a half a million people in 1971 to 396 million, or approximately 60 per cent of the population, in 1985. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was behind this expansion. Pendakur (1991, p. 248) goes on to say that

Was Gandhi's agenda in expanding television simply to spread the magic and myth of the ruling family (Gandhi's family ruled India for many years since its independence)? Unquestionably so, if one analyzes the daily newscasts and specials covering the prime minister's visits to world capitals and the villages of India. (Clarification on family rule is mine).

The use of television for personal publicity of the ruling party leaders over the years led to mounting demands for the autonomy of this state-controlled medium. As

a result, *Doordarshan* was made an autonomous organization with the enactment of the *Prasar Bharati Act, 1990*. However, the autonomy of *Doordarshan* did not come into effect until 1997 (Mehta, 1998).

The Indian television industry experienced an exponential growth in the 1980s and the 1990s with the development of Indian satellite technology and the expansion of Western transnational media empires to India (Thussu, 1999). The number of transmitters for *Doordarshan* increased from 19 to 868 by 1998 following the launch of the Indian National Satellite (INSAT) in 1982. Today, *Doordarshan* has 20 channels including national, special interest, regional language, and international channels. A program of liberalization of the Indian economy, which was introduced in 1991, has also transformed the media sector. Television channels in India increased to 70 including cable satellite channels by 1998 from one state-owned channel in 1991 (Thussu, 2000).

Following the liberalization of broadcasting, major transnational media firms including Star TV, the BBC, Discovery, MTV, Sony, CNN, Disney, and CNBC came into the Indian market on their own or with the help of local partners. Scores of Indian companies also emerged. Following the growth of local and satellite television channels, the major Indian media conglomerates also diversified their business by launching television program production units. The most prominent producers include Times Television (TTV) from the Times of India group, Hindustan Television from the Hindustan Times group, Television Bazar from the Ananda Bazar Potrika group,

and Enadu Television from Ushodaya group (Viswanath and Karan, p. 101). At the moment, the prominent satellite and cable television channels in India include Zee TV, Sony TV, ESPN, STAR TV, National Geographic, Channel V, Eenadu TV, Raj TV, and ATN. The boom in the development of cable television led to the enactment of the *Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1994*. According to this act, a cable network has to register with the government before beginning operation. This act was amended in the year 2000, prescribing the uniform enforcement of the broadcasting and advertising code on all television channels including those uplinked from abroad (Xavier and Eashwer, 2001). In India, broadcasting content is regulated by 1982 news policy guidelines of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Now two bills—the Broadcasting Bill and the Convergence Bill—are under consideration by the government.

Meanwhile, after the liberation of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh government took control of the television network remaining in East Pakistan, and the network was named Bangladesh Television (BTV). Television in Bangladesh faced a crisis immediately after the liberation war. Al-Mujahid (1978, p. 230) mentions that in 1973 one third of the Bangladesh's 15,000 TV sets were out of order because of a spare parts shortage. Just as with radio, the headquarters for television was also in West Pakistan. Because of the war with Pakistan, there was no supply of spare parts for television sets.

BTV was equipped with modern technical facilities including microwave reception in 1975, which enabled it to receive telecast materials directly from satellites through an earth station. By 1979, six more relay stations were built in different cities bringing 70 percent of the population under television coverage.

The year 1980 is a remarkable period in the history of BTV when it added a morning transmission session of one hour, introduced another channel, and entered into the age of color transmission (Riaz, 1993). Riaz notes that the gradual development of BTV was hampered in 1982 following the promulgation of martial law for the third time in the country since 1971. The morning session was stopped and the second channel was closed. However, the military government continued the program of installing relay stations and by 1983, four more relay stations were set up. At the moment, BTV has two broadcasting centers and 17 relay stations that cover 92 per cent of the population and 82 per cent of the geographic area. The country has only one private television channel. In recent years, urban people are exposed to dozens of foreign satellite television channels.

Broadcast media in Bangladesh are owned and controlled by government. Since the liberation of the country, all governments including the democratic and autocratic ones have used the media as a tool for circulating their own propaganda. At present, a debate is going on in the political arena of the country regarding the nature of the ownership and control of the state-owned radio and television. People are frustrated with the performance of electronic media. Low quality production and

government propaganda have caused public anger. As a response to popular demand, the issue of the autonomy of government controlled radio and television was incorporated into the manifesto of the alliance of opposition parties during the anti-autocracy movement in the beginning of the 1990s. The parties promised that whoever came to power after the fall of the military ruler would liberate the media from government control. Unfortunately, the democratic government that came to power in 1991 failed to keep this promise.

The next government to take office in 1996 formed a committee, which included members of parliament, academics, and cultural personalities to decide the nature of the autonomy of radio and television. The committee submitted its report to the government in 1997 after studying the structure of the BBC and other public broadcasting corporations. Another committee, headed by a bureaucrat, was formed to examine the implementation of the report. The report, however, was not made public. Following the recommendations of the implementation committee, the AL government of Sheikh Hasina (1996-2001) made two separate acts called the *Bangladesh Television Authority Act, 2001* and the *Bangladesh Betar Authority Act, 2001* to run the state-owned broadcast media. According to these laws, two separate five-member committees nominated by government will oversee the media. The committees will formulate principles for radio and television broadcasting, but these principles will have to be approved by the information ministry. Critics argue that

even after the formation of the new bodies, the media will work according to the whim of the ruling party.

The Sheikh Hasina government allowed the operation of a private television channel in the late 1990s to ease the demand for the autonomy of state-owned broadcast media and because of the pressure from donors for privatization. However, the private channel, Ekushey Television (ETV), is also bound to cover “important” government programs and broadcast the prime time BTV news. ETV, a Bengali-language terrestrial and satellite television channel, broadcasts news, soap operas, and entertainment programs. It has been licensed for 15 years. With an investment of TK 950 million (57TK = US\$1), ETV broadcasts its programs throughout the country for 12 hours everyday. It is now in the process of expanding its network. Its programs will be accessible in West Bengal, South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Presently, ETV is working to make its programs accessible in the Middle East, the USA, the UK, and Canada. Government regularly monitors ETV programs with a view to allowing more private television channels in the country. The AL government has also licensed a private radio station.

For the last few years, wealthy urban people have had access to foreign cable television channels thereby increasing the gap between the information rich and the information poor within the country. A new business community of young people has emerged in the country’s urban areas after the emergence of satellite television in South Asia in the 1990s. This community provides cable connections to urban houses

on a commercial basis from their rooftop dish antennas. Currently, on an average 35 channels are available through cable. A subscriber has to pay about US\$ 4 per month which most of the people in the country with a per capita income of US\$ 348 cannot afford. More than 2000 cable operators provide cable services. In metropolitan areas, small cable operators have joined forces to form larger networks for installing better equipment and providing a large number of channels to their subscribers. Cable operators in Bangladesh have to acquire a license which is issued by BTV on behalf of the government. An operator has to pay a license fee of TK 25,000 (57TK = US\$1) annually to provide services in four metropolitan cities—Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, and Khulna. The annual license fee to provide service in the rest of the country is TK 10,000 (Montu, 1999).

Currently, the number of television sets in Bangladesh is 2.4 million and the number of TV sets for every thousand people is 24 (ADCOMM Ltd, cited in Goonasekera and Wah, 2001, p. 14). In Bangladesh, four million households, with an estimated audience of 20 million people, subscribe cable. By comparison, the number of TV sets in India is 88 million, and the number of TV sets for every thousand people is 88 (Goonasekera and Wah, 2001, p. 79). According to the ITU (1999), the number of cable subscriber in India is 18 million. In both India and Bangladesh, state-owned television broadcasts educational and entertainment programs, but cable and satellite television services mainly broadcast entertainment content.

Film

Film arrived in the Indian subcontinent in 1896 within eight months of the world's first cinematographic exhibition in Paris by the Lumiere Brothers (Oommen and Joseph, 1991). One of the agents of the Lumiere Brothers conducted the first exhibition of film in the Watson Hotel, in Bombay, to a paying audience. As part of the united India, a western film was exhibited in Dhaka for the first time in 1898. Regular shows began in Bombay when M. Charles Pathe opened a branch of the Lumiere's company in 1907. By 1910, many cinema halls had sprung up in different cities, and people in the small towns saw cinema from touring cinema companies which used to organize shows occasionally in different places (The Times of India, July 7, 1896, cited in Shah, 1981). During this time, foreign films, particularly American films, were exhibited in Indian cinema halls.

However, India's own film industry began with the release of the first Indian film "Raja Harischandra" in May 1913 in Coronation Theatre in Bombay, the business hub of India. Dandiraj Govinda Phalke, who is considered the father of the Indian cinema, made the film. Phalke's venture was commercially successful, and the phenomenal success of Phalke inspired many people in other parts of India to become involved in movie production. Bombay's lead in film production was followed by Bengal, the Punjab, and Madras (Shah, p. 24). Although the film industry was spreading all over India, Bombay remained the center of the industry. The film industry in Bangladeshi territory (formerly East Bengal) did not develop immediately

because Bengali film production was confined to Calcutta. The first film in East Bengal was a four-reel silent movie produced by the *Nawab* family of Dhaka in 1920 (Azam, 1987, cited in Lent, 1990). Before the partition of India, only one feature film named *Dukhey Jader Jiban Gora* (Misery Is Their Lot) was made by a Bengali Muslim, Obaidul Huq, based in East Bengal (Lent, 1990, p. 262). However, his venture was unsuccessful.

From the beginning of the exhibition of film in pre-partitioned India, film was a very popular entertainment medium and film production grew rapidly. Following the growth of the film industry and the popularity of film, the *Cinematograph Act* was passed in 1918. It laid down certain fundamental rules regarding the place and exhibition of cinematograph films and set up film censor boards in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Rangoon, and Lahore.

The introduction of talking films in the beginning of the 1930s helped the Indian film industry grow rapidly through private initiatives. The first Indian talking film, *Alam Ara* directed by Ardeshir M. Irani, was produced in 1931. Drawing on Dharap (1940), Shah (p. 60) observes that by its twenty-fifth birthday, the Indian film industry had emerged as the eighth largest industry in India and the third largest film industry in the world. At the time, there were 75 film-producing companies in India and their annual average output was 200 films. Also at this time there were 1265 cinema halls in operation with 200 used exclusively for foreign films. These 200 cinema halls exhibited imported films for Anglo-Indians, Europeans, British, and

educated Indian upper class. Although films were imported to India, the majority of the Indian population was interested to see Indian film mainly because of language. From the beginning of the film industry, Indian producers distributed films to the Indian diaspora in different regions of the world including the Middle East and Africa.

The licensing of films began in the Indian subcontinent during the Second World War to discourage filmmaking. A strict embargo was imposed on the production of new films as well as the reprint of old films while the exhibition of propaganda films was made compulsory in cinema halls (Shah, p. 67). The government action discouraged the production of Indian film and facilitated the inflow of foreign films. The Indian film industry gained momentum after the war. In 1947 and 1948, 278 and 263 films were produced in India respectively. The film rating on the basis of content was introduced to Indian films in 1949 by an amendment to the *Cinematograph Act*.

After the independence of India, the film industry received government support to continue its growth. The Indian government played a major role at the national level for the development of the film industry particularly in the 1970s and 1980s (Pendakur, 1990a). The roles include, “financing, distribution, promotion of films at home and abroad, subsidies for theatre construction, censorship, taxation, limiting entry to foreign companies, and giving awards to filmmakers” (Pendakur, p. 237). The rapid expansion of television in the 1990s has also been a boost for the

movie industry, as many film-based pay channels have emerged (Thussu, 2000, p. 219). India now leads the world in the annual production of feature film followed by the United States (India, 2000, p. 307).

Meanwhile, Abdul Jabbar Khan produced the first commercially successful Bengali film in Bangladesh in 1956 during the Pakistani regime. The name of the film was *Mukh-o-Mukhush* (Face and Mask). Ali (1964, cited in Lent, 1990, p. 263) wrote that before the creation of the Film Development Corporation (FDC) in then East Pakistan in 1958, private capital made no attempt to indigenize film for theaters of East Pakistan. Instead, distributors favored importing films from Calcutta and Bombay. During the first decade of the FDC, attempts were taken to produce both Urdu and Bengali language films since Urdu and Bengali were the state languages of Pakistan. Bengali production increased from five films in 1965 to 25 in 1968 (Lent, 1990, p. 263). According to Lent (1990, p. 264) filmmaking in Bangladesh virtually halted during 1971 because of the non-cooperation movement and liberation war with Pakistan. During 1972-78, only 240 films were unreleased. Since the independence of Bangladesh, plagiarism has been a problem for the film industry. Kabir (1979), analyzing 183 movies produced during the period from 1972 to 1976, reported that 70 percent of the movies were plagiarized and copied from Indian features. Producers and distributors used to watch many Indian Bengali and Hindi films and tape-record their entire sound tracks. They then use the sound tracks to create “new” screenplays

picking the best scenes of different films and putting them together, Kabir (p. 62-63) adds. Unscrupulous producers and directors continue this practice to this day.

The FDC is the only full-service studio in Bangladesh and film producers can use its facilities by paying a fee. Direct government support to the film industry came in the 1990s when the government adopted a policy in 1993 to provide financial help to filmmakers for production of quality film (Khan, 2001). Different awards were declared to encourage film production and the FDC was reorganized with modern equipment.

In Bangladesh, today on an average 80 feature films are produced annually and the number of cinema halls is more than 1800 (See the official website of the FDC: <http://www.fdcbd.com>). On the other hand, in 1999, 764 feature films were produced in India and the number of cinema halls was 12,600 (Goonasekera and Wah, 2001, p.81).

In both India and Bangladesh, film is regulated by the *Cinematograph Act, 1918*. However, the act was amended several times in India as well as in Bangladesh. In these countries, government-controlled film censor boards review and certify every film before public exhibition. The prime responsibility of the boards is to safeguard the interest of local film producers, ensure the quality of films, and to protect national culture and heritage. In Bangladesh and India, a film is censored if it contains any element that threatens national security, helps deteriorate law and order, hampers relations with foreign countries, encourages religious animosity, immorality,

bestiality, crime, plagiarism, and any component contrary to national culture and heritage. Although the censorship criteria are similar in these countries, their definition is different. The censorship of film is a bone of contention between the government and producers.

Telecommunication

Experiments for introducing the telegraph to the Indian subcontinent began in 1839 and the first operational landlines were laid in 1851 in Calcutta (Mody, 1995). Telegraph lines were installed in British India to maintain speedy communication between different administrative units of government. Headrick (1988) notes that telecommunication began in India as a tool of law and order for the British government. Telegraphy expanded speedily following the mutiny of Indian soldiers in the British army in 1957-1958. In 1957, the British army hastened the colonial government's adoption of submarine telegraph technology. By 1870, telegraph offices were set up in all major towns in British India. The telegraph was merged with postal system in 1883, increasing its reach. Although the government and the army were the prime users of telegraph, it was also open for public use at a rate of 1 rupee (Indian currency) for every 10 words.

The plain old telephone service (POTS) was introduced to India in 1881, financed by British private capital. It also began in Calcutta. While the telegraph had always remained owned and controlled by the state, private companies were licensed

to provide telephone services in five cities for a period of 50 years (Chowdary, 1998). One firm was also licensed for the provision of international telegraph services in 1871. The *Indian Telegraph Act* came into being in 1885, placing telecommunication within the exclusive domain of state governance with a provision for licensing private entrepreneurs to establish telecommunication. However, the government took over the full charge of POTS in 1943 and telegraph in 1945 after the expiry of licenses of the private companies. At the end of colonial rule, India had 321 city-centered telephone exchanges, 86,000 working lines and 338 long-distance public call offices (Mody, p. 110). The teledensity was 0.025 per 100 people.

Although telecommunication was introduced to Bengal during British rule, East Bengal (now Bangladesh) had the least developed telecommunication infrastructure. During the partition of India, the entirety of Pakistan, including the present Bangladesh, had 12,236 telephone lines concentrated in few urban centers (Looney, 1998). In 1947, teledensity in Pakistan was 0.335. Rapid steps were taken in the 1960s for the development of telecommunication in both West and East Pakistan. A government organization called the Telegraph and Telephone Department was set up to look after telecommunication. The East Pakistan branch of this organization was in Dhaka. During the Pakistani regime, telecommunications facilities were extended to other major cities in Bangladesh.

Since the independence of India and Bangladesh, telecommunication has been a state monopoly. In India, telecommunication facilities are concentrated in major

cities including Bombay, Madras, Calcutta, and Delhi, depriving the majority people living in rural areas. A major shake up in the telecommunication sector began in the 1980s as importance was given to the sector considering it as a vital part of infrastructure development for the country. After returning to power in 1980, Indira Gandhi began to adopt a pro-market economic policy and opened the Indian telecommunication market to multinational corporations as the already burgeoning middle class in India demanded higher quality foreign products than the protected national monopoly capitalists and public sector corporations were capable of producing (Pendakur, 1991, p. 248).

Rajiv Gandhi, who came to power after the assassination of his mother Indira Gandhi, introduced significant transformations in the sector. The government's Department of Post and Telecommunication was split into Posts and a separate Department of Telecommunications (DoT) in 1985. In 1986, two corporate bodies named *Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd* (MTNL) and *Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd* (VSNL) were set up. MTNL provides local services in Delhi and Bombay, and VSNL is the sole authority to provide international services. Both MTNL and VSNL have mixed ownership of public and private shares. The government owns the 67 percent shares of MTNL and 85 percent shares of VSNL (Petrizzini, 1996). The interesting aspect of the Indian telecom reform program was that India took the path of liberalization shelving the idea of privatization of state owned enterprises amidst protest from telecommunication workers unions, opposition inside the ruling party,

and protest by opposition parties. The value-added network services such as e-mail, voice mail, mobile radio communication, data services, audio and videotext services, and video conferencing were opened to the private sector (Petrazzini and Krishnaswamy, 1998, p. 10). India's national telecommunication policy was announced in 1994 with the declaration that there would be no privatization of the DoT or any other state-owned telecom enterprises. Under the new policy, private domestic firms were allowed to provide basic local telephone services in competition with state-owned enterprises. An autonomous regulatory body, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), was set up to decide and enforce standards and technical compatibility, pricing mechanisms, and interconnection issues between operators.

India formed a new telecommunication policy in 1999 that envisaged a 49 per cent cap on foreign operators. The policy allows the cable networks to provide data and voice services, and interconnectivity between cable and basic service providers. Xavier and Eashwer (2001, p. 68) observe, "In terms of concrete initiative the year 2000 has been epochal in the telecom field in India". In that year, India took initiative to open up international services, corporatised the state-owned Department of Telecom Services as VSNL and allowed ISPs to set up their own international gateways bypassing VSNL.

Meanwhile, after the liberation of Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Department was formed by adapting the East Pakistan section of the

Pakistan Telegraph and Telephone Department. The Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Department was renamed Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) and it was put under the control of the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication (MOPT). The BTTB is the sole authority for operation, maintenance and development of telecommunication in the country. Under the state monopoly, the telecommunication sector in Bangladesh has been weak with a very low level of penetration, limited capability to meet the growing demand, low level of investment, and old, outdated systems and technologies. The country's policy planners began to emphasize the rapid expansion of telecommunication for overall national development. The government felt it 'impossible' to develop the telecom sector without private participation, as telecom technology requires significant investment and a good number of skilled personnel. In the late 1980s, the government began to take a pro-market policy for the expansion of the telecommunication network. The value added services, such as mobile radio communication, e-mail, voice mail etc, were opened to private capital. The government formulated the national telecommunication policy in 1998 with a view to creating a competitive environment in telecommunication. Before the telecom policy, telecommunication in Bangladesh was regulated by the *Indian Telegraphy Act, 1885*; the *Indian Wireless Telegraphy Act, 1933*; and the BTTB worked as an operator as well as regulator. An autonomous regulatory body, the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC), now performs the regulatory functions.

Today, the number of telephone mainlines in Bangladesh is 504,000 with a density of 4 telephones per 1000 people. The BTTB mainly provides fixed phone services, and four private companies provide mobile telecommunication services. On the other hand, in the year 2000, India had 26 million telephone mainlines having a density of 26.13 telephones per 1000 people (Goonasekera and Wah, 2001, p. 82). Alongside the three state-owned enterprises, three private companies have been providing basic telecom services. Mobile communication is provided by 23 companies and 15 private firms offer radio paging services in India.

This chapter has depicted the struggle between political power and media institutions to establish independent media in the subcontinent and showed the level of the development of different media in India and Bangladesh creating the platform for analyzing the media content flow between these countries.

Chapter Three: The media content flow between Bangladesh and India

This chapter examines the media content flow between Bangladesh and India and analyzes the impact of Indian media content on Bangladeshi mass media and culture. The flow of media content between India and Bangladesh is unidirectional with Bangladesh at the receiving end. Indian newsmagazines, film, and satellite television channels have a significant audience in Bangladesh. However, there is also resistance to Indian media content in Bangladesh.

The flow of media content from India to Bangladesh: A one-way traffic

A one-way flow of media content exists between Bangladesh and India—the flow coming from India and into Bangladesh. As well, Indian media products are not the only foreign media materials available in Bangladesh as there is also media content flow from western sources. However, the flow of Indian media content to Bangladesh is dominant and it has been increasing since the late 1980s because of the gradual privatization and liberalization of the communication sector.

If anyone roams around the major newsstands in urban areas, he or she will find many Indian magazines available. Indian Bengali language niche magazines such as *Desh*, *Anandalok*, *Sananda*, *Monorama*, and the English language general interest magazine *India Today* are widely available and popular in Bangladesh. Indian mass

magazines are not available because such magazines are published in the Hindi language. Indian daily newspapers are also not in circulation in the country. Currently, none of the Indian newspapers and magazines is published in Bangladesh since the foreign ownership of newspapers is not allowed. While there is no quota or restriction on the flow of Indian news magazines to Bangladesh, the government does reserve the right to ban the circulation of any foreign or local newspaper or newsmagazine if it is seen to act against the interest of the country and its people. Nevertheless, it is difficult to execute any such ban on Indian magazines because they can slip through the porous border. For example, the Bangladesh government has imposed a ban on *Desh* several times in recent years for “misreporting” on the history of Bangladesh and for criticizing the government, but these attempts were unsuccessful because the magazine was smuggled across the border despite the restriction on its circulation. Since Indian magazines enter Bangladesh through both legal and illegal channels, it is difficult to ascertain how many copies of the magazines are available in the country. Moreover, there are no official statistics available on the circulation of foreign magazines.

Indian-published Bengali-language magazines provide entertainment materials on issues such as contemporary fashion, lifestyle, and cooking etc., as well as short stories and literary critiques. The English language magazine, *India Today*, meanwhile, is a regular newsmagazine with political, business, and entertainment content. The educated middle class tends to be the readers of these magazines. These

magazines are popular because of their well-researched content and presentation compared to local magazines.

Indian Bengali-language magazines published from Calcutta in West Bengal are popular in Bangladesh due to the linguistic similarity and historical as well as cultural bond between the two regions. Similarly, Bangladeshi published magazines are also in demand in West Bengal, but cannot enter the Indian market because of higher tariffs. Indian Bengali language niche magazines have also created a market for Indian Bengali language novels. Many Indian Bengali-language novelists and writers including Sunil Ganguly, Samaresh Majumder, Shirshendu Chatterjee, and Buddhadev Guh are well read in Bangladesh by the younger generation. Bangladeshi book publishers import some of their novels, while some are published in Bangladesh and others are illegally printed. Indian Bengali language magazines play a significant role to make these novelists familiar to Bangladeshi readers by publishing serials and critiques of their novels. Cultural personalities in Bangladesh also have very good relations with Calcutta based Bengali cultural personalities and they visit each other frequently to maintain the cultural bond between the two regions. Some Indian Bengali language novelists have a personal interest in Bangladesh because either they or their ancestors were originally from the region. Hindu-Muslim riots before the 1947 partition compelled many Hindus to leave Muslim dominated East Bengal and many Muslims to leave Hindu dominated India.

In terms of news flow there is also an imbalance between India and Bangladesh. Daily newspapers in Bangladesh are dependent on the Indian news agency, the PTI, particularly for Indian news and news from other countries in South Asia. The Bangladeshi national news agency, BSS, has an agreement with the PTI and other multinational news agencies including Reuters, AFP, and Xinhua. Another Indian news agency, the UNI, has an agreement with the leading Bangladeshi private news agency, the UNB. These two Bangladeshi news agencies collect foreign news from these multinational and Indian news agencies and circulate them to Bangladeshi newspapers, Bangladesh *Betar* (Radio Bangladesh), and Bangladesh Television (BTV).

As part of the agreement between the PTI and BSS, the PTI has posted one of its reporters at the BSS office in Dhaka and BSS has posted a reporter in the PTI's New Delhi office. While the PTI can get all its Bangladeshi news from a single correspondent, it is difficult for BSS to get all of its Indian news from its Delhi based reporter because India is such a big country where so many news events occur. BSS cannot post more reporters in India or cannot open additional bureaus because of the lack of financial resources and infrastructure.

Since Bangladesh is geographically surrounded on three sides by India, Indian radio-TV signals are more easily received in border areas of Bangladesh than the signals of local radio and television. The limitations of domestic radio and television in covering the total land area of the country and Indian advancements in satellite

technology have led to this situation. Indian television programs also reach Bangladeshi audiences through BTV and cable services. Government's commitment to privatization and liberalization has initiated major changes in the broadcasting sector resulting in the growth of private television networks and private television production industry. These changes have affected BTV in many ways by fragmenting its audiences. To cope with the changes, BTV has opted to import Indian Hindi and Bengali entertainment programs and buy programs from private producers rather than producing its own. BTV imports popular Indian programs because they are cheap and attract advertisers. BTV had to turn to the private sector and imports from Indian sources to provide more entertainment programs in order to prevent the migration of audiences to private and Indian television channels.

Indian production houses dominate the recently developed television production industry in Bangladesh. *The New Nation* (2001/08/09), a conservative Bangladeshi daily, reports that the flourishing television production industry in Bangladesh is going to be an Indian property. Indian production houses including Zee TV and Mind Share have been supplying package programs to Bangladeshi television networks through their subsidiaries. The New Nation claims that during the last five years (1996-2001), Indian companies have pocketed the lion's share of the revenue generated by the television production industry. According to the newspaper, Joyce Majumdar of Zee TV, Lawrence of Star TV, and Sabbyasachi Ghosh of Mind Share have designed a plan to capture the Bangladeshi television production industry.

Although this conspiracy theory cannot be proven with concrete evidence, Indian influence over the Bangladeshi television production industry is undeniable. Many Bangladeshi producers go to India to shoot their programs and seek technical facilities from Indian production houses. Moreover, it is not difficult for Indians with big capital to exert tremendous influence over the Bangladeshi market since the production cost for Bangladeshi television programs is very low [the production cost of a 50-minute drama is only about TK400, 000 (57TK = US\$1)].

BTV broadcasts its imported Hindi serials by dubbing them into Bengali with a view to minimizing the domination of Hindi language in Bangladesh. In importing these programs, BTV carefully judges the content to make sure that they do not contain any message or idea contrary to religious beliefs and dominant political ideology of the society. Of the Hindi serials broadcast by BTV, *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*, *Akbar The Great*, and *Nurjahan* have drawn huge audiences. *The Sword of Tipu Sultan*, broadcast in 1998, is a production based on the history of battles fought by a Muslim ruler (Tipu) of Indian state Mysore against the East India Company in the 1700s. The other two serials, *Akbar The Great* and *Nurjahan*, broadcast in the year 2000, are based on the day-to-day activities of Mogul rulers in India. Moguls are considered to be the main force historically in establishing Islam and the Islamic lifestyle in the Indian subcontinent. These serials achieved popularity in Muslim dominated Bangladesh (89 percent of people are Muslim) because of their content and production quality. Another popular Indian serial on BTV was *Feluda 30*, a detective

serial which was first aired on *Doordarshan* (DD)-1 and 7, was voted the most popular serial in recent times and enjoyed high ratings in India. It impressed BTV authorities because its primary objective was to entertain. BTV has also made Sandip Roy, the producer of this serial, an offer to make a film of this popular serial and release it in theaters across the border (Available at www.screenindia.com/mar20/tele2.htm, accessed, 2001/10/15). Roy has accepted the offer and it is expected that *Feluda 30* will turn up on the big screen soon.

The invasion of satellite television in Bangladesh can also be attributed to the use of BTV's infrastructure. Cable News Network International (CNNI) was the first satellite channel to gain direct access to viewers in Bangladesh.

At midnight on September 29 (1992), Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia threw the switch in BTV's main studios at Rampura near the capital city Dhaka, to begin the daily six and-a-half hour CNNI programme. Speaking briefly on the occasion, she said fast technological development brought about a revolution in information, turning the entire world into one village, and people looked forward to sharing similar hopes and aspirations. With the relaying of CNNI's programme, BTV linked itself with International satellite broadcasting, she added (Bari, 1993, p. 31).

Bari (1993) continues that the Prime Minister assured her critics that CNNI programs would not have any adverse effect on the national television network or on Bangladeshi culture. According to Bari, the PM claimed that it would provide viewers with opportunity to update their knowledge about sophisticated technology and higher skills, and that international exposure would "enrich" country's culture. However, it was not in the mind of the Prime Minister or her advisers that opening of the sky for a satellite TV party would encourage a host of others. After a few days, the BBC World Service also began its transmission following in the steps of CNNI.

The success of CNNI and the BBC in South Asia and liberalization of the broadcasting sector in India lured other transnational media players such as Star TV, Discovery, MTV, Sony, Disney, and CNBC to come to the Indian big market and a number of companies, including Zee TV, Sony Entertainment Television, from within India also emerged. Due to geographic proximity between Bangladesh and India, any satellite television program targeted to Indian audiences spills over to Bangladesh.

In the early 1990s cable services has developed in Bangladesh to distribute satellite television signals. Cable service providers are free to carry any channels, excluding sex channels, irrespective of their country of origin. In recent years, urban and affluent Bangladeshis have access to more than 50 satellite television channels including many Indian and multinational. Of the satellite channels, Indian channels, both Hindi and Bengali, are very popular among Bangladeshi viewers. However, it is difficult to distinguish channels according to their country of origin because of the vertical and horizontal integration within the media. Most of the channels are entertainment channels and their main content is Indian commercial Bengali and Hindi movies.

The following table (Table 1) shows the top 10 satellite channels in Bangladesh and lists the sequence of these channels in terms of their popularity.

Table 1: Satellite TV programs received in Bangladesh (hours/month)

TV Channels	Movies	Light Ent.	Music	Sports	News	Info.	Arts	Edu.	Religion	Other	Total
<i>ATN Bangla</i>	270	30	10	0	3	2	2	0	0	5	322
<i>Zee Cinema</i>	270	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	277
<i>Zee TV</i>	60	15	10	0	7	10	5	10	2	10	129
<i>Sony</i>	60	90	10	0	0	10	5	5	0	5	185
<i>Channel I</i>	30	100	10	5	3	15	10	5	2	10	190
<i>ESPN</i>	0	0	0	600	0	0	0	0	0	10	610
<i>DD</i>	60	10	10	0	3	5	2	2	1	5	98
<i>Star Movies</i>	180	10	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	193
<i>Star Plus</i>	120	30	1	0	6	10	1	2	0	10	180
<i>Alpha TV</i>	60	60	5	0	2	10	2	1	1	15	156

Source: Ministry of Information, Bangladesh, cited in Gonasakera and Wah (2001).

Of the above channels, ATN Bangla, Zee Cinema, Zee TV, Sony Entertainment Television, DD, and Alpha TV are Indian, while ESPN, Star Movies, and Star Plus are multinational channels. Channel I is the only Bangladeshi channel. However, multinational channels operating from India have localized their channels with Indian media products and talents. For example, ESPN provides its sports commentary in Hindi, Star Movies broadcasts both English and Hindi movies, and Star Plus provides its all content in Hindi.

ATN-Bangla (a subsidiary of Asian Television network owned by Indian born Chandrashekhar), *Doordarshan's* Bengali channel DD-7, Channel I, and Alpha TV (a subsidiary of the Zee TV network) broadcast Indian Bengali language movies and

light entertainments while the other channels cash in on Hindi language movies. Bengali channels are popular with middle class people in suburban areas in both Bangladesh and the Bengali speaking regions of India which include West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura. Initially, ATN Bangla, launched by a group of Bangladeshi businessmen, with the franchise from the Asian Television network, in 1998, and DD-7 were the leading Bengali channels in Bangladesh. The ATN's program schedule, seems to be a copy of Hindi channels, contains movie songs, quizzes, chat shows, and Bengali language movies mainly from India while DD-7 presents news, soap opera, and Indian Bengali movies. DD-7's news program, *Khas Khabar* (Main news), and its soap opera, *Paroma*, have acclaimed audience's interest. However, the main attraction of DD-7 in Bangladesh is that it presents Indian Bengali movies produced in the 1960s and 1970s starring famous Calcutta based Bengali artists. The dominance of ATN Bangla and DD-7 has faded due to the challenge from other Bengali channels such as Zee's Bengali channel Alpha TV, Channel I (owned by Bangladesh's largest production house, Impress Telefilms), ETV, ETV Bangla (Indian Enadu TV's Bengali channel), and Star TV's Bengali channel *Tara*.

Page and Crawley (2001) observe that the availability of Bengali satellite channels has not stopped Bangladeshi audiences from watching Hindi entertainment channels, which are recognized for their superior production qualities. Popular Hindi channels (e.g. Zee TV, Zee Cinema, Zee News, Zee Music) of Zee TV Network and Sony Entertainment Television's offshoots, Sony TV and Sony Max, are the market

leaders in Bangladesh. Particularly, *Zee*, the largest Asian television network, has gained access to 87% of the four million satellite homes (with an audience of 20 million people) in Bangladesh. *Zee* TV claims itself that it is the most popular satellite channel in Bangladesh (Available at www.zeetelevision.com/zee/about/corprof/med1.htm, accessed, 2001/10/17).

Programs on Hindi-language channels include soap operas, chat shows, quizzes, Hindi film songs, and Hindi movies. Beside Indian movies, Hindi television programs such as *Zee* TV's *Antakshari*, *Sa Re Ga Ma*, *Andaz*, *Aap Ki Adalat*, and *Koshish*, Sony's *Kanyadan* and *Kutumb*, and Star Plus's *Kaun Banega Crorepati* (a Hindi version of 'Who wants to be a millionaire') have elicited maximum response from audiences in Bangladesh. All these Hindi programs were made for the Indian market in consideration of the taste of the Indian population.

All satellite channels are packaged popular entertainment media and the popular culture of Bombay-based Hindi cinema has helped them to reach a mass audience beyond its intended Hindi speaking audiences. Although the Bangladesh government banned the exhibition of Indian films in cinema halls immediately after the liberation war, Indian Hindi and Bengali movies are available to Bangladeshis through satellite television channels. Even before cable and satellite penetration into Bangladesh, Indian films were also available through video rental houses in urban areas. In the 1980s, Indian films on video created havoc for the local film industry (Hye, 2000/11/10). Moreover, Indian art films made by famous filmmakers such as

Oscar winning producer Satyajit Roy, Mrinal Sen, and Ritwik Ghatak regularly appear in different film festivals in Bangladesh and have earned praise from audiences. In recent days, Indian movies are also available through video compact disks (VCDs).

A main reason behind the popularity of Indian film in Bangladesh is its melodramatic style. Most films are social and family oriented dramas. Usually, in the Hindi film, the story line emphasizes dichotomies between the poor-just versus rich-unjust (Dissanayake, 1993; cited in Thussu, 2000, p. 220). Song and dance sequences are quintessential part of the Hindi film. This form and content of the Indian cinema is appealing to Bangladeshi audiences due in part to the Bangladesh's shared cultural heritage with India and to the developed habit of viewing Indian films over the years. Indian movies were a staple in theatres in Bangladeshi territory until 1965 when the Pakistani government banned the exhibition following a war with India. After the liberation of Bangladesh, the government continued the ban to help develop the Bangladeshi film industry.

However, in the last year, the export and import of films between India and Bangladesh has been an agenda item for Indian film producers and Bangladeshi film exhibitors. Indian film producers have been actively considering the possibilities of film export and import with Bangladesh and have raised the issue in their meeting with the Indian information and broadcasting minister Sushma Sawraj in May 2000 (The Times of India, 2000/10/20). The filmmakers met the minister under the aegis of

the entertainment committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FICCI). Since India endowed film with industry status in May 1998, filmmakers were pursuing the government to include film as a trade item.

Indian film producers and the Bangladesh Motion Picture Exhibitors' Association (BMPEA) gathered in Calcutta in December 2000 under the patronage of the Bangladesh-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry to lobby their respective governments for exchange of films between the two countries (The India Times, accessed 2001/10/17). Their feeling was that the exchange of film would help to make the film industry commercially viable in both countries. At the gathering, BMPEA president Saiful Islam Chowdhury said, "The Bangladesh cinema, passing through an extremely critical phase, will break down if a joint effort is not taken to resuscitate the ailing industry". Referring to the 340 million strong Bengali speaking audiences in Bangladesh and Eastern India, he said the industry could flourish if films produced in both countries were properly distributed. "We want to export our films to India and show Indian Bengali films in Bangladesh", he said by pointing out that before the independence of Bangladesh Indian films were exhibited in Bangladeshi cinema halls. Putting forward a neo-liberal kind of logic, he argued that because of the competition from these films, film producers in Bangladesh were more careful about the quality of film, and quality films were produced at that time as a result. At the gathering, Sukumar Ranjan Ghosh, a member of the Bangladesh Film Censor Board, emphasized the exchange of quality films rather than exchanging commercial films

only. The gathering ended with the formation of a six-member committee including representatives from the Indian Motion Pictures Association (IMPA) and BMPEA to lobby the respective governments.

In pursuance of the goal of importing Indian films, Saiful Islam advocates that the import of films from India and other South Asian countries will create competition in the market leading to high quality local productions [Saptahik (weekly) 2000, accessed, 2001/10/16 at www.bangladeshshowbiz.com/news/crisis_dhakai_movie.htm]. However, investigation reveals that his main objective behind supporting the import of Indian films for Bangladeshi theaters is to make money. The exhibition of Indian films will attract more audiences to theaters benefiting him and his associates. To date, Islam's initiatives have not yielded any result because of resistance from the film industry and the reluctance of the government, which will be discussed later.

Alongside the newspaper, television, and film industries, Indian influence is going to be felt in the telecommunications sector in Bangladesh. The foreign participation in this sector has increased significantly because of liberalization and privatization steered by the WTO Telecommunications Agreement. As part of the privatization in the sector, the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications signed a deal with WorldTel, an American company, in July 2001 to install 300,000 digital telephone lines in the capital city Dhaka and its adjacent areas ending the monopoly of the BTTB in telecommunications. WorldTel won the right to install these lines

through a bidding process, but these are to be installed by the Indian MTNL through a subcontracting arrangement (Hossain, 2001/07/13). Moreover, many Indian commercial information technology training institutes and software manufacturing companies, including information technology training majors Aptech Ltd. and NIIT, have opened branches in Bangladesh. Aptech accounts for the 40 percent of the total information technology training business in Bangladesh (company profile, available at www.aptech-globaltraining.com/investor.htm, accessed, 2002/01/11). This development would also increase Indian influence on Bangladeshi people and culture. However, the scope for the Indian telecommunication companies in Bangladesh is limited because of the competition from multinational giants such as Siemens, Alcatel, Nortel etc.

The impact of Indian media-cultural penetration in Bangladesh

Hamelink (1983) argues that the traffic of cultural products from one country to another creates cultural synchronization in the recipient society. The society, which is the source of cultural products, offers the model with which the receiving parties synchronize. As a result, “the whole process of local social inventiveness and cultural creativity is thrown into confusion or is definitely destroyed. Unique dimensions in the spectrum of human values, which have evolved over centuries, rapidly disappear. Cultural synchronization is a massive threat to the cultural autonomy of a country”, Hamelink (p. 6) claims. He continues that the exogenously developed techniques,

symbols, and social patterns are introduced more on the basis of the interests and needs of the source country than on the needs and environment of the host country. In Bangladesh, the availability of Indian media content might not be creating cultural synchronization, but affecting local culture and its industries. Indian news magazines, satellite television channels, and movies are creating a consumer culture in the country.

Although the market for Indian magazines is limited in Bangladesh because of the low literacy rate, their impact on the society is significant. These magazines have reached the key people who generate and disseminate social knowledge. For example, *Desh* has a wide acceptance among intellectuals because of its rich content. *Sananda* and *Monorama* are widely read by educated women because they provide tips on contemporary fashion, dress, and cooking. Nuruddin (2002), a founding figure in the field of communication in Bangladesh, claims that the availability of Indian magazines has reduced the opportunity for the publication of a quality Bangladeshi magazine. Many magazines are published in the country but none of them is on a par with the Indian magazines in terms of the quality of content and presentation.

Compared to Indian news magazines, the impact of Indian television serials and movies is more ominous for Bangladeshi culture and its cultural industries. Since television has the ability to cross the barrier of literacy, Indian television serials and televised movies are changing cultural values and crippling the broadcast media and the cinema industry in the country. A recent nationwide survey, conducted by

scholars from the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at the University of Dhaka and Department of Journalism at the University of Chittagong, on the impact of satellite television reveals that satellite television in Bangladesh has been changing the behavioral pattern of city dwellers thus threatening the age old values, culture, and tradition (Accessed, 2001/10/16, at www.bangladeshshowbiz.com/news/sat_tv.htm). The survey showed that changes occurred particularly in daily television watching times, day-to-day lifestyle, dress, fashion, career planning, use of slang terminology, and in showing respect to seniors. Collecting data from 443 households in six divisional towns—Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, and Sylhet—the in-depth first-ever countrywide survey showed that the sociopolitical and cultural impacts were largely ignored when the government decided to allow the reception of satellite TV signals directly in 1992. The survey claims that people are now spending more time in watching television and gradually losing interest in social and community activities. About 55 percent of the respondents in the survey opined that they have less interaction with their family members, kin, and friends after they had hooked up to cable television. Because of their exposure to Indian television channels, teenagers in Bangladesh try to dress and adopt similar hairstyles to the stars of Hindi films. Adult women prefer to wear the saris worn by Indian film actresses. It is ironic that satellite television programs have been shaping the language of a whole generation of young people in a country whose liberation struggle began on the issue of national language. Forty one percent of the

respondents believe that teenagers are interested increasingly in speaking Hindi. Most of the urban youth who are exposed to Indian satellite TV channels and Indian films can already understand Hindi. Bangladeshi journalist Chinmoi Mutsuddi (cited in Page and Crawley, 2001, p. 244) observes, “Many Bangladeshi kids can speak Hindi well. But no Delhi kid knows much about Bangladesh. This is neither desirable, nor sustainable, nor beneficial for the region.”

Drawing on the survey and other sources (Page and Crawley, 2001; Nuruddin, 2002; Golam Rahman, 2001), it can be summarized that the cultural text presented by Indian satellite channels has been redefining social relations, values, and language of a generation in Bangladesh. Among the younger generation individual needs are now more important than the family needs. Teenagers are more open about sexual and intimate relations, which has been a taboo in the society for a long time. In this context, Hall’s formulation about the cultural function of the media can be recalled. According to Hall (1977, p. 340), “The mass media are more and more responsible for providing the basis on which groups and classes construct an image of the lives, meanings, practices and values of other groups and classes”. Dwelling on Hall, it can be said that in Bangladesh, the younger generation constructs an image of Indian life (not Bangladeshi life) and tries to mimic that.

The influence of Hindi language is not only an issue in Bangladesh but also a matter of concern for people and policy makers in other South Asian countries. Page and Crawley (2001, p. 156) observe that satellite culture has challenged the linguistic

orthodoxies of South Asia's nation states by producing its own "lingua franca" which mixes English and Hindi. *Zee* TV and other satellite television channels popularize this new language known as "Hinglish" and sometimes "Zinglish". Recently, many of the multinational English satellite channels have also adopted Hindi as the broadcasting language to capture the Indian market overlooking other languages in South Asia. The issue of linguistic aggression cannot be seen as a trivial phenomenon. Hall (1977, p. 327-28) observes,

The production of various kinds of social knowledge takes place through the instrumentality of thinking, conceptualization and symbolization. It operates primarily and principally through language- that set of objective signs and discourses which materially embody the processes of thought and mediate the communication of thought in society.

Drawing on Saussure, he (p. 328) continues that an individual can only speak a language by situating himself within the language system, which is socially constructed and sustained. Therefore, it can be inferred that the whole generation of young Bangladeshis are moving towards becoming a part of the Indian social system by learning Hindi.

The popularity of Hindi language entertainment channels has given rise to apprehensions that the popular culture of Bollywood (the Bombay-based Indian film industry) is promoting cultural homogenization and destroying the ideological boundaries of the nation state in South Asia. Such ideological worries have been felt in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal (Page and Crawley, 2001, p. 223). Page and Crawley assert that in these countries, "those speaking for national cultures see Hindi satellite channels as carriers of an Indian culture, which threatens to break down the

sense of difference, which the state and state broadcasters have been trying to reinforce.” The reaction is also the same among India’s regional cultures—namely Bengali, Malayalam and Gujarati—to the dominance of Hindi satellite television. The better financed and produced Indian programs aimed at the mass market have reduced the space for other cultures. Indian heroes are better known than those of Nepal or Bangladesh. There are worries that efforts to develop individual language and culture in South Asian countries are undermined by the greater familiarity with Hindi.

The analysis of influence of Indian television programs and movies is not only limited in the cultural arena in Bangladesh but can also be expanded to the economic sphere. Indian media have created a market for Indian consumer goods in the country helping the growth of Bangladesh’s trade deficit with India. Advertisements in Indian and Bangladeshi media familiarize Bangladeshi consumers with Indian goods (Golam Rahman, 2001). Using Smythe’s concept of “audience labor”, it can be said that these channels are selling Bangladeshi audiences to producers of Indian consumer goods. In fact, Hindi television channels determine which consumer goods will gain currency in the Bangladeshi retail market. It is natural that Indian media products will work in the interest of the Indian economic sector. Drawing on the American experience in marketing products throughout the world, Schiller (1993, p. 98) convincingly argues that “the cultural and economic spheres are indivisible” and “the media-cultural component in a developed, corporate

economy supports the economic objectives of the decisive industrial-financial sectors (i.e., the creation and extension of the consumer society)".

People in the consumer goods and service sector in Bangladesh keenly follow Hindi programs to satisfy the need of their consumers. For example, local dressmakers and dress sellers watch the fashion shows of *Zee TV* and other Indian channels to get a sense of contemporary fashions. Hairdressers also acquire knowledge of contemporary hairstyles from these channels. When this researcher went to have his hair cut in different hairdressers in Dhaka city in the mid 1990s he was asked what type of cut would he prefer—a *Rahul* cut or a *Mithun* cut? Rahul and Mithun are superstars of Indian Hindi film. Page and Crawley (2001, p. 195) in their research also observed the impact of *Zee's* fashion program "Khoobsurat" among teenagers and women in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan and came to the same conclusion.

The popularity of Indian satellite channels has thrown a tremendous challenge to the broadcast media and the film industry in Bangladesh. BTV has lost much of its audiences to cable television. As a result, BTV is supposed to lose advertising revenue with the increasing cable penetration. Most advertisers on BTV are the subsidiaries of multinational and Indian companies. When these advertisers would find that by placing ads on Indian channels they can reach audiences in both Bangladesh and India would not use Bangladeshi television for advertising. *Zee TV* (accessed, 2002/02/10 at www.screenindia.com/20011228/tvnews8.html) has already

offered a separate encrypted broadcast beam for Bangladesh, the Middle East, Pakistan, and Nepal. This beam will help *Zee* to reschedule programs for these markets and enable it to tap more advertisers from the regions separately. *Zee* TV estimates that annual airtime sales of US\$ 4-5 million will proceed from these markets covered under the new beam. Before this new arrangement, *Zee* TV used to accept ads from these regions only in its late prime (post 11 p.m.) time slots.

The use of BTV as a propaganda machine by successive governments over the years has lowered its credibility, and people have developed a habit of tuning to foreign media for news and information. BTV's monolithic and dull program content also frustrated the audience. Satellite channels, with their attractive content, have provided an alternative to them.

Since Indian films are widely accessible to Bangladeshi audiences through satellite channels, many Bangladeshis tend to avoid viewing their own films. Few Bangladeshi films record commercial success because of the competition from Indian films (Rehman, 2001). The popularity of Indian films has also destroyed the creativity of Bangladeshi filmmakers. Many Bangladeshi filmmakers have opted to copy the story line and presentation techniques of Indian films and hire Indian actors/actresses for Bangladeshi movies. Maqsoodul Haque (2001) claims that most Bangladeshi thrillers are cheap imitations of Bombay blockbusters. Since 1998, many Indian film stars from Mumbai and Calcutta have come to Dhaka to work in Bangladeshi films threatening the jobs of local stars. Many Indian film celebrities including Mithun

Chakraborty, Jaya Pradha, Momota Kulkarni, Ravina Tendon, Victor Benarjee, Prosenjeet, Satabdy Roy, Ritu Porna, and Ranjit Mollik have worked in the local film industry.

Because of the penetration of cable services, the number of movie production and movie houses have also decreased. In the 1990s, the number of films did not increase significantly and by the end of the decade the number of movies had decreased (See Table 2) because it had become difficult to manage financing for film production (Nuruddin, Ibid). In Bangladesh there is no institution to finance film production. As a result, film producers have to find financiers from their peers. In recent days, few people are interested to invest in Bangladeshi film production.

Table 2: Yearly production of Bengali feature films in Bangladesh

Year	Number of films
1988	68
1989	78
1990	62
1991	78
1992	73
1993	75
1994	77
1995	73
1996	77
1997	90
1998	83
1999	Not available
2000	80*
2001	Not available

Source: BBS (1999), *Gonasakera and Wah (2001).

Taposh (Accessed, 2001/10/16) reports that by the end of the 1990s, around 500 cinema halls faced closure in the country because of the availability of films through satellite television channels. Of the prominent cinema halls, those which were closed include Jyoty, Mollika, Rupmohol, and Beauty in Dhaka; Nupur, Melody, Upahar, Shoronika, Mukty, and Olongker in Chittagong; Pubali, Shyamoly, Zharna, Shathi, Ananda, and Shohag in Sylhet; and Sangita and Raj in Khulna. According to Nuruddin (Ibid), many cinema halls have been turned into shopping complexes and many of the existing ones in urban areas no longer hold regular shows. Since satellite channels turned the living rooms of the affluent and middle class into mini theatres, people appear to be going less in number to cinema halls. The film industry in Bangladesh has been passing through the most critical time in its history. About one million people connected with the film industry are now under threat of losing their livelihood (Nurunnabi, 2000/10/07). A good number of filmmakers have remained idle because the drop in the number of moviegoers has created a slump in the industry. Nazmul Huda Mintu, a film director, (cited in Sohel Islam, accessed, 2001/10/16) points out in recent times in Bangladesh local film has become an entertainment medium for the working class because affluent and educated people do not visit cinema halls.

Filmmakers and producers are extremely concerned about this development. A 21-member committee has been formed with representatives from different sections of the industry to deal with the present crisis in the film industry. The committee

solely blames the satellite channels for the crisis and demands the government take necessary steps to save the industry from the hegemony of these channels. The committee is extremely critical about the channels, including local and foreign, which telecast Bengali movies. The committee has also lobbied high officials in the government to place an embargo on the telecast of movies through satellite channels, but their efforts have not produced any result.

However, the slump in the film industry should not be attributed to satellite channels only. The low quality of the local film and the environment in and around cinema halls also discourage viewers from going to cinema halls. Based on his experience as a member of the Bangladesh Film Censor Board for more than a decade, Nuruddin (Ibid) observes that the crude presentation of vulgarity and violence in the Bangladeshi film has kept away audiences from cinema halls thereby creating the slump in the film industry. Indian films also contain vulgar and violent content, but their sophistication in presentation overcomes the problem, he argues. Moreover, ticket black marketers, muggers, and prostitutes pose a threat to safety and security of viewers who frequent the premises of cinema halls in cities.

However, many scholars in the Third World as well as in the West have tried to minimize the impact of media content. First, it is said that in Third World countries the term “mass media” is a misnomer; mass media are class media and they are the media for the elite (Atal, cited in Menon, 1993). Bitterman (1985) claims, “The foreign products are not for the most part uninvited. Usually, they are sought, even

bought, by people in the host country, which indicates already a substantial degree of cultural contact and cultural congruence; but invited or not, they are widely accepted in the host country only if they have meaning and relevance for the host culture". In the case of Bangladesh, mass media are still the media of the elite and Indian media content in Bangladesh is expected and invited by the elite. However, depending on the elitist nature of mass media, it cannot be concluded that the acceptance and impact of the Indian media content is limited to elites only because the ideas of the elite are the ruling ideas in the society. "Nationally dominant classes are the convenient intermediaries for the global spreading of a profit-oriented mercantilistic and consumer culture" (Hamelink, p. 7). Hamelink goes on to say that cultural influence through the communication industry does not always occur in a direct way.

Television, newspaper, films, and books are still inaccessible to millions of people in Bangladesh and it is the urban elite and middle class who are most exposed to the Indian media content and culture presented in the content. However, drawing on Hamelink, it can be said that the ruling elite accepts the imported social models and their action is decisive for the economic and cultural environment of the rest of the population.

Second, another front challenging the impact of media content comes from proponents of the active audience theory and polysemy. Scholars in this line of thinking attempt to theorize on the minimal impact of mass media content raising the point that the audience is always active and media content is always polysemic, or

open to interpretation (See Tomlinson, 1991 and Fiske, 1987 for details). It is said that audiences resist media messages by interpreting them according to their own need. However, Morley (1993) observes, “The polysemic qualities of text are overemphasized and marred by undocumented presumption that forms of interpretive resistance are stronger than the media’s ability to reproduce the intended meanings”. Curran (1990) presents a more critical view of the active audience as well as polysemy theorists and dubs their work a new revisionism in mass communication research on media audiences. According to him, they put forward the old pluralist ideas to hide the role of media in expanding consumer culture. They tend to study the effect of the media by analyzing a single program or a television serial or movie (Schiller, 1993, p. 112). Schiller asks, “How can one propose to extract one television show, film, book, or even a group, from the now nearly seamless media-cultural environment, and examine it for specific effects?” The impact of a message of any medium should be understood by analyzing the socio-economic and cultural context in which the medium performs and audiences receive the message. Therefore, resistance against media contents needs to be discovered in social and political processes. In the India-Bangladesh context, Bangladeshis have been on the receiving end of the Indian cultural products since the very beginning of British rule. During British rule, all development in the communication sector took place in Indian territory creating a center-periphery relation within the two regions of undivided India. In recent years, the one-way flow of the Indian media products to Bangladesh

works to recreate the center-periphery relationship. Therefore, the impact of the Indian media content in Bangladesh should be perceived by looking at the historical process of the development of mass media in the subcontinent. Because of the presence and dominance of Indian media in Bangladesh, Bangladeshis are becoming dependent on Indian cultural products (Nuruddin, Ibid). However, the domination of Indian media products also led to the development of some resistance against them. It is now necessary to discuss the nature of resistance.

The resistance against Indian media content in Bangladesh

Of course, the flow of the Indian media content to Bangladesh is not without resistance: resistance comes from government, intellectuals, religious groups and right wing politicians, and professional bodies. The questions of why and how Indian media content is resisted with what success will now be examined. Through fear of the negative trade balance with India and the popularity of Indian media in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh government pursues a protectionist policy by not allowing foreign ownership of newspapers and television stations, and by forbidding the import of Indian films into Bangladesh. There has always been a pressure on the government from a large section of people not to allow Indian products and businessmen into Bangladesh.

Because of Bangladesh's topsy-turvy historical relationship with India and the overwhelming dominance of Indian products in Bangladesh, a large section of

Bangladeshi people have developed strong anti-Indian sentiments. Perceptions about India in the minds of people are that India is a 'Hindu chauvinist' state and trying to impose its political and cultural hegemony over its neighbor (EPW, 1999/06/19). This sentiment is sustained through the action of political parties in Bangladesh. Before every general election, India bashing is a common issue played up by right wing political parties along with religious groups for winning votes. Political parties in Bangladesh are divided over issues involving India. Some political parties have a soft approach toward India while some are strongly anti-Indian. The division is also observed in the cultural arena. The resistance against the Indian media and media products emerges from the ant-Indian segment of the society (Nuruddin, Ibid).

Recently, anti-Indian sentiment is strong in the film industry. On the one hand, the BMPEA is lobbying the government to repeal the ban on the import of Indian films while on the other, another group in the film industry is opposing the move. Two incidents of the resistance against Indian films in Bangladesh can be recalled in this context. First, a section of local film artists, under the banner of the *Bangladesh Chalachitra Samannay Parishad* (BCSP), vigorously protested the screening of Indian commercial films in the Bangladesh International Film Festival in February 2001 (The Daily Star, 2001/01/15). Holding a press conference, the artists warned the festival committee "If Indian commercial films are screened here we will withdraw our membership from the festival committee". They also demanded the exclusion of Saiful Islam Chowdhury, president of the BMPEA, from the festival committee

because according to them he is the main agent and exhibitor of Indian films in Bangladesh. The BCSP vows to resist any effort at importing Indian commercial films in Bangladesh.

Second, intellectuals and anti-Indian forces resisted an attempt to telecast Hindi movies by the Bangladeshi lone private television channel ETV last year (Kristy, 2001/03/06). Hardliners as well as intellectuals protested fiercely, when ETV decided to telecast Hindi feature films as part of its program package to celebrate Eid-al-Adha, one of the main Muslim festivals, in March last year. Street protests and many newspaper articles appeared stating that by airing Hindi commercial movies, the channel was promoting Hindi cultural invasion of the country. The channel had to withdraw its decision.

Another form of resistance, according to Page and Crawley (2001, p. 228), on Bangladesh's part is the launching of satellite channels by Bangladeshi businessmen. In response to the Indian Hindi satellite channels, the Bangladesh government licensed the private channel ETV and Bangladeshi entrepreneurs launched Bengali satellite channels such as Channel I with a view to reaching Bengali audiences in India and Bangladesh. ETV and Channel I can be accessed from India.

However, this thesis describes the above forms of resistance as deficient due to many practical reasons. First, despite the move to obstruct the flow of the Indian media content to Bangladesh, it is accessible to people through state-owned media and cable, and people have developed a habit of viewing them. The aims and

objectives of banning the import of Indian movies in Bangladesh suffer since films reach Bangladeshi audiences through cable. It is difficult for Bangladesh to build meaningful resistance to Indian media products because at the beginning of satellite broadcasting in South Asia India was the prime mover in the satellite revolution while Bangladesh was at the receiving end of programming devised primarily either for an Indian or an international audience. Indian cultural products secured unchallenged dominance in Bangladesh and other South Asian countries mainly because of the potential domestic market in India and they can recover their costs in their own market.

Second, Bangladeshi laws restrict foreign ownership in media, but there is nothing forbidding strategic alliances between Bangladeshi and foreign media. Bangladeshi media can share ownership with foreign media. Moreover, there is no restriction on media content in terms of origin.

Third, Bangladesh has been gradually privatizing and liberalizing the communication sector, and the private sector has been gaining importance as a result. There is also a move in South Asia to create a free trade area involving seven countries including Bangladesh and India within the framework of South Asian Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Both mass media and telecommunication are included in the SAARC framework as areas of cooperation between states. The first meeting of the Information ministers of SAARC countries held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in 1998 adopted an 18-point declaration called Dhaka Declaration for the

unhindered flow of information in the region (DFP, 2000, p. 59). The declaration contains provisions for wide ranging cooperation in the field of mass media and information between SAARC members covering the exchange of books, periodicals, and other publications, special postal concessions for the media, and tariff reductions on media products. Given the move to establish a free trade area and the pursuance of policy toward privatization and liberalization by the government, there will be no protectionist measures for media in Bangladesh for long.

Finally, the form of resistance noted by Page and Crawley (cited above) also does not work because programming provided by Bangladeshi private and satellite television channels is the same as what appears on Indian channels. Following Oliviera (1993), this thesis argues that Bangladeshi television programs are the “creolization” of Indian programs and the intention of Bangladeshi programs is the same as Indian programs: both attempt to create a consumer culture. Therefore resistance should be built against the commodification of culture as well as cultural industries.

This chapter has depicted the one-way media content flow between Bangladesh and India with Bangladesh at the receiving end. It also has analyzed how Indian newsmagazines, film, and satellite television made a market in Bangladesh and documented the impact of Indian media products on Bangladeshi culture and media industries. The India-Bangladesh situation in the field of communication bears some similarities and differences to the US-Canada situation in the same field, which will

be discussed in the next chapter, because Canada as a close neighbor of America also feel the dominance of American media products.

Chapter Four: Comparison between the US-Canada situation and the India-Bangladesh situation in terms of media content flow

This chapter looks at the media content flow between Canada and the United States and attempts to compare the US-Canada situation with that of India-Bangladesh. Historically, the media content predominantly flows from the United States to Canada. Canada's geographic proximity to its southern neighbor, linguistic similarity between the United States and Anglophone Canada, business-to-business communication across the border, and the exponential growth of communication media in the United States have all created the dominant presence of the US media in Canada. By comparison, Bangladesh's long shared border with India, business-to-business communication across the border, and the rapid development of communication media in India in the 1980s and 1990s have created a one-way media content flow between Bangladesh and India, with Bangladesh at the receiving end. This chapter discusses the similarities and differences between the Canada-U.S. situation and the Bangladesh-India situation, providing a sector-by-sector analysis.

The print medium

American daily newspaper content reaches Canadians through agreements with Canadian dailies while American magazines are available to Canadians from virtually all newsstands. In recent times, many newspapers in Canada have formed

strategic alliances with foreign companies—particularly American ones (Mosco and D. Schiller, 2001). For example, *The Globe and Mail*, the Canadian national newspaper, publishes a page of news directly from *The Wall Street Journal*, includes a section of news from *Sports Illustrated* magazine and delivers the Sunday edition of *The New York Times* to Canadian homes as part of its deals with Dow Jones, Time-Warner, and *The New York Times*. In other print media, foreign (mainly American) magazines account for 81 percent of newsstand consumer magazine sales and over 63 percent of magazine circulation revenue in Canada (SAGIT, 1999). The flow of American magazines to Canada has been a thorny issue between the two countries for a long time. Canada has taken many measures to reduce the presence of American magazines, but has been unable to sustain them because of pressure from American magazine publishers as well as the US government.

American magazines began to enter Canada towards the end of the 19th century. Canadians received these magazines by subscription mailed through postal services and from newsstands. By the 1880s, the American News Company monopolized newsstand sales in both the U.S.A. and Canada (Vipond, 2000). In 1907, one American magazine, the *Saturday Evening Post*, had a Canadian circulation of 60,000 copies, which was more than the total circulation of all other major Canadian magazines. By 1925, the total circulation of American magazines in Canada rose to about fifty million copies per year while the circulation of Canadian magazines was limited to around six million copies (Vipond, p. 26). In order to save their industry

from US domination, Canadian magazine publishers sought tariff protection from the government by arguing that American magazines provided low taste materials, took away Canadian advertising revenues, and propagated an American way of life. The Conservative government of R.B. Bennett imposed tariffs on imported magazines in 1930. The tariff was applied to general interest or mass magazines while 'high class' intellectual and cultural magazines were kept out of the arrangement. Because of the tariff, the circulation of American magazines in Canada fell significantly, paving the way for the growth of local magazines. However, during the Great Depression, some 50 American magazines opened branches in Canada and printed copies for Canadian readers thereby making the tariff ineffective (Vipond, p. 29). The tariff restriction was withdrawn in the late 1930s when the Liberal government of MacKenzie-King signed some major tariff-reducing arrangements with the Americans.

A new problem arose for Canadian publishers during the 1940s when two popular American magazines, *Time* and *Reader's Digest*, opened offices in Canada and began publishing Canadian editions which supplemented their American content with a minor amount of Canadian materials (McKercher, 2001). Within several years of their initial publication, these two magazines accounted for 37 percent of the total advertising revenue for general interest magazines in Canada. In 1954, the total share of American magazines in Canadian market was almost 80 percent (Vipond, p.55). To ease the dominance of American magazines, the Liberal government of Louis St.

Laurent imposed a 20 percent tax on advertising placed in Canadian editions of American periodicals in 1956.

However, the subsequent Progressive Conservative government of John Diefenbaker, which came to power after the Liberals, withdrew the tax and as a result five more American magazines launched Canadian editions and several more began publishing split-run issues. A substantial amount of the Canadian advertising revenue was realized by American magazines creating fear in Canadian publishers and nationalist groups. Sensing the crisis in the magazine industry, the federal conservative government formed a Royal Commission on publications in 1960. The commission recommended that the Canadian firms advertising in foreign magazines or Canadian editions of foreign magazines should not be allowed to use this cost as an income tax deduction and the foreign magazines selling ads explicitly to Canadian readers should be denied access to the Canadian market under the Customs Act. The report created substantial anxiety among American magazine publishers regarding their business interest in Canada and they became active to forestall the implementation of the report. Patrons and allies of *Time* and *Reader's Digest* lobbied the American government to resist the report. Persuaded by this hectic lobbying, the US government felt the Canadian action contradictory to the free flow of information and threatened to retaliate against Canadian business interests in the US market if the Canadian government proceeded with implementing the report's findings. Fearing American action, the Canadian government implemented the report but exempted

Time and *Reader's Digest*. These two magazines enjoyed this privilege until 1976 when the Liberal government of Pierre Trudeau eliminated their tax-deductibility provisions passing Bill C-58. However, the enactment of the bill was again jeopardized by American threats of retaliation. *Time* closed its Canadian office and began publishing Canadian editions from New York. *Reader's Digest* enjoyed the tax deductibility since it established a Canadian Foundation and continued publishing its Canadian editions from Canada.

The magazine battle between the US and Canada re-surfaced when American media giant Time-Warner came up with an innovative idea to sell split-run issues of *Sports Illustrated* magazine, evading the Canadian customs duty (McKercher, p. 195). Time-Warner planned to send the content of the magazine electronically to its Canadian affiliate for the latter would print and distribute. Since the magazine would not be exported physically to Canada, the question of customs duty would not arise. After the revelation of the Time-Warner plan, Canadian magazine publishers began a campaign to stop it. Under pressure from the publishers, the federal government promised to take action and formed a task force to investigate the issue. The task force reported that if action was not taken immediately as many as 50 US magazines would follow the technique of Time-Warner with the effect of costing Canadian magazines 40 percent of their advertising revenue and reduce their operating profit by 85 percent (Magder, 1998). It recommended that an 80 percent tax on the gross advertising revenue of split-run magazines should be imposed to discourage the

publication of split-runs and the *Sports Illustrated Weekly* be exempted from the measure since the magazine already got the green light from Investment Canada.

The Liberal government of Jean Chretien proceeded with the task force report and modified the report by withdrawing the exemption for the *Sports Illustrated* magazine. Bill C-103 was passed in 1996 for this purpose. This time, the US government took the issue to the WTO contending that Canadian action violated the General Agreements on Tariff and Trade (GATT). The US not only complained against Bill C-103, but also against the customs regulation and the postal subsidies provided for Canadian magazines. The WTO dispute settlement body ruled in favor of the US and urged Canada to comply with the WTO rules. McKercher (p. 197) writes, over the next two and half years Canadian policy makers tried to come up with a plan which would support the Canadian magazine industry, comply with the GATT and satisfy the US. As a result, Bill C-55 came into being. The Bill prohibited Canadian advertisers from placing ads in foreign magazines and kept provisions to fine foreign publishers up to C\$250,000 for selling ads to Canadians in violation of this rule. To comply with the WTO rulings, the bill eliminated the customs regulation and the excise tax on split runs and equalized the commercial postal rate for foreign and domestic magazines. However, the US government was still not happy with the bill and threatened to retaliate. With an aim to retaliate against the passage of the bill, the US government began to prepare a list of Canadian business interests to target with counter sanctions. Being afraid of the US response, the Canadian government

offered to negotiate on the magazine issue. Negotiators from both countries signed an agreement resolving the issue in the winter of 1999 (Canadian Heritage, 1999/05/26). The agreement stipulated that the prohibition on foreign publishers to sell ads to Canadians were to be minimized in two ways. First, the publisher of the split-runs were to be able to sell 12 percent of advertising to Canadians in the first year without making any changes in the content, and it was to increase to 18 percent by the third year. Second, magazine publishers who want to sell more ads to Canadians can open businesses in Canada and produce publications with a majority of Canadian content. Canada also agreed to modify the tax deductibility rule. Previously, tax deductibility was allowed for ads placed in the periodicals with a minimum of 75 percent Canadian ownership and 80 percent Canadian content. Full tax deductibility is now to be allowed for ads placed in periodicals with 80 percent of Canadian content, regardless of the nationality of ownership. Advertisers placing ads in the magazines with 50 to 79 percent Canadian content will be eligible for a tax deduction of 50 percent.

From the 1920s to the present, Canada has attempted many steps to protect its magazine industry from domination by US magazines, but every step has been in vain because of pressure from south of the border. US magazines dominate newsstand sales in Canada. The flow of the American magazines and newspaper content to Canada affects the profit of Canadian publishers in two ways. First, of the total revenue, which comes primarily from newsstand sales in Canada, the lion's share goes to American publishers. Second, because of their availability in Canada,

American publications capture a substantial amount of advertising from Canadian and multinational advertisers thereby depriving Canadian publishers. Audley (1983) argues that the spillover of American magazines into Canada is one of the main factors limiting the advertising revenue of Canadian magazines. Since both the US and Canadian markets can be reached by placing ads in the US magazines, multinational companies prefer US magazines to Canadian ones. American publishers are able to sell ads to advertisers and magazines in Canada at a cheaper rate than the domestic magazines because their editorial content is already paid in the US market by advertisers and subscribers. Publishing split-runs and magazines with minor Canadian content, American publishers earn additional revenue from the Canadian market without spending much on content. American publishers keep the advertising rate for Canadian advertisers at a very low level to compensate for their inability to deduct the advertising expenditure from their income tax (Magder, 1998). However, the influence of American publications is more visible in English Canada since French Canada enjoys a natural protection because of linguistic difference.

Compared to the Canadian magazine and newspaper market, the Bangladeshi market is better protected from foreign publications. While in Canada U.S. magazines dominate newsstand sales, in Bangladesh, Indian newsmagazines have a small market. A few Indian English language general interest magazines and Bengali language niche magazines are sold in Bangladesh but their sales revenue is insignificant in terms of the total magazine sale. Language acts as a natural barrier to

the access of Indian magazines to Bangladesh. Popular Indian magazines are published in Hindi and English languages making them difficult to access Bangladeshi audiences. On the other hand, in Canada, commonality of language between America and Anglophone Canada facilitates the access of American magazines to Canada. Moreover, while American publishers publish split-runs and Canadian editions of their magazines, there is no such arrangement for Indian magazines in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, the ownership of newspaper and magazines is restricted to citizens only. Under *The Printing Presses and Publications (Declaration and Registration) Act, 1973*, no non-citizen of Bangladesh can publish newspapers or periodicals in Bangladesh. However, there is no restriction on Bangladeshi publishers in sharing ownership with foreign publishers. By comparison, the Canadian laws permit 25 percent of foreign ownership of Canadian newspapers. Today, major Canadian newspapers have strategic alliances with American newspapers, but no such ties exist between Bangladeshi newspapers and Indian newspapers. Furthermore, because of the low literacy rate and limited buying capacity of the people, circulation of newspapers and magazines in both Bangladesh and India are still limited to elites. Unlike American magazines in Canada, Indian magazines which are imported to Bangladesh cannot recoup their cost in the Indian market. As a result, Indian magazines are costlier to distribute in the Bangladeshi market than the local ones.

Broadcasting

Radio

Like the newspaper and magazine industry, American influence is also observable in Canadian broadcasting. Canadian radio stations buy 70 percent of their music from foreign (mainly American) sources (Acheson and Maule, 1999). About 60 percent of all English language programming broadcast in Canada is foreign (mainly American), while for French language programming non-Canadian content is 33 percent. In the case of prime time drama broadcast on Canadian television, foreign content is even more dominant. About 85 percent of prime-time dramas on English language television are foreign, mostly from the United States; meanwhile 75 percent on French-language television originates outside Canada (Rabinovitch, 1998).

American broadcasting signals have been available to Canadians since the beginning of broadcasting in North America. Canadian radio broadcasting began in 1919 through private enterprises. During its early years, private broadcasters opted for importing American programming without concentrating on developing local productions. Canadians at the border areas were also able to receive live American signals through their radio sets. As a result, in the 1920s, US radio signals occupied the Canadian airwave and “drowned out” domestic voices (Jeffrey, 1996). Filion (1996, p. 118) writes, “By the end of the 1920s, the largest Canadian stations were affiliated either to the CBS or NBC networks”. The role of the government was limited to issuing licenses and managing the radio-wave spectrum allocated to Canada

under international agreements. For Canadian broadcasters, airing American programming was profitable for two reasons (Pike, 1995). First, it was less rewarding to produce programming for Canadian market because of the small market size. Second, a great deal of programming was produced in the USA and was easily available to Canadian broadcasters.

In response to the overwhelming presence of American programming in Canadian radio networks, the first Royal Commission on Broadcasting was formed in 1929 under the leadership of John Aird. The Aird commission identified several problems for Canadian broadcasting including urban concentration of the stations, commercialization, the overwhelming presence of American content, and the mediocrity of local programs. It recommended the establishment of a unified system under government control that would be available to all Canadians. In regard to programming and content, the commission suggested to use both local and imported programs. Vipond (1992) observes that the intention of the commission was to create a balance between local and American programming. This period in the history of Canadian broadcasting is marked by government indecision about the ownership and control of broadcasting, pressure from citizens activists for greater involvement of the government to preserve Canadian identity and culture, and pressure from private broadcasters to maintain their profit margin and to ensure less government control.

Out of this situation, the first Canadian Broadcasting Act came into being in 1932. This act established Canadian ownership and control over its broadcasting

system. In 1933, Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, a modest network with services both in English and French languages, was established. It was restructured as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1936. The CBC was entrusted with two responsibilities: providing programs to all Canadians and regulating the private stations. After the creation of the CBC, the Canadian broadcasting sector was composed of private and public networks. Both private and public networks regularly featured US programming along with locally produced programming since there was still no restriction or limit for foreign content (Hallman, 1977). Restriction on foreign content was not imposed until the late fifties, which will be discussed in the context of television broadcasting. Notwithstanding Canadian-content regulations and incentives for Canadian talent development, throughout the history of Canadian radio, American influence has been a major threat. Most stations still prefer to broadcast American programming for many reasons such as the appeal of American popular culture and the relative scarcity of Canadian popular music. Vipond (2000, p.38) argues, “Canadians became habituated to American popular culture, its trends, tastes and stars, on the radio” from its early days.

While American programming occupies a significant portion of radio programming time in Canada, Bangladeshi radio programming is free of Indian content. Although radio broadcasting began in Bangladesh as part of the All India Radio (AIR), broadcast of Indian programs on the stations in Bangladeshi territory ended immediately after the partition of India. However, like US signals to Canada,

off-the-air Indian signals spill over the border. Particularly, at night, Indian signals in many areas of Bangladesh are dominant over Bangladeshi ones. Unlike the USA and Canada, radio broadcasting in the Indian subcontinent has always been owned and controlled by the state. As a result, radio programming in the region has not yet developed as a business sector. On the other hand, in the USA and Canada, radio broadcasting developed as a sector like other businesses and has been dominated by the interests of private capital. In these countries, radio broadcasting has been developed and run by private entrepreneurs who looked across the border to maximize their profit. American private broadcasters look to the North for a market and Canadian private broadcasters move to south to procure programs at a low cost. In this context, the Canadian government's actions have focused on minimizing the American content flow, while at the same time trying to keep the private sector happy.

Television

Like radio broadcasting, American programming has also been a staple for Canadian television from its earliest days. The CBC launched the first television station in Canada in 1952—four years after US networks began regular television broadcasting. Canadians' first exposure to television was via the cross-border reception of American broadcasting services. Jeffrey (p. 204) estimates that before the launch of CBC television, 100,000 Canadian households received television signals from US stations. From the beginning, the CBC provided both Canadian and foreign

(mainly American) programming with a view to attracting audiences who had already become avid watchers of American programming. The CBC tried to strike a balance between local and foreign programming. By virtue of the CBC, the Canadians who were not able to receive US television signals got access to American programs.

American programming became more widely available in Canada with the beginning of private television broadcasting. Private broadcasting came to Canada in 1961 when CTV went on the air (Pevere, 1998). From the beginning, the private network relied heavily on American programming for its entertainment content but produced news and public affairs programming locally. The Canadian government's measure to ensure the Canadian character of broadcasting came in 1959 when the Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG) announced that all broadcasters would show a minimum of 45 percent Canadian programming by 1961 and it should rise to 55 percent by 1962 (Audley, p. 254). However, this decision faced resistance both from the Canadian Association of Broadcasters and the Association of Canadian Advertisers. The private broadcasters fought the decision because they saw it as affecting their business by reducing their profit by requiring broadcasters to produce local programs. Importing American programs was many times more profitable than producing locally. The advertisers, many of whom were the subsidiaries of American firms, opposed the decision out of the fear that local production would cost the broadcasters more leading to an increase in advertising rates. Under pressure from broadcasters and advertisers, the board softened its standards and made the definition

of Canadian content flexible. The board has never been able to ensure that the broadcasting system as a whole is Canadian in content and character because of the inability to regulate the private sector successfully.

Today, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC), as the successor of the BBG, enforces Canadian content regulations. The CRTC requires television licensees to devote at least 60 percent of all programming hours in a year to Canadian productions. During prime time (6 p.m. to midnight), Canadian content requirement for publicly owned broadcasters (e.g. CBC/SRC) is 60 percent and for private broadcasters the requirement is 50 percent. For radio stations, at least 35 percent of the recordings they play must be Canadian, both as a weekly average and between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. from Monday to Friday. A number of loopholes exist with these regulations however allowing the pre-dominance of American programming on Canadian broadcasting. First, since the regulations require 60 percent Canadian content in a yearly basis from all stations, the broadcasters can achieve this requirement by jamming Canadian content into the summer months when audiences are smaller (Vipond, 2000, p. 158). Second, the definition of prime time is generous—from 6 p.m. to midnight. Because of this generous definition of time, broadcasters can use their most lucrative 7 to 11 p.m. slot for imported programming. Third, the definition of Canadian content is also very flexible and does not specify exactly what type of content counts as Canadian. Private stations can meet a large part of its 50 percent content requirement in prime time with news and sports programs.

Private broadcasters include their 6 p.m. and 11p.m. newscasts as prime time Canadian content which allows them to offer as little as 25 percent Canadian material in the most popular and lucrative 7 to 11 p.m. slot. Audley (p. 205) calculates that private broadcasters need twenty-one hours of Canadian programming between 6 p.m. and midnight weekly to meet the content requirement. Accordingly, if a station runs an hour of news between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. and a half hour at 11p.m., it can cover half of the Canadian content requirement each week, and for the other half it can use two or three sports events and co-productions with foreign broadcasters.

Vipond (2000, p. 158) claims that Canadian content rules regulate quantity, not quality. Since the production of dramatic programming involves huge costs, private stations rarely use local drama to fill the broadcast quota. They prefer news, sports, and cheap game and quiz shows to meet Canadian content requirements. Babe (1979) observes that private broadcasters have never accepted the Canadian content quota cordially and always tried to develop mechanism to minimize their carriage of Canadian material. Neither the BBG nor its successor, the CRTC, has been able to compel private broadcasters to produce a significant amount of Canadian programming. The CBC contributes significantly to the development of Canadian content. However, the question is also raised against the CBC that it carries same kind of American commercial programming that can be found on commercial networks to capture advertising revenues (Lorimer and Gasher, 2001).

There are many reasons for the dependence of Canadian broadcasters on American programming (Lorimer and Gasher, p. 170-71; Vipond, 2000, p. 46; and Jeffrey, p. 204). First, since there was no independent television production industry in Canada when television was introduced, Canadian TV stations either bought from the US or produced their own programs in-house. Second, American programming has always been far more profitable than local programming. It is generally ten times cheaper for a Canadian broadcaster to buy a US show than to produce its own programs. For example, a broadcaster has to pay a license fee of about C\$200,000 per hour for national rights to a distinctively Canadian drama while earnings from drama is about C\$125,000 (Canadian Heritage, 2000). On the other hand, a typical one-hour US drama costs approximately C\$80,000, but generates revenue of roughly C\$200,000. American TV producers can supply programs to Canadians at a cheap rate since they recover their cost in their own huge domestic market. Third, it is less risky for Canadian broadcasters to import American programs, which already have a track record of attracting audiences and advertisers, than producing new shows. Finally, success of a TV show depends heavily on marketing. By importing American programs, Canadian broadcasters can benefit directly from the publicity and media coverage generated by American TV shows. If Canadian broadcasters produce their own show they have to spend extra money for publicity to market them. Therefore, it is always cheaper and less risky for Canadian broadcasters, with a market one-tenth the size of the US, to import US programs. Private broadcasters in Canada became

rich by selling audiences for imported US shows to advertisers, not by producing or purchasing shows in Canada. Historically, Canadian broadcasters and cable operators have played the role of middlemen, brokering the flow of programs from US producers to Canadian consumers (Jeffrey, p. 204). Critics argue that it has always been easier in Canada to get relief from the regulator than to make successful Canadian production for domestic and global markets (p. 245). Jeffrey (p. 204) goes on to say that “from the first Broadcasting Act of 1932 to the current act of 1991, the federal response has remained consistent: license broadcasters and allow them to import popular US programs while requiring them to use a portion of the resulting revenues to carry, produce or purchase domestic content”. Regulators in Canada have taken many initiatives to ensure Canadian broadcasting content, but never attempted to stop the flow of American content. The major initiatives over the years include the establishment of Canadian Broadcasting Commission (1932), the CBC (1936), the BBG (1958), content regulations (1959), the CRTC (1968), revised content regulations (1970), direct subsidies for independent producers through Telefilm Canada’s Broadcasting Fund (1983) and requirements that private broadcasters fund underdeveloped program genres, particularly dramatic entertainment and children’s shows (1979, 1989).

Historically, English language broadcasting have been the place for disputes over Canadian content quotas. French language networks are more or less protected from American programming because of language. Recent trends, however, show that

Francophone Canada is also now under threat from popular American programs, and linguistic difference is not strong enough to act as a barrier to the penetration of mass media giants from south of the border. Today, a large portion of all television viewing in Canada, mainly in Anglophone Canada, is of American programs. From September 1998 to September 1999, in Anglophone Canada, viewing of foreign programs on three major television networks—publicly owned CBC and private networks CTV and Can-West Global—was 17 percent, 55 percent, and 73 percent respectively of daily programming (The CBC, 2000-2001). During prime time, it was 11 percent on the CBC, 88 percent on CTV, and 91 percent on Can-West Global. On the other hand, in Francophone Canada, viewing of foreign programming on publicly owned Radio-Canada, privately owned TVA, and TQS was 14 percent, 25 percent, and 46 percent respectively of the daily programming. In prime time, it was 9 percent on Radio-Canada, 35 percent on TVA, and 59 percent on TQS.

Widely viewed Canadian made programs include news and sports. The prime time schedules of most Canadian television stations are programmed in Los Angeles by executives of CBS, NBC, ABC, and Fox. Broadcasters, program distributors and advertisers, not the viewers, decide what programming appears on Canadian networks. Broadcasters choose those programs that maximize their profit. From September 1998 to September 1999, in Anglophone Canada, the amount of foreign (mainly American) content was 19 percent of the daily programming on the CBC, 46 percent on CTV, and 53 percent on Can-West Global, while the percentage in prime

time was 13, 77, and 80 on the CBC, CTV, and Can-West Global respectively (The CBC, 2000-2001, p. 27). On the other hand, in Francophone Canada, foreign content accounted for 24 percent of the daily programming on Radio-Canada, 29 percent on TVA, and 41 percent on TQS. In prime time, the percentage was 13, 40, and 50 on Radio-Canada, TVA, and TQS respectively.

Statistics Canada (2000) reports that in 1998, television networks spent 57 percent of their total programming budget on Canadian produced television programs. Expenditures by private television stations on Canadian programming were largest for sports and information programming and the key cultural category of drama remains dominated by foreign mainly American programming. However, drama is the most popular type of programming watched in Canada. Statistics Canada's 1998 survey (cited in Statistics Canada, 2000, p. 112) on television viewing time reveals that drama occupies 28 percent of all viewing time. Television networks spent 81 percent of their total foreign programming expenditures on drama which exceeded each category of Canadian program expenditures by several times. English language stations spent \$325 million on drama programming in 1998 and only 15 percent of this was on Canadian shows, while French language network stations spent about \$30 million on drama programming and 55 percent was on Canadian shows. In the Francophone market, private broadcasters have traditionally produced many more original drama and entertainment programs than English language broadcasters.

Recently, however, French television networks are also finding it increasingly difficult to compete with less expensive foreign productions.

While the prime time schedules of television stations in Canada are occupied by American drama, with Bangladeshi television, the most popular prime time drama and serials are Indian made. Unlike Canada, Bangladesh only has two television networks. Of the networks, government controlled BTV is dominant. The private network ETV is still in its initial stage, and broadcasts mainly sports and information programming. Like the CBC, publicly owned BTV airs foreign programming to attract advertising revenue. BTV imports Indian serials which already have successful track records in India. For BTV, Indian serials are cheaper than the locally produced ones and attract more advertisers. In the case of drama programming, BTV has abandoned its role as a producer and has become a carrier. It purchases programs from both local sources and Indian producers. If BTV continues this policy, the prime time drama and serials on BTV will be more and more dominated by Indian productions because the television production industry in Bangladesh is still in nascent stage. It would not be wrong to predict that, like Canada, the prime time schedules of Bangladeshi television networks will be dominated by foreign programming in the near future. In recent years, the Indian television production industry has grown significantly in the private sector and is looking for markets outside its borders. Since there is no quota or restriction on foreign programs on

Bangladeshi television networks, Bangladesh tends to be a good market for Indian producers.

Cable Television

Cable service providers have made many American channels available to Canadian viewers. Cable television came to Canada in 1952 and initially the activities of cable service providers were limited in the implementation of service in small rural communities. Cable penetration increased rapidly in the 1960s because of the demand for receiving American television channels in urban areas close to the border, where easy reception of American television signals were interrupted by the construction of high rise buildings, and areas distant from American television transmitters (Janigan, 1995). Babe (1973) observes that the primary function of the cable providers was to carry American television signals to communities that could not normally receive such signals.

In the early stage of cable penetration, the cable system was not regulated in Canada. The BBG did not regulate cable because it was not considered broadcasting at that time (Nash, 2001). Through cable many American channels became available to Canadians, threatening the business of Canadian broadcasters who were at risk of losing audiences and advertising dollars. According to Babe (1975, p. 152), cable was fragmenting the audiences of local television channels by increasing the reach of American stations in Canada. If this trend continued, multinational corporations with

branch plants in Canada would choose American television to advertise their goods in Canada (Babe, p. 211).

Cable was integrated into the Canadian broadcasting system in 1971 by the CRTC which at that time also fixed the terms and conditions for cable service regarding the carriage of foreign signals (Babe, 1973, p. 2). The CRTC ruled that cable systems must carry broadcast signals on a priority basis and should give priority to Canadian stations, substitute advertisements sold by the local stations into the commercial time of the foreign stations, and delete the distant stations from the system, when such stations duplicated the programs of the local station, following the request of local stations. The CRTC's ruling has restricted the proliferation of American channels in Canada through cable, but has not stopped the carriage of such channels.

From the 1970s to today, the CRTC's policy regarding cable television revolved around one principal: how to reduce the number of US channels. The CRTC has never intended to stop the carriage of American channels, however, it has tried to ensure the existence of Canadian channels in the cable system. Current policy of the CRTC (available at www.crtc.gc.ca) also allows the carriage of American channels. The CRTC requires that cable services should contribute to the production of Canadian programming and give priority to Canadian services. Cable services are obliged to include local CBC/SRC stations or their affiliates, local commercial Canadian services, the provincial educational service, a community channel, and the

Canadian parliamentary channel (SAGIT, 1999, p. 9). Cable services are able to include five (four commercial and one non-commercial) American services. Acheson and Maule (p. 204) observe that Canada's policy has been a "schizophrenic mixture" of protective measures and actions facilitating the spread of American channels. Over the years, the CRTC has licensed many cable services and as a result cable has penetrated almost every household in Canada. Most Canadians now watch television through cable.

Today, Canadian cable systems are comprised of cable services such as basic and discretionary, pay-per-view and video-on-demand. Pay television channels usually consist of local and foreign movie channels. The Canadian content requirement for pay-per-view and video-on-demand services is a 1:20 ratio of Canadian to non-Canadian films and a 1:7 ratio of Canadian to non-Canadian events. These services have to distribute at least 12 Canadian feature films every year. Because of the flexible content requirement, these services also carry substantial amounts of American programming.

Cable services developed in Canada to distribute American television signals; similarly in Bangladesh cable emerged in the early 1990s to distribute Indian television signals. During the last decade, cable services in Bangladesh have reached all urban areas throughout the country. Today, cable operators provide all Indian satellite television channels along with a few multinational channels. While Canadian cable providers are required to provide Canadian channels and television signals

along with foreign ones through cable, Bangladeshi cable operators are free to carry any channels irrespective of their place of origin. Moreover, Canadian cable services have a quota of five American services, but Bangladeshi cable operators are free to hook into unlimited number of Indian channels. The only restriction on cable services in Bangladesh is that they are not allowed to distribute sex channels and they have to censor sex scenes from other channels as well.

Film

Like the print medium and broadcasting, Canadian movie theaters are dominated by American films. Canadian films account for an average of only two percent of Canadian box-office receipts while 98 percent is accounted by American films (Telefilm Canada, 2001). From the earliest days of the cinema, the Canadian movie market has been dominated by the movies of Hollywood. Major American production and distribution companies established control over the Canadian market by 1920 through exclusive franchise agreements with Canadian exhibitors. Canadian entrepreneurs in the early days did not engage their own technology or ability to produce local films and were satisfied to exploit the market by importing films from Hollywood (Pendakur, 1990). Pendakur notes that prominent Canadian entrepreneurs set up a business structure that imitated the business patterns of the American film industry and acted as brokers for American films in order to realize assured profits.

For example, the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association (CMPDA) was formed in 1921 with the Canadian offices of the American distribution majors (Wise and Glassman, 1996). It was Canadian in name, but in essence was a branch of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association of America (MPPDAA). During the period from 1920 through 1930, the vertical integration between the three segments—production, distribution, and exhibition—of the motion picture industry in Hollywood, already the main center of the world’s movie industry, had given birth to a handful of powerful companies. Vertical integration allowed these companies not only to control the production of movies but also distribution and exhibition. Five giant corporations—MGM-Loews, Paramount, Fox, RKO, and Warner Brothers—and three other large production companies—Columbia, Universal, and United Artists—controlled production, distribution, and exhibition of films in both Canada and the US (Smythe, 1981, p. 131). Pendakur (1990, p. 47) observes, “ For all practical purposes, the border between Canada and the United States did not exist during those early years of the film industry; entrepreneurs from both sides of the border traveled at will. This practice was to be an important factor in the way the Canadian film industry developed”.

Hollywood-based companies extended their reach to Canada by integrating the Canadian principal theater chain Famous Player with them. Adolf Zukor formed Famous Player in New York in 1912 and subsequently bought a substantial share of the Canadian Paramount Theaters chain (Wise and Glassman, p. 20). Famous Player

was incorporated as Famous Player Canadian Corporation (FPCC) in 1920 and bought Canada's biggest theater chain, Allen Theaters, getting control of the biggest and best movie houses in the largest cities throughout Canada in 1923. US-based Paramount Pictures took over Famous Player in 1930 which by that time was the owner of the one-third of total cinema halls in Canada. The control of Famous Player was transferred to another US based entertainment company, Viacom, when Viacom bought Paramount in 1994.

By using the accomplishments of Adolph Zukor of Famous Players, the major Hollywood studios squeezed out all independents and established total domination over the Canadian movie industry. Theater owners could not show popular first-run movies without cooperating with the Hollywood majors. The majors also occupied most of the available time in theaters through block booking. As a result, independent producers could not get their films distributed or screened. Because of the control of American giants over Canadian market, investors were afraid of backing Canadian films. Before the First World War, virtually none of the films shown in Canada was made here (Vipond, 2000, p. 31). Peter Morris (1978) estimates that 60 percent of the pre-war movies came from the United States, and the other 40 percent from Britain and France.

N.L. Nathanson, one of the founding board members of FPCC, left Famous Player in 1941 and formed Odeon Theaters which later became one of the most dominant theater chains in Canada. In 1946, Odeon was sold to the Rank

Organization, which was the largest vertically integrated film company in Britain at that time. Cineplex, a Canadian company, purchased Odeon and the company was renamed Cineplex-Odeon. In 1986, MCA Inc., a diversified US entertainment company and parent of Universal Pictures, purchased a 49 percent equity interest in Cineplex-Odeon.

Today, two chains—Famous Player and Cineplex-Odeon—dominate the theatrical market in Canada while a handful of companies, subsidiaries of Hollywood majors, control distribution of films. The dominance of the two chains is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Canadian film market. These chains receive about two-thirds of annual theatrical revenues in Canada (Ellis, 1992) and maintain ongoing supplier arrangements with Hollywood majors. Famous Player has first-run rights in Canada to all MGM-United Artist, Paramount, and Warner Bros. films, while Cineplex Odeon has the same rights to the films of Columbia and Universal Studios. They also share the exhibition rights for films from other studios as well.

In response to the domination of American companies in the Canadian film market, the actions of the Canadian government were nothing more than eyewash. Smythe (p. 132) points out that the monopolistic structure of the Hollywood majors were broken in the United States in 1948 by anti-trust laws; however, their arrangement in Canada was unharmed. The Canadian government did not even enforce any quota for foreign films in Canada. Direct intervention against the American film interests was first attempted in 1930 when Prime Minister Bennett

appointed Commissioner Peter White to investigate various complaints against Famous Player. White released his report in the next year and concluded that FPCC is a combine “detrimental to public interest”. The provinces of Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia took FPCC to Ontario court. However, the court acquitted FPCC from the allegation in 1932 (Wise and Glassman, p. 24).

Other government initiatives to revitalize Canadian cinema include the creation of the National Film Board (NFB) and the Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC), and the introduction of Capital Cost Allowance (CCA). The NFB was created in 1939 to produce and distribute films designated to help Canadians in all parts of Canada to understand the ways of living and the problems of Canadians in other parts. The government introduced a 50 percent capital cost allowance (CCA) to encourage private investment in Canadian films in 1954. In 1968, the Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC) was established to stimulate feature film production. Despite the NFB, CCA, and the CFDC, the main problems of the Canadian film—distribution and exhibition—remained. Films were being produced in Canada, but were getting little playtime in theaters because of existing arrangements. In response to this situation, Secretary of State Hugh Faulkner negotiated a voluntary quota agreement with Famous Player and Odeon in 1975 (Wise and Glassman, p. 45). As part of the agreement the chains were supposed to guarantee a minimum of four weeks per theater per year to Canadian films. However, the theater chains did not comply with the agreement.

The last serious attempt to control the film distribution market in Canada was taken by Federal Communications Minister Flora MacDonald in 1987. The minister tabled her Film Products Importation Bill with a view to introducing a licensing system for all film distributors in Canada. If the Bill had been passed, it would have limited foreign firms to distributing their own films or films for which they had the world rights. However, the Bill did not proceed because of pressure from the American distributing companies and their allies in Canada (SAGIT, 1999, p. 14).

Today, film distribution and exhibition in Canada is controlled by the subsidiaries of American companies. Since the 1920s, Hollywood has considered Canada as a part of its domestic market and has sold Canadian and American rights to films as a single package (Magder and Burston, 2001). As a result, Canadian distributors have access only to those films that have been picked over by the large US distributors. The lion's share of film distribution revenues in Canada flows south of the border, contributing further to the under-capitalization of Canadian production activities. According to Statistics Canada (2000), in 1997-98, there were 178 distribution companies in Canada and 10 percent of these were foreign controlled. However, foreign controlled companies generated more than \$200 million dollars, which is 79 percent of the theatrical distribution market in Canada. Most of the revenues from distribution in Canada are generated by foreign productions. In 1999, English language Canadian films received a mere 0.5 percent of ticket sales across the

country while in Quebec French Language films received 7 percent of the theatrical gross (Kelly, 2001).

On average, the NFB is involved in the production of between 80 and 100 films a year and television is the only medium through which they reach audiences. It is difficult for Canadian filmmakers to gain access to Canadian theater screens because the major Hollywood studios own or control the production companies, the distribution companies that supply theater chains with films, and Canada's principal theater chains. Nearly all Canadians go to movies, thereby contributing to the development of American film production.

Compared to the Canadian situation, Indian films dominated the theaters in Bangladeshi territory until the mid 1960s when the government banned the exhibition of Indian films after a war with India. Before the ban, distributors and exhibitors preferred to import Indian films rather than patronizing local films. However, there was no vertical integration between the segments of the industry within the country or across the border. In recent years, Indian films have reached Bangladeshi audiences through cable television and are driving out audiences of theaters. There is also pressure on the government from Indian film producers and Bangladeshi film distributors to withdraw the ban on the import of Indian films.

Telecommunication

The American influence on the Canadian telecommunication industry works through strategic alliances between industries of the two countries. In the early days of telegraph in Canada, telegraph companies were integrated with the US industry: in central Canada they were integrated through cartelization and exclusive interconnection agreements, and in Atlantic region by lease and ownership (Babe, 1990). The telegraph companies initiated telephony in Canada. Dominion and Montreal telegraph companies developed telephony in Ontario and Quebec, and Western Union in parts of Maritimes from 1878 to 1880 (Winseck, 1998). Dominion Telegraph used the Bell patent while Western Union and its associate Montreal Telegraph used the Edison patent for telephony. Dominion lost its patent right in 1879 when it failed to acquire US\$100,000 necessary to become the sole owner of the Bell patent in Canada. Subsequently, the patent was sold to National Bell Telephone Company (the predecessor to AT&T) of Boston, Massachusetts, which was also the holder of the Bell telephone patent for the USA at that time. Babe (1988, p. 65) argues, "In this way Canadian telephony fell under US control less than four years after its inception".

Babe goes on to say that in 1880, National Bell of the USA appointed its Canadian subsidiary, the Bell Telephone Company of Canada, and signed an agreement with Western Union that gave Bell the right to concentrate on telephone while Western Union concentrated on the telegraph business. Within a year, Bell

Canada had acquired all remaining telephone plant in Canada. However, the federal government cancelled the Bell's patent in 1885, opening the field for entrance by independent companies. Despite the loss of the patent, Bell still was in an advantageous position. Under the Bell charter, it had the power to construct lines in any public place without the authorization of the municipalities or provinces. On the other hand, independent companies were supposed to obtain permission from the municipalities for installation of lines.

After losing the patent, Bell concentrated on Ontario and Quebec, the most lucrative areas for telephone business, abandoning the Maritimes and British Columbia. It also undertook rapid construction of long distance lines which gave it a further advantage over independent telecommunications companies. Over the years, Bell dominated the Canadian telecommunication scene by acquiring independent telecommunication companies, ousting rivals through predatory pricing, refusing to interconnect, striking exclusive covenants with railways, and applying other restrictive trade practices. Until the mid-20th century, American telecommunication giant AT&T (American Telephone and Telegraph Company) controlled the core of the Canadian telecommunication system, mainly controlling Bell Canada and its manufacturing arm Northern Electric. Winseck (p. 150) observes that another significant US owner of the Canadian telephone companies was General Telephone and Electronics (GTE). GTE owned majority stocks in British Columbia Telephone and Quebec telephones through its holding company, Anglo-Canadian Telephone

(Smythe, p. 151). Mosco and D. Schiller (2001, p. 7) write that Canadian capital supplanted American control from 1950s through mid-1970s. During this time, Bell Canada also gradually reduced its ties to AT&T. However, the telecommunications trade liberalization after the US-Canada Free Trade Agreements and WTO Telecom Agreements has invited many foreign, mainly American companies into the Canadian market, and Canadian companies have formed strategic alliances with American companies.

Today, BCE Inc, MTS Communications Inc., TELUS Corporation (TELUS), Saskatchewan Telecommunications (SaskTel), AT&T Canada Inc., Call-Net Enterprises Inc. (Call-Net), GT Group Telecom Inc. (GT Group), Futureway Communications Inc. (Futureway), Microcell Telecom Inc. (Microcell), and Rogers Communications Inc. (Rogers) are the major players in the telecommunication sector in Canada (CRTC, 2001). BCE, the largest telecommunications holding company in Canada, owns directly or indirectly, partially or fully, Bell Canada, Aliant Telecom Inc., Norwestel Inc., and BCE Nexxia Inc. BCE also has significant share in CTV, specialty channels, Bell ExpressVu, and the Globe and Mail. Bell Canada, the nation's dominant telephone service company, sold 20 percent of its stake to the US telephone giant Ameritech. SBC Communications Inc., a US company, holds a minority interest in Bell Canada. Other US companies Verizon Communications Inc., AT&T Corporation, and Sprint Corporation have minority share in TELUS, AT&T Canada, and Call-Net respectively (CRTC, 2001, p. 11-12). Furthermore, in August

1999 Rogers sold a \$1 billion stake in its mobile telephone to AT&T and British Telecom. These strategic alliances between Canadian and US telecommunication companies have reestablished American influence on the Canadian telecommunication market.

While telecommunication in Canada was developed by the subsidiaries of American companies in its early days, in both Bangladesh and India, telecommunication was developed under strict government control. Although Canadian entrepreneurs replaced the Americans in Canadian telecommunications in the 1960s and 1970s, however, the presence of American companies tended to rise after the signing of the US-Canada Free Trade Agreement and the WTO Telecommunications Agreement. Many American companies bought shares in Canadian companies which reestablish American domination in the Canadian telecom market. Similarly in Bangladesh, the telecommunication sector has been liberalized after the WTO agreement and as a result many foreign, including Indian, companies are coming into the market. However, the scope for Indian companies in the Bangladeshi telecom market is limited because of the European and North American telecom giants. Indian telecom companies can have a share in the Bangladeshi market through cooperation with the giants and one Indian company, MTNL, has already secured a deal with WorldTel to install 300,000 digital lines in Bangladesh.

This chapter has analyzed the media content flow between the US and Canada and compared the media content flow between the US and Canada with the same between India and Bangladesh by providing a sector-by-analysis.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the arguments presented in previous chapters and identifies some areas for future research.

This thesis began with an aim to find answers to two questions—one involving media content flows between Bangladesh and India, and the other dealing with the similarities and differences between the Bangladesh-India situation and the Canada-US situation. To find answers to these questions, a history of the development of mass media in both Bangladesh and India was provided in the second chapter. The chapter demonstrated that mass media emerged in these countries during British colonial rule when the present Bangladesh was a part of undivided India. At the time, development of media in all parts of India was uneven. The growth of media was concentrated in the present Indian territories which include Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay, and Madras thereby limiting their growth in the present Bangladeshi territory. Moreover, Indian media grew steadily after the end of British rule in 1947, while Bangladeshi media suffered seriously because of the Bangladesh-Pakistan war in 1971. However, the struggle between political power and media institutions in order to establish independent media is a common feature in both countries. In spite of a similar environment in these countries, Indian media grew enormously because they had a huge domestic market and were able to recover costs in their own market. Because of the early and steady development of its media industries, India is in a far better

position compared to Bangladesh in the communication sector. By taking these factors into consideration, the thesis dealt with present day media content flow between Bangladesh and India in chapter three.

The third chapter showed the one-way media content flow between Bangladesh and India with Bangladesh at the receiving end. Indian media materials access Bangladeshi audiences through newsstands, state-owned television (BTV), and cable services. Privatization and liberalization of the media market in both Bangladesh and India, and an Indian revolution in satellite broadcasting technology, have paved the way for the dominant flow of Indian media content into Bangladesh. The availability of Indian media materials has affected both the culture and the industries of Bangladesh. Indian television channels are attempting to create cultural homogenization by providing the same programming to both Indian and Bangladeshi audiences. Particularly, the presence of Hindi language in Bangladesh is a matter of grave concern because already a good number of children have been exposed to Hindi language and many Hindi words have become part of their vocabulary.

The exposure of Bangladeshi audiences to Indian television channels has fragmented the audience of BTV which is now at risk of losing advertising revenue. Film-based Indian satellite television channels have contributed to creating a slump in the Bangladeshi film industry by driving out middle and upper class audiences from cinema halls. Total film production per year also did not increase significantly in the late 1980s and 1990s. The drop in the numbers of audiences in cinema halls has led to

the closure of many cinema halls. The popularity of Hindi films also tempted Bangladeshi producers to imitate Bombay blockbusters in order to attract audiences without developing their own genres in film.

After examining the media content flow between Bangladesh and India, this thesis analyzed the similarities and differences between the Bangladesh-India situation and the US-Canada situation in terms of media content flow in chapter four. This chapter depicted how media content predominantly flows from the USA to Canada. Both Bangladesh and Canada feel the same pain—the pain of being located beside mighty neighbors. Like the Indian media content flow to Bangladesh, the US media content accesses Canadian audiences through newsstands, the state-owned television network (CBC) and private networks, cable services, and Canadian theaters. The early development of mass media in the United States, US diplomatic pressure on behalf of its media companies, private ownership of media in Canada, and the inability of the Canadian government to control the private sector are responsible for the availability of US media content in Canada.

Both Bangladesh and Canada are the victims of the development of mass media which occurred in their neighboring countries. However, the victimization was not imposed unilaterally on these countries; rather, the ruling elites and business entrepreneurs in these countries cooperated with their foreign counterparts. In the case of print media, US magazines dominate newsstand sales in Canada. In Bangladesh, however, newsstand sale revenue for Indian magazines is low compared to the sale of

local magazines. The linguistic similarity between the United States and a large part of Canada, low production and distribution costs of American magazines in the Canadian market, and the pressure of the US government on Canada have helped to create and maintain the US magazine market in Canada. On the other hand, language acts as a natural barrier to the flow of Indian magazines to Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, almost all people speak in Bengali while Indian mass magazines are published in Hindi.

In the case of television programming, in both Bangladesh and Canada, state-owned television networks import foreign programming. The prime time schedules of Canadian television are dominated by American programming; meanwhile the same is true of Bangladeshi television which is dominated by Indian programming. Cable services were developed in Canada to distribute American television signals just as in Bangladesh where it emerged to distribute Indian satellite television signals. However, Canada has introduced quotas to limit foreign content on Canadian networks and cable services, in Bangladesh, there are no restriction on television or cable content in terms of its country of origin.

In the case of film, the Canadian situation is completely different from the Bangladeshi situation. In Canada, either Hollywood majors or their subsidiaries control the distribution and exhibition of theatrical films. Hollywood films dominate Canadian theaters while Canadian films have taken refuge in television to reach audiences. On the other hand, Indian films are not allowed for exhibition in

Bangladeshi theaters. Indian films reach Bangladeshi audiences through cable services. However, there is a strong pressure on the Bangladesh government from both local film exhibitors and Indian film producers to withdraw the ban on the exhibition of Indian films.

In the telecommunication sector, in both Canada and Bangladesh foreign companies are penetrating more deeply after the WTO Telecommunication Agreement. Many Canadian telecommunication companies have forged alliances with American companies as part of risk reducing arrangements in the telecommunications business, but there are no such arrangements between Bangladeshi and Indian companies.

Finally, examining the Bangladesh-India situation and the US-Canada situation in terms of media content flow, this thesis observes that it is neither desirable nor possible to stop the flow of foreign cultural materials to any country, particularly to a country with a poor background in media products. In this current age of media globalization, private media companies, irrespective of their country of origin, will seek markets wherever they can be found. Supranational organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO have been creating a favorable environment throughout the world for the free flow of capital by pursuing the policy of privatization and market liberalization. In the process of media globalization, weak states are poised to suffer a negative balance in the case of media content flow at both regional and international levels. To resist this imbalance, this thesis does not

advocate that weak states like Bangladesh in South Asia and Canada in North America should close their windows to foreign cultural goods, rather it suggests that they should work at national, regional, and international levels to safeguard their cultures and cultural industries. This thesis does not criticize the media content flow from one country to another, but raises questions regarding the one-way flow. It believes that media cultural content should not flow from one country to the other at the cost of the culture or its industries in the recipient country and emphasizes two-way flow between states.

Areas for future research

The present study can lead researchers to conduct future studies on various issues concerning media and communication. The major areas for future research are as follows:

1. *Privatization and liberalization*: Privatization of state owned media and liberalization of the communication sector in developing countries should be a principal focus of political economic research. Currently, privatization and liberalization, advocated by the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO, have been changing the mass media environment in many countries and reorganizing the media content flow at regional and international levels. Further research on the media content flow between India and Bangladesh should examine in detail what will be the nature of the flow after the

completion of privatization and liberalization in the communication sector in these countries.

2. *Commodification and media*: Future research should look into how media industries produce and sell commodities in both Bangladesh and India. Mass media, as an industry, produce ideological and audience commodities and help to sell consumer goods through advertising. Therefore, it is a vital area of political economic research in both developing and developed countries to examine the media's role in selling commodities.
3. *Loss of advertising revenue*: An in-depth study can be conducted on how Bangladeshi television networks lose advertising revenue because of Indian television channels which reach Bangladeshi audiences through cable. A similar study has been conducted in Canada by Robert Babe (1975) to show how Canadian broadcasters lost advertising revenue because of the availability of American television channels.
4. *Strategic alliances between media companies*: Strategic alliances between Canadian and US media companies tend to be a vital area for future research. Researchers can look at how these alliances affect media content flows between these countries.
5. *Impact studies*: Detailed studies can be conducted in both Bangladesh and Canada to judge the impact of foreign media content on local cultures and cultural industries.

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