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## **Media Industry Trend in Bangladesh: Today and Tomorrow**

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### **Abstract**

With an assumption of having potential market for quality education on TV, Film and Media in Bangladesh, the present research was conducted involving primary and secondary data sources simultaneously. Ninety five (95) respondents include professionals from the universities and institutions offering media education, HR heads of media houses, media professionals, job seekers, students of different universities on related subjects and potential students of different colleges. The findings show that demand for media professionals is high whereas the supply is poor. While the young generation is eager and capable to study and spend money for getting quality media education (TV production, editing, sound engineering, film making etc.), there is still a little scope for obtaining such education. The paper argues that developing a media industry focusing on quality media education is a call of the day and will in the long run keep cultural orientation global, contribute in GDP growth, and increase skilled human resources migration all over the world. This is the high time to initiate and enhance the facility and standard of media education in Bangladesh. We must understand that every single day is crucial as potential candidates are looking for other options available (may be low quality) in the country or abroad (with high price).

Bangladesh as a nation turns 43-years-old in 2014. This report will review the trends and developments of media industry in Bangladesh in the last four decades. The report will also try to forecast the trends of the media industry in the coming decade after which Bangladesh will be a 50-year-old nation.

In the contemporary global economic system, Bangladesh is still at the receiving end. The peripheral capitalist countries of the Third World like Bangladesh have become the market of globalization. Along with the industry of readymade garments cashing in on 'cheap' labor and the telecommunications sector based on direct foreign direct investment, there arrived in the 1990s a class of traders who mainly imported products from foreign countries. A new entry into the world of communication and expansion is the media. Apart from a few media houses, maximum number of print and broadcast houses and channels came into being in the last two decades. It is to be noted that these two decades saw the emergence of globalization based on the idea of a free market economy. Consequently, an influence of capitalist globalization is felt in the media institutions. Moreover, a country of 150+ million people meant a big potential market. From the traders' point of view, there was a need to change people into consumers, and developing consumer culture is an essential prerequisite of the prevailing economic process. Added to this is the fact that while supplementary budget is being allocated in every financial year for the military forces of the country with a view to protecting the land of the country, no safeguard has been ensured through plan or budget to protect our indigenous and unique culture from the influence of other cultures. Since most of the media leaders and professionals are not properly knowledgeable and sufficiently skilled to survive and compete with the well-equipped western media giants, there is a strong possibility that our cultural values and humanforce will gradually be undermined and abused. Keeping this concern in mind, the present paper explores the paradox and recommends ways of resolving the paradox.

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**Objectives of the Study**

The broad objective of this study is to analyze the trends of media industry in Bangladesh in the last four decades and the future potentiality of the media industry in Bangladesh. More specific objectives include:

- i) To find out the current market demand for media studies
- ii) To analyze the level of competition in media industry
- iii) To test and report the technical feasibility
- iv) To analyze the critical risk factors that might affect the business and to suggest the ways to mitigate them
- v) To report the economic effects through the aforementioned project in Bangladesh

**Media Industry in Bangladesh: Trends and Developments**

The print media has been the most accessible and reliable source of news and information until the ‘channel boom’ in the first decade of the millennium. Now-a-days, television channels mostly owned by private companies are the biggest source of news and entertainment in Bangladesh. There are about 30 television stations and more than a dozen is waiting for broadcasting permission. Added to this is the new trend of radio, boosted up by the radio applications available in mobile phones. In 2013, there were 15 AM and 18 FM radio stations. FM radio channels broadcast hourly news, traffic updates, and stock updates along with talk shows, interviews, and music.

In the 1990s, the Internet emerged as a new media with its users limited only in the urban areas. Recently, however, the scenario has changed and the Internet has reached rural areas too. The number of Internet users in Bangladesh reached 35.43 million at the end of April in 2014. The Internet can be used in two ways: mobile and broadband. According to the state-run Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) statistics, around 95 percent people (33.33 million) use internet through mobile network and the remaining ones (1.71 million) use

broadband internet. There are around 7,000,000 internet users in Bangladesh who read daily newspapers on the internet.

The following graphs show the growth of media in Bangladesh:

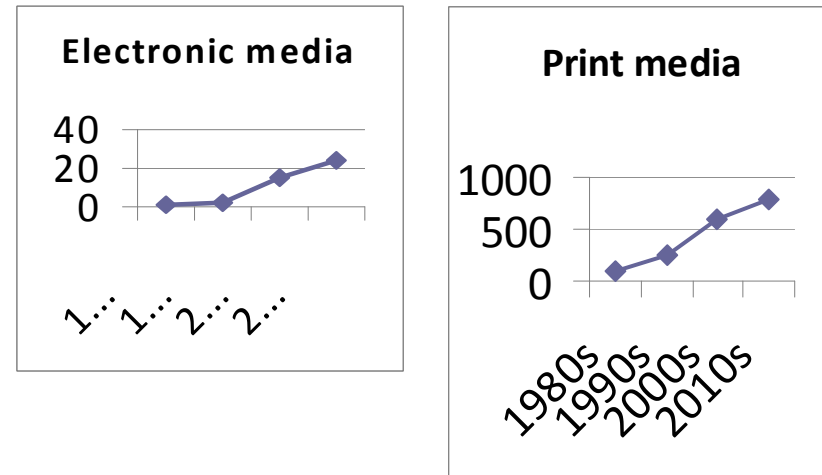


Figure 1: The Growth of Media in Bangladesh

The upward curving growth indicates that the industry is in growth stage but the market size will be expanding at a higher rate since ever.

Added to this is the film industry in Bangladesh which has about 50 years of experience and has released more than 2000 films (94 in 2013) but has always been unstable. Since 1990s, films in Bangladesh have been witnessing a sharp decline in quality though some films managed to fare well in the domestic market. It was at the beginning of the new millennium that skilled filmmakers and informed entrepreneurs joined the film industry. The most important achievements have, however, been made by the independent filmmakers which include Tareque Masud’s *Matir Moina*, or *The Clay Bird* (2002) and Mostofa Sarwar Faruki’s *Television* (2013). But most of the films have failed to make business having huge competition from the Hollywood and ‘Bollywood’ films. While some innovative and successful initiatives

have been taken by a couple of producers and directors to develop the market and quality of films in Bangladesh in the recent years, the condition is still less than satisfactory in the national context. Due to the lack of research, technological knowledge, and exposure to the contemporary world, films in Bangladesh lag significantly behind.

Vis-à-vis the mixed scenario of some industries booming and some collapsing, the status of the media in Bangladesh is far from satisfactory. For example, according to the Reporters without Borders Press Freedom Index in 2014, Bangladesh media is ranked at 146th out of 180 countries of the world. This is a downward development as Bangladesh media was ranked at 144th in 2013 and 129th in 2012. However, the situation is not that bleak as there are certain rays of hope. For example, the media industry in Bangladesh can command a mammoth market if quality technological and creative knowledge become available and affordable in our country. Moreover, unlike popular assumptions, people – both parents and students – are increasingly interested in studying, for instance, filmmaking and audio engineering. The market says (based on a survey) that students (and their families) said “Yes” to a question that reads: “Will your family allow you to do media education?” 55.32% respondents said that they and their family are ready and can avail degrees on media if the institute ensures quality education.

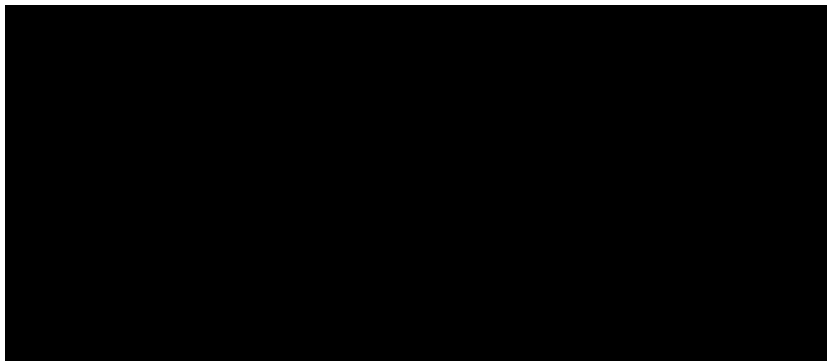


Figure 2: YES or NO to Media Studies

Thus, the current trend of media industry indicates a positive upward sloping movement, but, unfortunately, the quality of education and production is not up to the mark. The situation is ‘vulnerable,’ because the human resources we have, particularly in this sector, are, first, not skilled and educated enough to produce quality materials and, second, not committed enough to the development of their self and the industry as a whole. The field verification and profound study on this vulnerability made for the present paper shows that lack of quality education service is the major reason of the backwardness of the media industry in Bangladesh.

**Existing Media Education in Bangladesh**

Criteria	(Supply) Native Educational Institution (Yearly)	(Supply) Educational Institute (Abroad) (Yearly)	Total Supply (Yearly)	Total Demand by TV/ News papers/ Faculty/ Radio (Yearly)	Supply Deficit (Yearly)
Journalism	250-350	7-12	257-362	1000-1700	743-1338
Broadcast Engineer	–	1-2	1-2	20-50	19-48
Sound Engineer	–	1-2	1-2	50-100	49-99
Graphics & Animation	30-50 (poor)	2-5	32-55	200-300	168-245
Film Making (Producers-Program/News)	110-120	2-3	112-123	150-300	40-177
<b>Total</b>	<b>390-520</b>	<b>13 – 24</b>	<b>403 - 546</b>	<b>1,420 - 2,450</b>	<b>1,019 - 2,127</b>

Table 1.1 An Overview of the Existing Media Education in Bangladesh and Current Demand-Supply of Media Graduates

There are a few universities in Bangladesh that offer media studies, being established and operated locally. The following survey shows that 51.06% students said that they will choose to study media if the education is available in recognized institutes with sufficient and specialized amenities at hand.

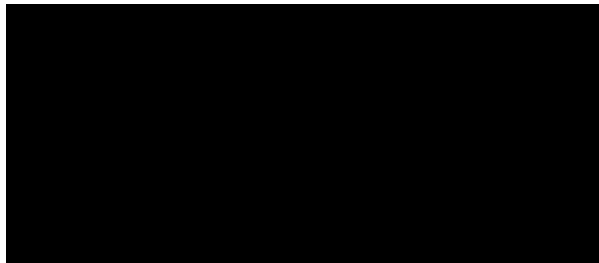


Figure 3: Current Demand and Supply of Media Graduates

The graph above indicates that the native universities and institutes produce 21.66% of the total graduates projected. Many attempts have been made by the government and private universities with funds from domestic and international sources since 2000 to promote the development of media studies in Bangladesh but the significant demand-supply deficit still exist. The aforementioned table narrates that only a moderate number of graduates major in Journalism are being supplied but all the graduates of different courses are not adequately produced by the native institutions.

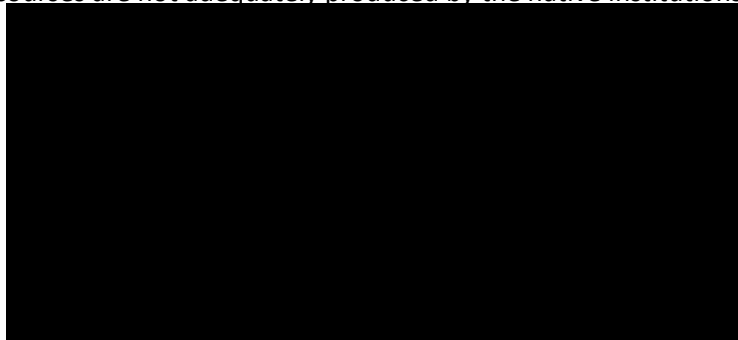


Figure 4: Chart Overview of Demand-Supply of Media Graduates for the last three decades

### **Current Buyers of the Service**

Our survey shows that the present buyers of the service (i.e. media education) include students passing HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate), A-Levels (similar class of 11-12), students completing 4 years Graduation (Honors, BBA, similar class of 13-16), students completing Masters (MBA, similar class of 16-17), students have at least passed Intermediate Level ( Class-12), Neighbourhood Foreign Students (Students seeking for lower cost) e.g. students of Philippines, Thailand, Nepal, Malaysia, and India (West Bengal), Professionals who are seeking a Master Degree (Evening) in Media Studies or short term certificate courses as well as the ones who have interest and creative talent in the field of media more specifically in film making, sound composing, photography and related belongs to our target customers' list.

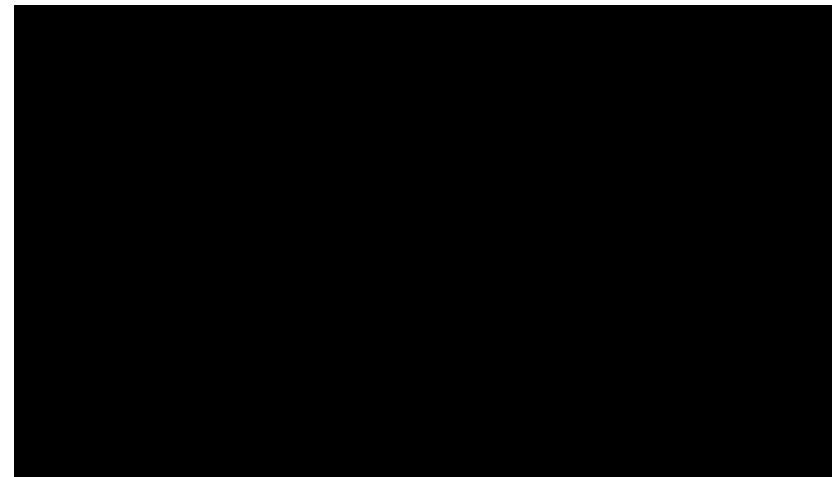


Figure 5: Yearly Rate of Students Admission to Media Studies in Comparison with Other Faculties

**Forecasting the Potential Demand for the Service**

While conducting the survey we got an incredible response from the potential students. 60.04% of the students said they will choose an institute for media studies which will provide quality education rather going abroad for the same purpose.

**Growth Rate of Demand for Film & Media Studies**

Year/ Institute	Stamford University	ULAB	DIU	Increasing Demand of Graduates	Total	Growth Rate (%)
2008	45	-	-	900	945	-
2009	60	60	3 0	1100	125 0	32.28
2010	80	90	4 0	1400	161 0	28.80
2011	150	100	6 0	1600	191 0	18.63
2012	180	120	9 0	1935	232 5	21.73

Compounded Annual Growth Rate	29.21%
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Table 2

**Projected Demand for the Film & Media Studies**

Year	Compounded Annual Growth Rate	Total Demand for the Service
2013	29.21%	504
2014		651
2015		841
2016		1,087
2017		1,404

Table 3

Here the market indicates 29.21% compounded growth rate but, due to the lack of resources, the number of customers/graduating students is low. If we consider both the growth of the service and the growth of the media graduates demanded by the industry, the growth rate will become higher which is shown and discussed in the next pages.

**Growth Rate of Demand for Media Graduates**

The demand of media graduates in Bangladesh during the period 2005-2012 as presented below has been complied by survey:

Year	Total Demand of Human Resource in TV/Newspaper/Radio/Film/Online	Change (%)
2005	4,000	-
2006	5,900	47.5
2007	7,900	33.9
2008	9,589	21.4
2009	11,000	14.7
2010	12,450	13.0
2011	15,100	21.3
2012	18,765	24.3

Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)	46.14%
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Table 4: Demand for Media Graduates in the Year 2005-2012

Over the course of 8 years, the demand for human resources grew from 4,000 to 18,765 and its compound annual growth rate, or its overall growth rate, is 46.14%. CAGR demonstrates the increasing demand of HR due to rapid growth of this industry over a period of time, providing a clearer picture of annual growth. However, although in the aforesaid table the starting demand was 4,000 and ended with 18,765

## **Significant Reasons behind the Growing Demand for Media Education Media Studies**

### ***Competition among TV Reality Shows***

If we look back at last 8 years of the TV program trend in Bangladesh, we will have a clear scenario that the numbers of TV reality shows have been significantly increased and also it's being still increasing and a healthy competition among TV channels is seen. More reality shows will require more skilled media professionals but still the supply is too limited regard to the demand of human resource in this particular sector.

### ***Reduction of Play Grounds and Outside Security***

Bangladesh is well known as one of the populous countries in this world. From the last decade major cities of the country have become densely populated and consequently open grounds are occupied for the commercial spaces, industries and residence. At the moment, city dwellers cannot even think about a single room to live in, a garden to breathe, a ground to walk on, and a wide-safe road to drive. Thus, roads are becoming narrow; narrow roads result traffic jam, severe and frequent accidents and all these compel people to stay at home. Excessive people means excessive unemployment rate, higher unemployment rate results increasing rate of crime which also compel people to stay at home. Developers do not relinquish a slice of land for the children to play; lack of playground compels children to stay at home.

Staying home during the leisure means spending time in front of television and the above situation indicates the dwellers of the city will pass more time by watching TV. Hence, the demand of TV channels and TV programs will be enormously increased by the very next decade.

### ***Projected demand for Graduates***

The demand for media graduates including media related short courses degree is growing at a higher rate in Bangladesh than the production of graduates due to

- the growing market size,
- the high price margin,
- career consciousness,
- urbanization and poor availability of competing services; which are sometime inferior in quality and innovation,
- and the distinct trend in the new generation of population to switch from traditional career choice to Career in Media.

On the basis of past Trend of graduates demanded of 4,000 graduates in 2005 which increased to 18,765 graduates in 2012, the demand of media graduates & masters has been assumed to rise to 55,756 in the year 2015.

### **Existing Arrangement to Meet the Demand of Media Graduates**

A discussion with the HR manager of Television Channel, expert in the sector, indicate that there is a severe shortage of media studies graduates in the country. A very insignificant supply is available from the native sources comparing the increasing demand. A small portion of total supply is supplied by the foreign Institutions located abroad.

Although there is a demand supply deficiency a number of Universities or Institutions are producing graduates and masters in media studies in our country. Among all the public universities only Dhaka University recently initiated Media Studies on October 2012. A few private universities started their journey in this sector a bit earlier. The pioneer university in Media Studies is Stamford University in private sector; started Faculty of Film & Media in the year 2005. On the contrary, departments devoted to the study of journalism and mass communication are pioneers in the field of journalism and have been skilled workforce since 1997. Jahangirnagar University opened the department of Journalism and Media Studies in 2011 and has been thriving since then. Presently, there are 12 universities and institutes different in size in terms of number of courses offered offering media studies.

Among the listed universities we are presenting below a yearly average production capability of competitive institutes:

Where are they currently buying the service from?	
Public Universities	Private Universities/Ins.
University of Dhaka	Stamford University
Jahangir Nagar University	ULAB
Rajshahi University	North South University
	Daffodil International University
	AIUB
	Pathshala Institute

Table 5

**Customer Feedback**

The survey reveals both side of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction regarding the services they are receiving from the countrywide institutions. Zero percent of the total respondent is fully satisfied and only 20% of the customers are moderately satisfied because the degree has a certain demand in this country. A significant number of students demanded a well-resourced practical laboratory with contemporary instruments which are totally unavailable in their own campus. Along with these unavailable practical instruments they have another unfilled desire that the certificates are being achieved should have an international recognition.

**Customers Expectation**

When we visited the market (different private & public universities) the current buyers (Students) showed a desire of changing the service they are now buying. Majority of the respondent wants to have some classes with renowned professional (director, editor, cinematographer, journalist etc.) as a guest lecturer or as a guest speaker. They specified it more that

they dream to share the practical experiences of popular & successful International Directors. 80% of the current students studying media related courses agreed that the certificate they are trying to avail must have international recognition which will open the door of international career opportunities. Only 30% students think that they have well-equipped practical laboratory and they are moderately satisfied but rest of the students strongly agreed that they must be taught practically using contemporary technologies since the channels are using present-day technologies in Bangladesh.

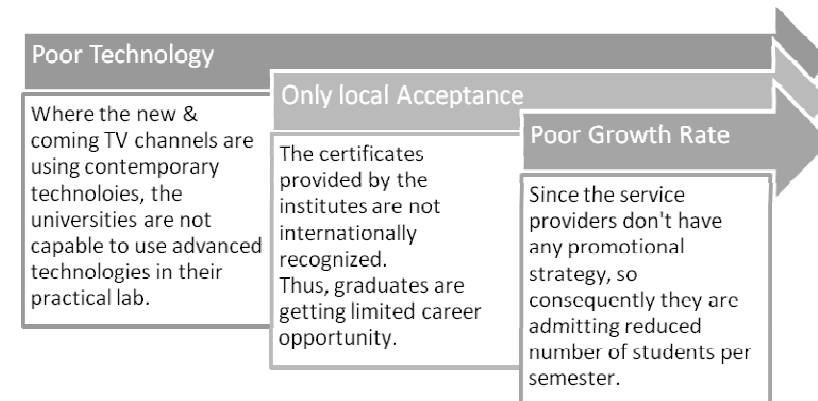


Figure 6

In Bangladesh there are two parts of technology used in television houses; one is for broadcast and another for news and newsroom management. As far as broadcast is concerned, all satellite TV stations of Bangladesh are using most modern technology for synchronizing with the technology of satellite service providers. Internally, for production, all television companies are using modern computers which are compatible with the most modern production and special effects software. But, in newsroom management, a few are using software like Octopus or any software of similar standard.

Most of the TV newsrooms use computer for typing and printing of the script. BTV, the government owned TV, has the capacity but the company has no inclination for using modern technology any way. Bangladesh Betar, the state owned radio service has vast capacity in terms of coverage and ability but again similar to the BTV, they are not much tech-savvy. Private FM radio stations are a bit more technology loving. In at least broadcast and production, they are using modern technology. In newsroom the Newsboss is the popular software in Bangladesh.

### **Socio-Economic Impact**

#### ***Economic Impact***

When it comes to establish a new business in the country it is quite important to visualize the impact it will have on an economy as a whole. Before we understand what factors are responsible for economic growth? We need to have an idea about the sectors that are accountable for the economic growth. There are three main sectors:-

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Service

If we take a look at the past records it will be seen that among all three sectors, contribution of the service sector has been consistently lower and media industry being a part of it has a huge role to play in.

The progress of the media industry has been slower due to lack of resources (adequate technology), lack of knowledge and absence of expertise to deal in the field. If we can start a full-fledged media institute having a capability to possess the required resources which will produce well skilled professionals will be able to make a difference. Animation, filmmaking and audio courses will bring a change in the current scenario of film industry. The courses which will be offered must be aligned with the current global media trend. Therefore, contemporary and trendy institutes specialized in media education will not only produce global

experts but it will also help the nation to reach the required standard.

We all are quite aware about the fact that our film industry is not still able to produce good quality films with good video quality, it's not still capable of producing a film that will not only last in the memory of the viewers but will be also be able to compete globally. Not a single movie till now has reached the doors of KAN or Oscar which is quite disappointing. Institutes or universities like SAE being a hi-tech based institute will be able to cover up the problems that are being currently faced. It will change the video quality as well as it will change the quality of directors. When this trend will be laid down automatically the consumer group will shift their taste and will prefer more of local movies and local music than foreign movies. This will aid in reducing the outflow of local currency from the country.

A recent report of Bangladesh Cable TV Viewers Forum (BCVF) depicts 70% of the total television viewer of Bangladesh are watching Indian channel. According to BCVF there are about 60 million satellite television viewers in Bangladesh. Viewers claimed that the program quality of our local TV channels are not up to the mark reason being they choose to watch foreign TV channels. In this regard, the advertiser are more interested to telecast their TV commercials in Indian TV channels which are being frequently watched by Bangladeshi satellite TV viewers evaluating the TRP rate. Thus, local TV channels are continuously losing their earnings and as a whole a significant amount of foreign remittance is snatched out from the country.

Quality institute specialized in media education will contribute to produce & broadcast good quality programs inside & outside the boundary. Along with this quality production institutes will also export skilled human resources to the rest of the world. In this way we will manage to increase the inflow of foreign remittance which will increase the foreign reserve and which will also increase the value of taka with respect to dollar. As a result the trade



deficit will be decreased which is a fair indicator of economic growth.

Compared to other fields, media industry is still growing and promises to grow in an everlasting manner. There are 28 channels and still more to come which means more job opportunities. More job creation means a rise in the household income. And a rise in the household income will increase both government earnings and private investments .i.e. more new business will be established creating more employment opportunities and so the cycle goes on. In addition to that it will increase the living standard of the people. An increase in the government earning will increase daily expenditure by developing infrastructures, by doing social works, by giving subsidies to small organization which in turn will help them to earn additional revenue which will again contribute to GDP.

We can finally summarize the fact that creation of jobs will eventually increase consumption, government expenditure and private investment which will eventually contribute to GDP an indicator of economic growth.

### ***Socio-cultural Impact***

Similarly this growing industry will also contribute to the socio-cultural value. It is now a matter of fact that the current generations are more prone to watch foreign movies or listening to music and why not? , which is far better than the local ones. But there are new promises to break the chain and to set up a trend that will hold the traditional values among the upcoming generation and cultivate more of it. Culture and beliefs will no longer be confined to geographical locality but will be shared and dispersed across nations.

### **Conclusion**

This article explores the ways media education can contribute to economy, add up to the socio-cultural values, and make effective use of manpower, and, therefore, argues that media education has a dazzling future in Bangladesh. To meet the ever increasing

demand of the media professionals which has a growth rate of 41.69% (due to change in the shift of consumer's taste) compared to its limited supply, what is required is to identify the potentiality and to develop and equip educational spaces and institutes that will help to produce skilled professionals. The paper is optimistic in its assertion (and forecast) that the establishment of quality media institutes and schools of audio engineering is not only necessary but also highly viable in the country.

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