

WHO OWNS THE MEDIA IN BANGLADESH ?



Bangladesh, which has seen a dramatic growth of various media in the past decade, is also considered by international media watch groups as a country with a very poor record of media freedom. The country has also witnessed a serious erosion of democracy. This seemingly contradictory trend – media proliferation and weak media freedom - calls for an exploration of the Bangladeshi mediascape, particularly who owns the media and what relationship the media has with politics. Since the media no longer solely *informs*, it also *shapes* politics. As such, media accountability and transparency are vital for the effective functioning of democracies and a vital indicator of a vibrant democracy. A lack of transparency in media ownership implies that vested interest groups may skew public attention by creating media hype. Understanding media ownership in a given country is, therefore, essential to map its political and social trajectory.

It is against this background that this report has explored the question: who owns the media in Bangladesh? Relevant information and statistics on the media in Bangladesh—both in terms of numbers of media outlets and their typologies, e.g., print, electronic, radio and web-based etc., the nature of media ownership and the scope of press freedom are presented in this report. This report is expected to provide insights into the degree of media transparency and accountability in Bangladesh and help chart any potential challenges arising from media ownership patterns.