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Constructing "the Others"

A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of News
Media Portrayals of (Street) Children in
Bangladesh

Master's thesis in Childhood Studies

Supervisor: Linn Cathrin Lorgen

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Abstract

The phenomenon of children in street situations has been a persistent issue in Bangladesh. However, it has gained significant media coverage and sparked ongoing public discourse amid the global pandemic in 2020, which disproportionately affected these children in Bangladesh. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the news coverage of children in street situations over the past two decades in four major newspapers in Bangladesh, namely The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, Dhaka Tribune, The Daily Ittefaq. This thesis uses a multimodal critical discourse analysis framework, drawing inspiration from Machin & Mayr (2012) to conduct an in-depth analysis of texts and images of a dataset of 36 newspaper articles, including news stories, editorials and op-ed pieces.

The findings suggest that the representation of children in street situations in press media is highly influenced by an idealized model of childhood, resulting in predominantly negative and stereotypical portrayals. The analysis also reveals that such portrayals significantly contribute to the process of othering, which disempowers these children by portraying them as ideal victims, stigmatizing them as drug addicts, gangs, threats and oversimplifying policy recommendations through promoting neoliberal ideals of children as objects of investment. This thesis concludes with a call for more balanced and critical news coverage of the phenomenon of children in street situations and a literary initiative for journalists who represent children in the media.

Sammendrag

Fenomenet med barn som lever i gatesituasjoner har vært et vedvarende problem i Bangladesh. Imidlertid har den fått betydelig mediedekning og utløst en pågående offentlig diskurs midt i den globale pandemien i 2020, som uforholdsmessig påvirket barn som lever i gatesituasjoner i Bangladesh. Hensikten med denne oppgaven er å undersøke nyhetsdekningen av barn som har levd i gatesituasjoner de siste to tiårene i fire store aviser i Bangladesh, nemlig The Daily Star, Prothom Alo, Dhaka Tribune, The Daily Ittefaq. Denne oppgaven bruker et multimodalt rammeverk for kritisk diskursanalyse, og henter inspirasjon fra Machin & Mayr (2012) for å gjennomføre en dybdeanalyse av tekster og bilder av et datasett med 36 avisartikler, inkludert nyhetsartikler, lederartikler og op-ed-artikler.

Funnene tyder på at representasjonen av barn som lever i gatesituasjoner i pressemedier er sterkt påvirket av en idealisert barndomsmodell, noe som resulterer i en overveiende negativ og stereotyp fremstilling. Analysen avslørte også at en slik fremstilling bidrar betydelig til prosessen med annet, som gjør disse barna umyndige ved å representere dem som ideelle ofre, stigmatisere dem som trusler og rusmisbrukere, og forenkle politiske anbefalinger ved å legge vekt på utdanning. Denne oppgaven avsluttes med en oppfordring til mer balansert og kritisk nyhetsdekning av fenomenet barn som lever på gaten og et litterært initiativ for journalister som representerer barn i media.

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To mom and dad, I love you and miss you!

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List of Abbreviations

BIDS	Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies
BPC	Bangladesh Press Council
ILO	International Labour Organization
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NTNU	Norwegian University of Science and Technology
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund

1 Introduction

The phenomenon of children in street situations has been a global concern for several decades. These children encounter numerous challenges while living on the streets, such as poverty, limited access to resources, healthcare, protection, and social exclusion. According to UNICEF, more than 150 million children live in street situations worldwide, mainly in developing countries such as Asia, Africa and South America (UNICEF, 2012). Bangladesh is home to approximately 1.5 million children living, working, and surviving on the street (BIDS, 2015). Although the definition varies across time and space, Children in street situations are usually considered minors under 18 who reside on the street full or part-time and earn their living by working on the streets. (Karabanow, 2003). Empirical evidence suggests that children living on the streets have experienced marginalization throughout history and have been viewed as petty thieves, street wandering children, and psychologically deviant (Lalor, 1999). Furthermore, international aid and government organizations label these children as "children in street situations," "hard-to-reach children," "working children," "at-risk children," and "especially disadvantaged children." Scholars argue that discourses of children in street situations normalize the social derivation and stigmatization of impoverished families and children (Aptekar, 1994; Lalor, 1999; Glauser, 2015). A large body of research has documented the process of marginalization of children in street situations in terms of age, social position, street involvement, and policy decisions (Cosgrove, 1990; Rizzini, 1996; Panter-Brick, 2002; Venanzi, 2003). However, relatively few studies have explored the media's role in constructing the image of children in street situations using multimodal critical approaches. The media play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions and policies regarding children living on the street. Van Dijk (2005) states that media influence people, especially marginalized ones, both positively and negatively. On the one hand, media coverage can give minorities a voice to reduce stigmatization and discrimination. Conversely, it can perpetuate stereotypes and reinforce dominant ideologies, leading them to further marginalization. Therefore, this thesis aims to investigate how media represent children in street situations in Bangladesh using a multimodal critical discourse analysis framework. Jones (2012) defines "multimodal critical discourse analysis" as "a critical approach to discourse that focuses on how meaning is constructed through the use of multiple modes of communication, such as text, image, visuals, color, and layout" (p.02). Since print media is multimodal by nature, incorporating various modes into the analysis is essential to explore how print media represent children in street situations, construct their identities, and reproduce dominant ideologies. With that in mind, this thesis aims to investigate news coverage of children in street situations using multimodal critical approaches.

1.1 Background: Children in street situations in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has made significant progress in addressing a number of SDG goals, particularly economic growth and reducing poverty, hunger, and child mortality in the last 52 years since its independence (World Bank, 2015). However, the phenomenon of children in street situations has remained a major concern. UNICEF (2012) estimated that approximately 1.5 million children in Bangladesh live on the streets. By 2024, this number

is expected to reach 1.6 million. Scholars argue that the economic growth strategies intended to integrate into the global economy caused Bangladesh to undergo a radical transformation in terms of widening social gaps between the rich and the poor, urbanization, and the exclusion of many from the development process (Holloway & Valentine, 2000). Many children migrate to the street to find alternative income, and their presence on the street is partly seen as a consequence of the development process. Although economic poverty is considered the main cause of street migration, scholars argue that the cause of migration to the street is multifaced and varied. Conticini & Hulme (2007) show that social factors, such as family dysfunctions, experience of emotional, physical and sexual violence lie behind most street migration in Bangladesh. Once on the street, they engage in various economic activities for survival as well as use the street to play and socialize (Reza, 2017). Existing literature suggests that most children work in the informal economy (Reza & Bromfield, 2019). Children's jobs in the informal economy include begging, day laborer, street vendor, transportation worker, car washer, garbage picker, flower and newspaper seller, and small industry worker and more.

Children in street situations are socially excluded and the state and mainstream society view these children as a "problem". Several programs have been launched in the past to solve it by labeling them as "children in street situations," "hard to reach children," "working children," "at-risk children," and "especially disadvantaged children." They are also marginalized from the mainstream society as people treat them as socially inferior and their existence in public space often seen a source of danger and violence exposing them to physical, mental, sexual abuses forcing them into antisocial activities, such as substance abuse, pickpocketing, involvement with crimes (Beazley, 1999). This phenomenon is widely reported in Bangladeshi Print media. Children living on the street are often viewed as orphaned or abandoned by their families or lacking parental care and protection. Their detachment from the idealized affiliations of home and family position them as inferior in society. It is mainly because children's street presence challenges the development philosophy and idealized construction of home, family, education, and social control (Holloway & Valentine, 2000, p.168).

In Bangladesh, the dominant concept of home, family, and education in child rearing and development is highly influential and idealized by Western developmental agendas, interventions, and policies (Ansell, 2005). The major tenant of contemporary child rights and welfare thinking prioritized a responsibility-free, happy, safe, secure childhood. Proponent of childhood studies suggest that these ideals are western constructions which globalized and idealized as a universal model of childhood (Prout & James, 2015; Ansell, 2005; Jenks, 2005). Ansell (2005) describes, "the universal model of childhood includes vulnerability, innocence, passivity, the need for protection, schooling, and protection from economic activity" (p.12). In Bangladesh, as in many developing countries, these ideals have become dominant through the implementation of Western developmental agendas, interventions, and policies. For example, compulsory education for children in 1990, MDG in 2011, ratification of UNCRC in 1989 and ILO in 1972 are all part of these international agendas. The presence of children on the street contradicts dominant notions of childhood in Bangladesh, as they lack a nurturing home environment, education, care, and protection. Consequently, society and the media often categorize and label children living in street situation as 'deviant', 'lost or stolen childhood', and 'abandoned childhood' (Jenks, 2005). Children working on the streets without adult supervision, roaming the streets instead of sleeping at home or attending school undermine social morality (Jenks, 2005). As a result, these children are viewed as out of place, at-risk population, menace to the society, victim and delinquent (Stephens, 1995; Ennew, 1995). They experience

discrimination and oppression on the streets. Most children in street situations in Bangladesh lack Birth registration. Studies also suggest that these children face violence and abuse by law enforcement agencies (Reza, 2007). Moreover, government interventions often adversely affect these kids or lead to inefficient policies. For example, the government of Bangladesh already prohibits children working in 38 sectors in Bangladesh. This includes construction, transportation, and small industries like fishing, manufacturing, and stone breaking (ILO, 2013). These sectors are considered hazardous for children. Scholars argue that prohibiting children from work might have adverse effect on these children and leads to further marginalization (Aptekar, 1989). As news media has a significant influence on public opinion, policy decision, agenda setting, it is essential to critically examine how news coverage represent children in street situations in Bangladesh. A multimodal critical approach to news coverage will shed light on whether or not media portrayals of children in street situations in Bangladesh contribute to the reproduction and maintenance of dominant and discriminatory social relations in Bangladesh.

1.2 Rationale for the study

Research on the discursive construction of minority groups has dominated the critical discourse analysis literature over the past two decades. Numerous topics have been addressed in the critical discourse literature, such as migrants (Huot et al., 2016), refugees or asylum seekers (Parker, 2020), gender and sexuality (Bates, 2017), ethnicity and race (Teo, 2000), religion (Hjelm, 2014), and indigeneity (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). These studies aim to draw attention to the issues of power relations, social inequality, disempowerment, marginalization, and stigmatization faced by members of non-dominant social groups. In particular, the representation of asylum seekers has recently gained significant attention in CDA research. A growing body of literature demonstrates the media's tendency to portray asylum seekers in a negative light by highlighting issues of border and criminality, job theft, desperation, and the potential problem of refugees in a country (Chavez, 2001; Branton & Dunaway, 2008; Chomsky, 2007; Suro, 2008). These studies argue that the media's stereotypical portrayal of immigrants significantly contributes to their stigmatization and marginalization, which affects decision-making.

CDA scholars have demonstrated plenty of interest in how language is used in particular contexts, such as media and political discourse, and how these discursive practices shape our understanding of the world. For example, a large body of literature has examined the media representation of marginalized communities, emphasizing the role of media and language in identity construction, argumentation, and ideology reproduction (Chavez, 2001; Branton & Dunaway, 2008; Chomsky, 2007; Suro, 2008). Despite the abundance of minority focused CDA literature, relatively few studies on children living on the street have been conducted (Shin, 2009). According to a 2015 report by the United Nations, "there are more than 150 million children in street situations worldwide, mainly living in developing countries" (p. 23). Approximately 30 million children live on the streets in Asia. Nonetheless, it has received considerably less attention in CDA literature, especially in the context of Bangladesh. The situation of children living on and off the streets in Bangladesh has been a topic of discussion and consistent media coverage for a very long time. Despite this, there is a lack of critical research on the media's portrayal of children living on the street and the role of media discourses in identity formation, public perceptions, and policy decisions (Adhikary & Lingard, 2018). In Bangladesh, CDA research focuses primarily on religion (Khan & Govindsamy, 2011), political conflict (Moniruzzaman, 2009), corruption

(Mahmood, 2010), and representations of gender (Shafi, 2021), domestic violence (Shahen, 2021), and ethnic minorities (Ali et At., 2021) in media and political discourses (Ali et At., 2021). For instance, the critical study of gender stereotype representation in television advertisements (Shafi, 2021) and Rohingya refugees in print media (Istianah, 2018) focuses on how media representation diminishes the role of women and promotes violence against Rohingya refugees. Joye (2009) argues that these studies are insufficient and do not provide an in-depth understanding of media representation, particularly about children in street situations in Bangladesh. This thesis examines the representations of children in street situations in Bangladeshi news media to fill this gap.

Existing research on children in street situations in Bangladesh adopts a sociological, anthropological, and participatory approach to studying the lives of children in street situations. A body of literature in these fields demonstrates the significance of recognizing agency and resilience among children in street situations (Reza, 2017; Conticini, A., and Hulme, D., 2007; Reza & Bromfield, 2019). They claim that children in street situations have long faced discrimination and exclusion from mainstream society and public policies. Thus, respect and recognition of their agency and resilience are crucial in combating stereotypes, marginalization, and stigmatization. These studies mostly use data from interviews, focus group discussions, participant observations, drawings, and sometimes media reports as secondary data. This thesis takes a different approach than previous research and employs a critical multimodal analytical approach (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The main focus of this thesis is to critically analyze newspaper texts and images regarding children in street situations. By analyzing news coverage critically, it will be possible to identify prevalent media discourses and representational strategies regarding children in street situations in Bangladesh. This thesis will shed light on whether or not media portrayals of children in street situations in Bangladesh contribute to the reproduction and maintenance of dominant and discriminatory social relations in Bangladesh. It is also possible to make recommendations for more ethical news reporting on children in street situations, which might positively impact their lives regarding public perception, social position, and decision-making. van Dijk (2005) says that language and images are also powerful tools that can be used to construct out-group identities, perpetuate stereotypes, and marginalize people in society. It places media at the forefront of CDA research. This thesis, therefore, contributes to the existing knowledge on the role of the press in shaping public perception toward children in living street situations in Bangladesh, which has been relatively understudied.

1.3 Positionality

Positionality is an essential aspect to consider when conducting social science research. The term "positionality" refers to the researcher's beliefs, ideologies, and positions toward the social and political contexts in which they conduct research (Cuevas-Parra, 2021). Positionality can affect all aspects of research and its outcomes. Evens (2016) claims that researchers are not neutral because their lived experience and the social world shape their perspectives and viewpoints about the world. Since I am a part of the social context on which the thesis is based, my personal views and perspectives may influence the research project that I am conducting. Therefore, understanding and acknowledging my own positionality, I will take a reflexive approach to the research process. Cuevas-Parra (2021) defines reflexivity as a critical self-reflection process that involves questioning one's assumptions, biases and values in the research process.

Positionality and critical self-reflection are particularly important in conducting critical discourse analysis of social, cultural and political phenomenon. Wodak (1989) asserts that "being critical" in CDA research involves continuous self-reflection and self-evaluation throughout the research process. My intention in conducting a critical analysis of news coverage about children in street situations in Bangladesh is not to criticize the media but to understand the underlying meanings, ideologies, and power relationships communicated through representation while constantly evaluating my positionality.

As part of my self-reflexive position in this research, I prefer to use "children in street situations" in my writing rather than the more common terms, such as "street/homeless children". This is mainly because these terms have implicit negative associations that may have unintended effects of stigmatising or labelling children in street situations. (Conticini & Hulme, 2007). As mentioned above, throughout history, various terms with negative connotations have been used to describe these children, including "children in street situations," "homeless children," "children of the street," "children on the street," "at-risk children," and "street-connected children." Scholars argue that using these labels when referring to children is inappropriate as it may stigmatize or categorize them (Stoecklin & Lucchini, 2019; Aptekar, 2016; Conticini & Hulme, 2007). Several contemporary scholars opt for a more neutral term, such as "children in street situations", to avoid stigmatization through language (Conticini & Hulme, 2007). UNCRC general comments recently coin the term "Children in street situations", which refers to:

"(a) children who depend on the streets to live and/or work, whether alone, with peers or with family; and (b) a wider population of children who have formed strong connections with public spaces and for whom the street plays a vital role in their everyday lives and identities. This wider population includes children who periodically, but not always, live and/or work on the streets and children who do not live or work on the streets but who regularly accompany their peers, siblings or family in the streets" (UNCRC, 2017,p.03).

Stoecklin & Lucchini (2019) states that the definition adopted by UNCRC is more nuanced and acknowledges the diverse experiences and situations of these children. The term "children in street situations" indicates that "the problem is not inherent to the children themselves but rather arises from the situation in which they must earn a livelihood" (Stoecklin & Lucchini, 2019, p.02).

Considering the importance of self-reflexivity in conducting a critical analysis of newspaper discourse, I will critically reflect on my positionality and assumptions throughout the writing process to ensure the rigor and accuracy of this thesis. In the methodology chapter, I will further discuss the concept of reflexivity.

1.4 Research questions

This thesis aims to explore how children in street situations are portrayed in Bangladeshi print media. The main objective of this thesis is to critically analyze news coverage of children in street situations in four major Bangladeshi newspapers to gain a nuanced understanding of how news media construct the image of children in street situations through representation. It will further investigate how these constructions shape the identities of these children and influence public perceptions. With these objectives in mind, I have formulated the following research questions that will be explored throughout this thesis:

RQ1: How children in street situations are represented in Bangladeshi news media?

RQ2: What ideals of children and childhood can be found in representations of children in street situations in news coverage?

1.5 Relevance of the study

Bangladesh has a long history of growth and development and made remarkable progress in poverty reduction, social equality, and overall development in 52 years of its independence (World Bank, 2015). However, integrating children in street situations into mainstream society with dignity and respect remains a challenge in Bangladesh. The phenomenon of children in street situations is complex and their representation in the news media has significant implications for public perceptions and policy response. Therefore, it is crucial to critically analyze how the media represent children in street situations and their discursive and representational strategies. It is also possible to make recommendations for more ethical news reporting on children in street situations, which might positively impact their lives regarding public perception, social position, and decision-making. Moreover, this thesis is relevant because it uses multimodal critical discourse analysis approach in the analysis of news media representation of children in street situations. Multimodal discourse analysis provides a unique approach to critically analyze both texts and images of news reports. Machin & Mayr (2012) state that it is crucial to consider the relationship between images and text when conducting multimodal analysis. They argue that these modes are not distinct but work together to construct meaning. By using multimodal critical approach to media representation of children in street situations, this thesis will contribute to the existing knowledge on the role of the press in shaping public perception toward children in living street situations in Bangladesh.

1.6 Thesis outline

This master thesis consists of seven chapters: introduction, literature overview, theoretical background, research design and methodology, overall sample characteristics, analysis of negative representation of children in street situation, discussion and conclusion chapter. The introduction chapter introduces the topic, background of the problem, rationale, research questions and relevance of the thesis.

In Chapter 2, I present a review of literature about children in street situations. Then I elaborate on the role of media in society and previous research on media representation of children in street situations. The purpose of this chapter is to situate my thesis within

this field by looking at the different ways the phenomenon of children in street situations is discussed in the literature.

In chapter 3, the theoretical framework presents the relevant theories that are the basis of this thesis. Due to interdisciplinary nature of this thesis, I draw on theories from different disciplines. Theories in the field of childhood studies is central as this thesis as I position my thesis in this field. In addition, I draw on theories from media studies, such representation theories as I aim to explore print media representation of children in living in street situations. Finally, I present the theoretical perspectives of critical discourse analysis and multimodal discourse analysis and argue the benefit of using multimodal critical discourse analysis to study news contents.

In chapter 4, I present methodology and methods that have been used for data analysis. First, I elaborate on importance the multimodal discourse analysis followed by tools that have been used to analyze the data. Then I explain the process of data collection, such as sampling and coding. Finally, the methodological limitations and reflexivity is addressed.

Chapter 5 contains overall sample characteristics emerged from data analysis. This chapter illustrate a general overview of the data and identifies positive, negative, and neutral tone in selected articles and major changes in representation in the last 20 years.

Chapter 6 presents the main findings from the analysis of selected articles that are negative in tone. In this chapter, I explore how news media represent children in street situations using texts and images. I use multimodal tools to conduct the textual and image analysis, drawing inspiration from Machin & Mayr's (2012) book.

In final chapter 7, I present a final discussion and conclusion. In this chapter, I will first elaborate on the main findings of multimodal analysis based on the central theories introduced in Chapter 3. Lastly, I conclude with some suggestions for future research.

2 Literature overview

An overview of relevant research on children in street situations is imperative for understanding the subject matter and data analysis in this master's thesis. This chapter begins with a review of existing literature relevant to children in street situations. I will then outline the media's role in society, followed by an overview of literature about media representation of children in street situations in majority and minority world contexts. The purpose of this chapter is to contextualize this thesis within the field of childhood studies by exploring different ways the phenomenon of children in street situations is discussed in the literature.

2.1 Children in street situations: vulnerable victim or social agent?

In most literature, there appears to be a dichotomous representation of children in street situations. On the one hand, a large body of literature represent children in street situations as a vulnerable or at-risk group by highlighting the negative aspects of street lives (Panter-Brick, 2002). Most of this literature suggests that children's lives on the street and their involvement with economic activities, age, social position, and socio-economic condition expose them to vulnerability (Lindley et al., 2011). In addition, specific health risks, including physical, sexual, and mental health, are highlighted in these writings when discussing the vulnerability of children in street situations (Panter-Brick, 2001). Wright & Kaminsky (1993) wrote about the mental and physical health effects of poverty and dysfunctional family life on Latin American homeless children. In addition, they claimed that street-dwelling children are both violent offenders (by killing each other) and victims of violence (abuse, drug addictions). This association between childhood and vulnerability can be traced back to the romantic discourse (Rousseau, 1762) and psychological and sociological literature from the early 20th century (Piaget, 1950; Parsons). Children are viewed as innocent "human becomings" who are cognitively and emotionally immature compared to adults (Jenks, 2009). Thus, they require parental care, guidance, and education to develop into mature and capable individuals, placing them in a precarious position if their normal development is interrupted (Bynner, 2001). However, children in street situations are typically portrayed as vulnerable or "at-risk" in this literature because they are children (under the age of 18), and the street is the opposite of where children belong. These viewpoints also contribute to what Dean (1999) defines as "the perception of fear and danger." Numerous studies have been conducted on individuals who do not conform to social norms, such as children in street situations, who are frequently viewed as a vulnerable or dangerous group (Panter-Brick, 2002). The Western ideal depicts childhood as a time of happiness, protection, care, and responsibility-free childhood. Consequently, most public, policy, and media narratives over the past three decades have been shaped by either pity or fear and moral panic regarding the lives of children living on the streets who are contrary to the ideal norms.

In contrast, a growing body of literature within childhood studies focuses on their agency to counteract these stereotypical conceptions. The emphasis in these scholarly articles is on the children's own experiences with their circumstances (Prout & James, 2015). Children in street situations are constantly exposed to violence, but violence can also help them resolve conflicts, so understanding the meaning that children attach to violence is crucial

(Conticini & Hulme 2007). The concept of agency is central to the relatively new field of childhood studies. Within this field, children are viewed as capable social actors rather than passive recipients of adult influences (Woodhead, 2009). The viewpoint stems from the emergent paradigm in the 1970s which is often refers to the new sociology of childhood (Prout & James, 2015). The new sociology of childhood prioritizes the diversity of childhood and their experiences as well as considers children as active agent who shape their own lives (Jenks, 2009). Children's agency is linked to the concept of resilience. Scholars from the global south have applied the resiliency lens to their research on socially marginalized groups (such as children in street situations), focusing on the groups' coping mechanisms, resilience, and social relations to counteract widespread negative and stereotypical depictions of these individuals (Abebe, 2008; Aptekar, 1994; Aufseeser & County, 2017; Reza & Bromfield, 2019). Reza (2017), for example, studied the lives of children in street situations in Bangladesh and demonstrated "how they overcome vulnerability and abuse by employing coping strategies and social support networks" (p.294). According to these scholarly works, vulnerability discourse is frequently generalized and oversimplified, which promotes stereotypes of children living in street situations, leading to their deprivation and exclusion from mainstream society. These different perspectives are crucial for this thesis to examine how children in street situations are portrayed in print media.

2.2 Media's role in society

Every institution has a particular role to play in maintaining society. Some of the most important institutions in modern societies that are considered the backbone of establishing a value driven and well-maintained society, are those involving education, religion, politics, family and of course the media. One of the primary roles of the media is to inform the public by monitoring and reporting on public events that directly or indirectly affect them. The media is often referred to as the watchdog of a democratic society, acting as the fourth state to hold those in power accountable (Norris, 2014). The ideal journalistic practice is founded on truthfulness, authenticity, and providing accurate information to the public. Ideally, media coverage should be based on facts and the truth (Belsey, 2002).

However, a body of literature in sociology of news proposes that news constructs reality rather than the truth (Lau, 2012). Scholars in the news sociology demonstrated how media professionals actively construct reality by selecting, structuring, emphasizing, and interpreting an event (Weiss, 1968; Flower, 2013). In this sense, the media, particularly news media, are not mere reflections of reality, but rather play an active role in shaping and constructing it. This gives media a significant power and control over us. van Dijk (1995) defines media power as symbolic and persuasive, which can influence people's thoughts, beliefs, and opinions. In their book *Media Effect: Advances in Theory and Research*, Bryant and Zillmann (1994) explain that "the news media typically set the agenda for public discourse by selecting which stories to cover and how to present those stories" (p.09). Media outlets have a significant and influential role in setting the agenda. They can shape public opinion and influence decision-making by selecting the issues and emphasizing particular aspects of those issues (Bryant & Zillmann, 1994). Moreover, the media can influence how individuals perceive and feel about those issues and how they react to them. Examining this specific media function is central to this thesis to understand the news selection process and what aspects are highlighted in the representation of children in street situations. It will also help to gain an in-depth understanding of the

process of identity construction and ideologies reproduction of children in street situations in news media.

Aside from the debate of whether the news reflects truth or reality, the commitment to truth and accuracy, transparency, impartiality, and accountability are foundational to good journalism (Eide, 2011). Journalistic ideals serve the public good and should not be neglected. Journalists in Bangladesh and elsewhere adhere to similar standards of conduct to maintain credibility, and accuracy, avoiding conflicting interests in their reporting. All media professionals in Bangladesh, from the top editor down to the young reporter, are expected to be familiar with and uphold the 22 ethical codes established by the Bangladesh Press Council, a government-controlled agency. I want to emphasize on the point "views on main news shall be presented clearly and fairly" in which it is mentioned:

"Newspapers shall refrain from publishing news which is contemptuous or disrespectful to caste, creed, nationality, and religion of any individual or the community or the country. For upholding national unity, communal prejudices and feelings of hatred and malice be discouraged" (Accountable Journalism, 2015, p.02).

This point is critical to my thesis and a fundamental principle of journalism, particularly in representing minorities in society. As previously stated, the media can give minorities a voice by providing accurate, factual, and ethical news, which can help reduce stigmatization and discrimination against them. With this in mind, I will examine the representation of children in street situations in Bangladeshi print media and the process of constructing their identities through news reports. The agenda-setting role of the media, and its power and influence, have already been demonstrated. I believe multimodal discourse analysis will aid in comprehending how the media shape public opinion and influences decision-making regarding children in street situations in Bangladesh.

2.3 Media representation of children in street situations

Media representation of social phenomenon has been a long-standing and well-researched topic in diverse disciplines, including as sociology, anthropology, geography, film studies, media studies and more. Media representation involves (re)presenting different demographics, such as age, sex, race, gender through texts, visuals, and ideas in media that people can relate to in order to communicate effectively with their audiences (Levinson & Wien, 2011). Existing literature on the representation of children in the news indicates that children are often absent despite being one of the major segments of society (Kaziaj, 2015). A report from an African 'media monitoring project' investigating media representation of children and their rights in South Africa and Zambia, for example, revealed that children are under-represented in media, accounting for only 10% and 5% of all news coverage in South Africa and Zambia, respectively (Kalu & Singh, 2014). Similarly, Goonasekera (2001) studied the portrayal of children in the media across 13 Asian countries. According to the research, media coverage of children is significantly lower than coverage of other topics. However, a body of literature shows children's significant presence in news media and argues that children are often given limited roles in news coverage by highlighting their innocence, suffering and vulnerability (Youssef, 2011; Kaziaj, 2015; Ponte, 2007). For instance, Carter (2014) describes that images of children suffering in war, famine, genocide, and refugee crises are common in the news media, highlighting the brutality through the representation of children's suffering to elicit adult sympathy and humanize these events. In these news coverage children are portrayed as

ideal victim (Moeller, 1999). Christie (2018) defines "an ideal victim is a person or group who is perceived as weak and blameless" (p.07). The construction of ideal victim can be achieved in many ways, such as by focusing on age, gender, race, country of origin. Scholars argue that the ideal victim is a cultural construct and varies across time and history (Höije, 2004; Christie, 2018).

Media representation of children in street situations has received relatively little scholarly attention compared to other social issues, such as, asylum seekers (Branton & Dunaway, 2008), gender (Mardikantoro & Baehaqie, 2022), LGBTQ (Wang & Ma, 2021) and physically challenged people (Saito & Ishiyama, 2005). However, a few studies on the representation of children in street situations in developing countries revealed that children are portrayed in news stories as ideal victims. These studies suggest that physical, mental, and sexual abuse of children due to their unprotected street lives and involvement in various activities is typically used to illustrate the victimization of children in street situations (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2004; Fahmi, 2007). For example, Joshi and Sharma (2013) conducted research on the portrayal of children in street situations in four leading newspapers in India. The study concludes that more than 60% of news coverage of children in street situations focuses on cases of abuse and neglect. Some believe that stories about the maltreatment and neglect of children in street situations have the potential to positively influence public opinion and persuade governments to uphold these children's rights. However, critics argue that sensationalizing the plight of children in street situations may disempower them and undermine their agency (Kus et al.'s, 2016; p.136).

In addition to innocence and victim, there has been a number of studies on media representation on children in street situations in Asia and child shoulders in Africa demonstrates media often portray these children as dangerous and delinquents (Ponte, 2007). Salazar (2008) examined media coverage of police brutality against high school students and children in street situations in Nigeria. Even though both issues received significant media coverage, the study revealed that while high school students received media and public support, children in street situations were portrayed as criminals. Connolly and Ennew (1996) claim that children in street situations are generally portrayed as "out of place" in the media, public policies, and local and international charity organizations due to their involvement with the street without adult supervision and protection. In public and media discourse, streets are constructed as adult spaces associated with crime, deviance, and delinquency, so the presence of children on the street is deemed undesirable and dangerous (Young, 2002). For instance, Vakaoti's (2018) research on the media construction of Fiji children in street situations demonstrates that these youth are portrayed negatively and seen as a threat to society. He claims that "children's presence on the streets is seen as a source of drug use, violence, and other criminal behaviors in media" (p.57). Scholars researching children in street situations in the global south argue that normative beliefs and stereotypical representations of children in street situations contribute to moral panic and public anxiety, resulting in stigmatization, marginalization, and inefficient interventions (Abebe, 2008; Aptekar, 1994; Aufseeser & County, 2017; Reza & Bromfield, 2019). Empirical evidence on moral panic suggests that how media portrays a particular group can influence public perception and social exclusion in society (Cohen, 1972). The term "moral panic" is most commonly associated with Stanley Cohen's (1972) work "Folk Devil and Moral Panic," in which he describes:

"A condition, episode, person, or group of people emerges to be defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its panic nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical manner by various medium in society, such as media, politicians, bishops, and so on" (p.09)

As media representation of children in street situations in Bangladesh is a relatively under-explored topic, this thesis will provide valuable insights into how media portray street children and whether it contributes to moral panic in society through representation.

2.4 Summary

I have discussed the situation of children in street situations in Bangladesh and presented research literature that is relevant to this thesis. The literature review above demonstrates the importance of critical reading of media portrayals of children in street situations in Bangladesh because it can shape public opinion and policy regarding children in street situations. In today's mediated society, the media has considerable power and influence over us. Depending on how this power is used, it can have positive or negative effects on our lives (Dijk, 2005). This research is crucial to understand how media represent children and possible effects that might entails. Moreover, media representation of children in street situations is an underexplored topic. Since no prior research on critical multimodal discourse analysis of media representation of children in street situations has been conducted in Bangladesh, I believe that this study will contribute to the production of new knowledge and understanding of media portrayal of children in street situations in Bangladesh. In this dissertation, I draw on insights from prior relevant literature when conducting the research. Theoretical perspectives that underpin this thesis will be discussed in the next chapter.

3 Theoretical background

Relevant theories that are central to this thesis will be discussed in this chapter. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of this thesis, theoretical reflections from distinct disciplines are required. Thus, this chapter is divided into three sections. First, I will introduce relevant theoretical perspectives from childhood studies, such as a brief overview of the field, social constructionism. Then I will present theories from media and journalism studies as the main aim of this thesis to investigate media representation of children in street situations. Finally, I will demonstrate the theoretical foundations that underpin research in linguistics, media and film studies, and social science, which are widely known as critical and multimodal discourse analysis. As I mentioned, the interdisciplinary nature of this thesis requires the integration of theories from childhood studies, media and journalism studies and critical discourse analysis. These theoretical perspectives serve as a foundation for the selection of methodology and methods and analysis of press media representation of children in street situations.

3.1 Childhood Studies

The new sociology of childhood often refers to as a paradigm shift or new paradigm within the sociology of childhood (Hammersley, 2017). The new paradigm in the field of sociology of childhood is emerged in the 1980s and 1990s as a critique of development psychology and socialization theories (Jenks 2009). Before the emergent paradigm by Prout and James (1990–2015), research about children was dominated by development psychology and socialization concepts. Development psychology documented the developmental stages of childhood and highlighted the transition from childhood to adulthood. Jean Piaget had a substantial influence on development psychology. His age-and-growth-based discourse dominated mainstream theories and research in constructing knowledge about children and childhood in the early 20th century. Piaget's conceptual framework was predicated on the notion that childhood is a natural, biologically determined stages on the path to adulthood. This dominant framework viewed childhood as a period of biological immaturity and dependence, incapable of making sound decisions on their own until they reach the later stages of development (Jenks, 2009). Researchers in the new sociology of children and childhood criticized the dominant developmental model for viewing children as "human becomings" who are cognitively, emotionally, and morally deficient to adults (Prout & James, 2015; Qvortrup, 1994; Jenks, 2009). Furthermore, the emergent paradigm challenged developmental research on children, claiming that these conceptual frameworks are inadequate as it views children as passive participants in the research process rather than active agents (Woodhead, 2009). Similarly, the socialization paradigm inherited from functionalist sociology incorporates some of the basic tenets of development psychology, including the concepts of naturalness, universality, irrationality, and immaturity. However, functionalist sociologists argued that becoming an adult is not biological rather a social process in which children acquire social norms and values in order to maintain social order (Jenks, 2009). Sociological research was traditionally focused on exploring how children learn to become contributing members of the society in which they live. Talcott Parsons (1954) was one of the most influential exponents of the socialization paradigm. He believed that home and school are the two most significant institutions for socializing children into

adulthood (Leonard, M. 2016). The new sociology of children and childhood contested these assumptions underlying traditional socialization theories, which view children as passive, innocent, and asocial, requiring familial and educational care to become social (Prout & James, 1990; Alanen 1988; Nilsen, 2009; Corsaro, 2002)

The new sociology of children and childhood emerged in Europe in the 1980s/90s as a critical alternative of these mainstream thinking and research which fostered new ways of understanding and theorizing children and childhood. In particular, the emergence of the new sociology of childhood placed a strong emphasis on children's experiences in the present rather than viewing them as future adults (Leonard, M. 2016). Within this new conceptual framework, children are no longer considered as cultural dupes of socialization and development theories, but as competent social actors with agency (Thorne, 1987). The notion of agency is a central concept within the field of childhood studies that view "children as competent social actors rather than merely the passive recipients of adult influence" (Berridge, 2017, p.90). The concept of children's agency is closely associated with resilience, which enables children to cope with adverse situations. The new paradigm, originally outlined by Prout and James (2015) in the 1980s and 1990s has not only challenged mainstream thinking but also revolutionized our understanding about children and childhood. It made a significant contribution by rejecting the idea of natural and universal childhood and emphasizing how childhood is socially constructed and varies across time and space. Prout & James's (1990) book "Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood: Contemporary Issues in the Sociological Study of Childhood" proposed six central tenets of the new paradigm as a reassessment of previous understandings about childhood as follows:

- 1) Childhood is socially constructed. Instead of seeing childhood as a natural, universal, and biological stage of life, this perspective views it as a structural and cultural component of many societies.
- 2) Childhood is a variable of social analysis. It does not, however, exist in isolation from other factors such as class, gender, ethnicity, and so on.
- 3) Children's social relations and cultures are worthy of study on their own rights, independent of the concern of adults.
- 4) Children are not passive subjects rather actively involved in the construction of their own lives.
- 5) Ethnography is a particularly useful methodology for studying children because it allows children's voice to be heard.
- 6) The new paradigm is a contribution to the process of reconstructing childhood.

Undoubtedly, the new paradigm made a significant contribution in the field of sociology of children and childhood. Most of the principles are still omnipresent in theorizing and researching children and childhood around the world. However, contemporary scholars argue that it is not enough to simply prioritize children's voice, agency and participation (Ba, 2021; Hammersley, 2017). Tisdall & Punch (2012) suggest that researchers should pay more attention to the "complexities, tensions, intricacies of the lives of children in both majority and minority world" (p.259). In this regard, Spyrou (2009) advocates for an "ontological turn" in the field of childhood studies, arguing that independency, social relationships, and other material aspects must be reconsidered in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of how childhood is constructed in a particular society.

Although the new paradigm made a significant contribution in conceptualizing childhood, scholars suggest that the historical and western conceptualization of childhood significantly influence the modern policies and practice in both majority and minority world. Scholars have shown how these modern policies and practice affects children in street situations. To get a more nuanced understanding, it is important to elaborate on the historical and western construction of childhood and how it became a dominant model of childhood. Historically, the western construction of childhood is based on several major themes. First, 'The puritan discourse' in which childhood is viewed as a time of evil and wilderness (Montgomery & Heather, 2003, p62). During medieval period in European Christian culture, it was widely believed that children were born ignorant and sinful and therefore they need to be enlightened through discipline and education. John Locke's tabula rasa discourse (1632-1704) assumed childhood is a time of becoming and that institutionalization is the best way to foster future responsible citizens. According to Locke (1690), children require adult 's guidance, a proper environment and education to become rational, self-controlled and responsible citizens which aligned with views of the socialization research described above. A third western discourse is called 'the romantic discourse'. Contrary to the image of children as evil, dangerous, or wild, in this discourse, children and childhood is considered as a period of innocence. French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) was pioneer of such romantic discourse. He demonstrated in his book that childhood is a period of idyllic innocence with joy and happiness; free from adult responsibility (Rousseau, 1972. P 107). In this construction of childhood, it is believed that when child's innocence is corrupted or abused in any way, it becomes stolen or taken away. Thus, children need protection and adult supervision to protect their innocence to ensure happy and healthy childhood. These ideas were central in the construction of western contemporary childhood.

During the 19th century, the Western model became globalized through migration and colonialism, and later, it has exported to the global south through international NGOs and organizations, such as World Bank and UNICEF (Ansell, 2010; Bourdillon, 2011). In this way, the global model became dominant all over the world in conceptualizing children and childhood. The global model shares the features described above, such as the natural and universal distinction between children and adults, the idea that children are weaker and are defined by their limitations, and more (Ansell, 2010). Nieuwenhuys (2007) demonstrated additional characteristics of the global child, such as vulnerability, innocence, passivity, the need for protection, education, protection from economic activities, and time for play. This model is deemed ideal and superior to all other childhood models in the world (Ansell, 2010). Prout & James (2015) asserts that "the modern ideals of a safe, happy, and protected childhood are culturally and historically based on the social preoccupations and realities of capitalist nations such as Europe and the United States" (p.189). According to Ennew (2001), historically, western conceptions of childhood and its policies and interventions were based on child needs and protection. Although the focus shifted significantly from children's needs to children's rights with the introduction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1989, there have been debates about the effectiveness of the universal model and the UNCRC in addressing children from poorer countries, particularly children in street situations, and whether the convention serves their best interests or not (Ennew, 2001). Proponents of childhood studies argued that the global model disregards the lived experience of the vast majority of disadvantaged children and youth in developing nations and serves to position them as "other" (Ansell, 2010; (Bourdillon, 2011). The ideal construct of the universal model positioned children in street situations in society as innocent and vulnerable victims,

stigmatizing or even criminalizing them because they fall outside these global standards (Aptekar, 1994). Boyden (1995) argues that social policies and interventions based on these universal ideals can be punitive for children from low-income countries and families, as they are unable to meet the standard. Embracing the principles of the "emerging paradigm" (Prout & James, 1990), contemporary research on disadvantaged children in the global south emphasizes local perspectives and children's present experiences and sees them as competent social actors and active agents (Prout & James, 1990). To counteract the social exclusion and stigmatization of children in street situations, many scholars in the global south advocate for "politics of recognition and respect", emphasizing children's agency, resilience, and social relationships as opposed to viewing them as passive victims or stigmatizing them (Abebe et al, 2022; Lister, 2015; Abebe, 2008; Reza & Bromfield, 2019; Atkinson-Sheppard, 2017). These are central theoretical perspectives for this thesis. The next section elaborates on different approaches used to study children and childhood within the field of childhood studies.

3.2 Social construction of children and childhood

Although the conceptual framework outlined above has gained widespread acceptance among scholars, different approaches are employed to study children and childhood. Alanen (2001) demonstrates three main approaches that are widely recognized in childhood studies. Actor-oriented approach is the first approach to research in which children are viewed as competent social actors, and therefore their ideas and perspectives are emphasized (Clark, 2013). The concepts of competency, peer culture, participation, agency are central features within actor-oriented child research. The next one is structural conflict perspectives in which childhood is viewed as a structural form in a society. Alanen (2001) and Mayall (2002) had a major influence on the structural conflict approach, which emphasizes generational notions and the interrelationship between children and adults.

Social constructionist perspective is the last and widely recognized theoretical approach within childhood studies which argues that childhood is neither natural nor universal but a social construct (Jenks, 2009; Prout & James, 2015). Social constructionism is a comprehensive theoretical framework with various research methodological approaches aimed at examining the social existence of individuals. A social constructionist approach has been used in a variety of research fields to investigate how categories are constructed, power relations are maintained, and a body of knowledge is built in the maintenance of social relations (Burr, 2015). Most importantly, researchers adopting this approach considers childhood is socially constructed and emphasize on children's experience within their social contexts (O'Connor, 2009). This approach enables researchers to study dominant notions and practices that shape our perceptions of children and childhood at societal level. For instance, how binary constructs of children and childhood, such as adulthood versus childhood, good or evil versus normal, or deviant, are formed and perpetuated in society. Proponents of childhood studies have used the social constructionist approach to study children and childhood to explore how reality is negotiated and constructed in everyday life through people's interactions and a set of discourses in a given society (Mongomery, 2003; Spyrou, 2011; Buckingham, 1993).

According to Berger & Luckmann (1996), social reality is co-constructed through our shared practices, and language plays a vital role in this process. Thus, the concept of discourse is extremely important in social constructionism for studying social actions, practices, and ideologies that contribute to the construction of social reality for a particular group (Mongomery, 2003). Discourse, according to Stainton-Rogers (2003), is “a collection of interconnected ideas that act independently and are bound together by a shared ideology or worldview” (P. 21). Post-structuralist theorists, especially Michel Foucault and her followers, view children and childhood as discursively constructed and conceptualize discourse in terms of power relations (Wilhelmsen & Nilsen, 2015). Foucault’s panopticon concept in childhood studies made a significant contribution to our understanding of power, control, and hidden normativity imposed on children. A critical discourse analysis could help us grasp these issues more deeply, such as what kind of perspectives, knowledge and truth about children are accepted in a particular society and what is not (Wilhelmsen & Nilsen, 2015).

Social constructionism is a central concept in childhood studies, and the perspectives of category, power relations, and dominant ideals in social practice are crucial in social constructionism. These perspectives are in tune with the main objective of this thesis and thus will be useful in conducting a critical analysis of news coverage of children in street situations to assess what ideals of children and childhood prevail in Bangladeshi print media and society. Additionally, this thesis is about a critical study of media representation, and thus the following sections will discuss relevant theories of media studies and discourse analysis.

3.3 Media and journalism studies

Media is considered one of the most powerful institutions that shapes public opinion and constructs social reality by providing meaning. However, media construction of social reality may have diverse meanings for people (Hall, 1997). For instance, while certain constructions may encourage power and privilege, others may foster stereotypes and discrimination. Meaning has mainly been theorized in media and journalism studies using two distinctive approaches: political economic approach and cultural approach (Fenton, 2007). To comprehend how meaning is communicated through media, it is necessary to briefly explain the two techniques indicated above. To begin with, the political economic method examines how various media favor certain cultural forms over others by shaping public discourse around economic distributions, power, geography, and the democratic process. It focuses on economic distributions as well as the link between the economy and other dominating institutions. According to Fenton (2007), “the political economic approach is an effective approach for investigating structural inequalities, the effects of representation, and access to consumption in society” (p.08). Cultural studies, on the other hand, investigate how some beliefs become mainstream and, as a result, reproduce social identity, relations, and dominance (Kellner, 2004). Researchers can uncover media nuances about representations that favor certain ideas over others by taking a cultural perspective. As a result, this approach enables academics to critically analyze and scrutinize one’s culture. Most importantly, when studying hegemonic ideologies and the social reproduction of power and subordination, the concept of ideology is central. For example, class ideology provides us a jubilant view of upper-class living, whereas the

working class is mostly underrepresented in society. Similarly, the notion of gender privileges men over women. Ideologies, according to Kellner (2004), are "a set of dominating conceptions and ideas that make inequality and subordination look natural, and therefore persuade consent to relations of domination" (p.03). The cultural approach is relevant and useful in analyzing press media representation and ideology reproduction about children in street situations through news coverage.

The importance of the media's role in shaping public opinion has become more obvious in the presence of different information sources today. People regardless of age are consuming media contents more than ever. Consequently, traditional, and social media has become powerful entities that influence society in a variety of ways (Andaleeb, Rahman, Rajeb, Akter, Gulshan, 2012). Traditional media convey information to people through texts and news broadcasts. The facts and events are usually interpreted and prioritized by journalists. In most cases, they decide what information needs to be public and what should be concealed from the public. Eide (2011) describes the process as "a construct reality through active interpretation" (p.403). However, media professionals have a responsibility to convey accurate information without deception and fabrication. Media has the power to mitigate social inequalities, power imbalance, gender discrimination through ethical decision making. Journalism thrives on seeking truth and giving voice to the voiceless (McBride & Rosenstiel, 2014). Since the study aims to examine the media construction of children's work in Bangladesh, taking political and cultural perspectives into consideration are important to understand how these perspectives influence media representation of children's work.

3.4 Representation

Media representation is yet another essential aspect which must be addressed to explore how children in street situations are portrayed in print media. In cultural study, the concept of representation has always been emphasized because it helps researchers to examine the relations between media representation and various social issues, such as, race, identity politics, gender, ethnicity, etc. Representation in print media entails using texts, signs, and images to represent something in certain way which contributes to meaning productions (Hall, 1997). Therefore, the analysis of media representation is necessary to investigate how children in street situations is portrayed in Bangladeshi newspaper.

Media representation is a well-researched topic. Many scholars have studied the relationship between media representation of minority group and identity politics in society (Hall, 1997; Poole, 2002; Van Dijk, 1991). However, Stuart Hall is one of the cultural theorists who made significant contribution to media representation theory. Hall's (1997) theories on representation highlight the influential role that cultural symbols and signs play in shaping our understanding of the around us. The term "representation" was introduced by Hall (2017) to illustrate the intricate way media not only present specific events and individuals but also actively engage in the process of (re)presenting them, resulting in different meanings. Several theoretical perspectives are used to illustrate how language represents the world through constructing meaning. Hall (1997) emphasizes three distinct approaches through which it is possible to examine and identify the representation of meaning through language work. The first one is called a reflexive approach which considers how meaning can be found in the real world in the form of an object, person,

idea, or event. According to this perspective, language serves as a mirror, reflecting the genuine meaning as it already exists in reality. The intentional approach, on the other hand, contends that meaning is produced through language, imposing the author's or speaker's own thoughts and beliefs. Because of the persuasive nature of communication, this approach is problematic in understanding the true meaning. The constructionist approach is the final and in tune with the social constructionist perspectives. Therefore, this approach is the most relevant and useful to this thesis. The constructionist approach to representation emphasizes that representations are constructed through cultural practices and are not neutral or mere reflections of reality. Instead, they are actively shaped and influenced by social actors (Hall, 1997). He argues that various cultural practices, such as language, media, or other symbolic systems, contribute to the construction of representations. Additionally, the constructionist approach emphasizes the role of ideology in determining representation. Hall (1997) believes that ideology is embedded in the cultural practice that produces representation, not the producer. In cultural studies, the concepts of representation and ideologies are central. These are also essential concepts in media studies to study how the media represent people and construct reality through representation.

As presented in the literature review chapter, many scholars have investigated media representation of children and minority children (Chavez, 2001; Branton & Dunaway, 2008; Chomsky, 2007; Suro, 2008). These studies use various theoretical perspectives and approaches, including, content analysis, reception analysis, and discourse analysis. In this thesis, I will employ discourse analysis, especially Multimodal critical discourse analysis, to examine written language and visuals in news media about children in street situations. These theories will be explored further below.

3.5 Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis is not a single but combines diverse theoretical frameworks that usually encompasses a range of critical linguistic approach for studying the language. CDA has significantly contributed to improving our understanding of how discourse functions in social processes, social structure, and social change (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018). CDA mainly focus on how language constructs meaning, and the underlying power relations, ideologies, and discursive practices communicated through language. CDA views language as a part of social practice and socially constructed shapes and is shaped by society. Although the definition of discourse is still vague and inadequate, it is commonly accepted among CDA scholars that discourse is a "form of language" or "way of speaking" (van Dijk, 2006). Critical discourse analysts claim that the interplay between language and discourse contributes to the reproduction and maintenance of dominant ideologies, power relations and social inequalities in society. Therefore, CDA scholars pay close attention to language to better understand power dynamics and ideology in discourse. CDA shares similarities with critical linguistics because it mainly stems from the field of critical linguistics. MAK Halliday was one of the critical linguists who argued that language is a social practice, and that systematic critical analysis of language (written and spoken) can reveal its underlying values, concepts, and practices. He developed semiotic tools to analyze the choices of words, phrases, and grammar, the structure of spoken and written language that affect the meaning and the implicit ideology behind the texts. Halliday's (1978) social semiotic

theory known as "systemic functional theory" and its approaches is still influential among CDA analysts, especially in conducting critical analysis of multimodal discourse which I will elaborate on in the methodology chapter. However, in the 1980s, several scholars from different disciplines, including Gunter Kress, Norman Fairclough and Teun van Dijk argued that the approach in critical linguistics is insufficient to critically analyze language due to its limitation to identify the link between language, power and ideology.

Van Dijk states that the concept of "critical" and "ideology" is particularly important in CDA research. van Dijk (2006) defines "ideology as shared ideas, beliefs and values of a group" (p.330). CDA scholars argue that ideology is not confined to a particular idea or belief accepted by everyone in society, but there can be many ideologies and ideological groups, such as feminist and anti-racist groups. The discursive practice has also ideological significance that can help produce and reproduce dominant ideology, unequal power relations and discriminatory social relations in society. In CDA research, media is considered on the most powerful institutions that plays a crucial role in perpetuating dominant ideologies through representation. As a result, media representation has been a central focus of CDA research. As discussed in the theory of representation, Stuart Hall was one of the prominent scholars in cultural studies who contributed significantly to the theories of representation and provides invaluable insights about representation and ideological significance. Hall (1997) argues that presuppositions about beliefs and practices in media often contribute to the reproduction of dominant ideals and practices which shapes our everyday perception of reality.

Since the development of CDA, there has been a plethora of research conducted in diverse disciplines to examine the interplay between language and discourse and how they contribute to sustaining dominant ideologies, power relations, and social inequalities between social classes. However, much of this CDA research has been monomodal, focusing on spoken and written language to understand how discursive practice in media perpetuates dominant ideals and power relations (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In the early 1990s, several scholars challenged the monomodal aspects (written and spoken language) of CDA and claimed that different modes, such as linguistic and non-linguistic convey meaning (Van Leeuwen, 2006; Machin & Mayr, 2012). Two prominent linguistics, Gunther Kress and Teo van Leeuwen, contributed significantly to the advancement of CDA research by introducing the concept of multimodality. In recent years, a growing body of literature and research shows how multimodal analysis can be best suited for achieving CDA's central objective (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The concept of multimodality is central to this thesis to analyze how news media construct meaning through different modes of representation of children in street situations, which will explore in the following chapter.

3.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined the theoretical frameworks that are relevant to this thesis. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of my thesis, I will use theories from childhood studies, media and journalism studies and critical discourse analysis. I have elaborated on the important theoretical concepts from childhood studies which I will reflect on in discussing the results. Media studies and theories of representation have also been presented as I aim to investigate media representation of children in street situations. Lastly, theoretical

perspectives from critical discourse analysis are central as I intend to employ methodological approach from multimodal critical discourse analysis which will be discussed in the next chapter. Theoretical perspectives from diverse disciplines are useful to get more nuanced understanding of how news coverage portray children in street situations in Bangladesh. I believe this thesis will provide invaluable insights of the media's role in shaping the identity and public perception of children in street situations.

4 Research design and Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology and methods employed for data analysis to address the research questions. As mentioned above, the aim of this thesis is to examine explicit and implicit meanings, ideas, concepts, ideologies conveyed through different semiotic choices in newspaper, such as written texts, images. Critical discourse analysis combined with multimodal tools, Machin & Mayr (2012) referred as multimodal critical discourse analysis, will be a useful to study the newspaper representations of children in street situations in Bangladesh. In the following section, I will first provide a brief description of multimodal discourse analysis followed by the methods used in this study for data analysis inspired by Machin & Mayr's book "How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction". I will then elaborate on the process of data collection, sampling, and coding of news contents. Finally, I will reflect on the methodological limitations and the importance of reflexivity in CDA research.

4.1 Multimodal critical discourse analysis

Multimodal critical discourse analysis combines critical analysis to multimodal discourse to investigate different modes of communication and its underlying meaning which has previously been ignored in CDA. Although the combination of visual texts and other modes have been used in the field of semiotics, anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies, the integration of different semiotic modes in studying language and media has been popular among linguistics relatively recently (Jones, 2021). As mentioned above, much of the work in CDA research has primarily focused on written and spoken texts to study news media, political speeches, advertisements, schoolbook, and so on. A number of scholars argued that meaning is conveyed not only through spoken and written language but different modes construct meaning. They started developing visual analytical tools that will help researchers to critically analyze multimodal texts, such as audio, video, image. Two early proponents of critical linguistics, Kress and Van Leeuwen contributed significantly to the development of methodological frameworks to analyze visual and non-linguistic communication in addition to texts. Kress & Van Leeuwen's (1996) book "Reading image" popularized the concept of multimodality among linguists and discourse analysts. The concept of "multimodality" refers to the integration of different modes, such as texts, images, sound, video, music in communicative events through which meaning is conveyed (Machin, 2013). As discussed above, Kress & van Leeuwen's work is heavily influenced by the fundamental principles of "systematic functional model" of language originally developed by semiotician MAK Halliday. Halliday in his systematic functional theories states that "linguistics is a kind of semiotics because language is one among a number of systems of meaning that constitute human culture" (Norris & Maier, 2014; p.137). He pioneered the concept of "social semiotics", through which "people make use of semiotic resources to produce communicative events and interpret them" (Norris & Maier, 2014; p.137). Kress & van Leeuwen (2005) claims that MCDA is considered as a subfield of social semiotics that considers how semiotic resources in used and its underlying meaning in multimodal communicative events. In recent years, multimodal representation has been an important part of our daily lives due to the rise of digital technologies and social media which has resulted in a significant increase to integrate multimodal aspects of communication into

research. Contemporary scholars from various disciplines, including media and film studies, journalism, visual studies, social anthropology, and psychology, have shown an increasing interest in multimodal frameworks to study media and language to gain in-depth knowledge of how complex ideas, concepts, and ideologies are communicated through language by integrating various modes of enquiry.

Multimodal critical discourse analysis aims to explore not only the individual meaning conveyed through different modes but also how they work together to construct meaning. For instance, in multimodal texts, image can help interpret the texts. In contrast, image can have different meaning for different people, texts can help clarify the message. Kress & van Leeuwen (1996) assert that various linguistic modes are intricately intertwined and dependent on one another to construct meaning through language. The multimodality concept is particularly important to study media due to its multimodal nature, such as texts, images, sounds, layout. These modes are not isolated but work together that contribute significantly to the meaning-making process in media. Scholars suggest that paying attention to the semiotics resources in different modes is crucial to gain a more nuanced understanding of how meaning is constructed and conveyed through these modes in communicative events (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2005). As a result, it is important to consider different modes, such as texts and images and how semiotic resources is used within these modes when conducting research on print media representation. Multimodality is a central concept in this thesis and important methodological framework to explore explicit and implicit meaning communicated through different modes using semiotics resources in representation of children in street situations. I will further elaborate on these semiotic resources below.

4.2 MCDA tools

The methodological approach used to examine media representation is consistent with the recent trend of combining text and image analysis to comprehend the underlying meaning and ideologies communicated through language. To carry out the data analysis using MCDA tools, I will draw inspiration from Machin and Mayr's (2012) book "How to Do Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction". As previously stated, the fundamental principle of multimodality refers to the various semiotic modes utilized to convey meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen (1996). These modes in media usually include visual, auditory, linguistic, gestural, and spatial. However, since this thesis aims to analyze news media, I will consider all these modes as part of my analysis, including texts, images, gestures, and color, except the auditory mode. Each of these modes relies on a unique set of semiotic resources to convey meaning. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) define "semiotic resources" as distinct signs and symbols within each mode to communicate meaning through language. In news media, I will mainly focus on semiotics choices that is used in written texts and images to represent children in street situations. For instance, the textual analysis involves looking at words, phrases, sentence structure used in texts and its underlying meanings. Similarly, image analysis pays close attention to semiotic resources in image, such as gaze, pose, color, framing. Semiotic choice analysis both in texts and image is an important toolkit for analyzing the way people make semiotic choice in language and visual communication to achieve their communicative aim. Machin and Mayr (2012) demonstrate several useful MCDA tools for examining semiotic selections in diverse modes of communications, including texts and images, that are usually employed to

convey meaning through media representation. In this thesis, by focusing on lexical choice analysis, social actor analysis, rhetoric trope analysis, the textual analysis will be conducted. Similarly, the analysis of the selected images will involve examining various semiotic, such as pose, gaze, framing, composition, color. The following section elaborates on these MCDA tools that will be used to analyze semiotic resources used in news stories and images of children in street situations.

4.2.1 Analysis of Lexical choices

The first and most important semiotic resources that can be used to convey meaning through texts is the choice of words or lexical choices. Lexical choice analysis focus on the word choices used by the author in newspaper contents to represent children in street situations. It includes what kind of words, phrases are used, predominance of certain words, and how these words connotation convey certain meaning in texts. Machin & Mayr (2012) stress the importance of analyzing different lexical or word choices in texts as it can signify certain kinds of identity, values which are not explicit in the text. Moreover, examining the underlying connotation associated with words is also important as words contains positive and negative connotation. Connotation refers to the additional meanings ascribed to words and images beyond their literal sense (Van Dijk, 2006). One the other hand, words can also carry denotation which is the literal meaning or strict dictionary meaning of a word. Paying close attention to the word choices and connoted meaning associated with the words are crucial to understand implicit or indirect meanings in texts. One fundamental aspect of CDA is to the study of implicit meanings conveyed through texts (van Dijk, 2006). Machin & Mayr (2012) states that various lexical sources can be used in language to convey certain meaning, such as overlexicalization, structural opposition, quoting verbs, modal verbs which will be presented below.

Overlexicalization refers to overemphasis on certain terms or excessive description that connotes movement and change. It gives a sense of over-persuasion in language, especially if something is problematic or ideologically contentious (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 37). Consider the following example: "*Winter is horrendous in Norway*". The word "horrendous" gives a sense of exaggeration and negative connotation in the sentence. It suggests something causes problem during the months of winter in Norway. It might be the reason of heavy snowfall, extreme cold weather, or limited daylight. Even though it is not clear form the sentence why winter is horrendous in Norway, but we can get a sense of danger as the over-lexicalized term and word connotation "horrendous" problematized winter in Norway. This tool will aid the analysis to identify words or terms that are ideologically significant in texts in representation of street.

Structural opposition defines as Opposing concepts in language, such as good-bad and men-women, are referred to as structural oppositions. These opposing concepts are often dichotomous and mutually exclusive, which constructs categories, reinforces social hierarchies, and establishes power relationships through language. When used in context, some words in texts can bring with them a set of ideas or imply a distinction between the qualities of their opposites without being explicit (Machin & Mayr 2012:36). Nonetheless, these opposing terms can also be expressed explicitly in language, that Van Dijk (2006) refers to as ideological squiring. Ideological squires in a sentence can be seen when opposing classes of ideas are built around the same people. It does not have to be stated

overtly in a sentence but can be demonstrated in texts how these concepts are applied (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Thus, it is necessary to pay close attention to the word selection in news articles in order to identify structural oppositions and the underlying meaning conveyed by these opposing ideas.

Quoting verbs analysis in CDA is equally important as other semiotic choices described above. It is an important analytical tool in CDA that allow researchers to examine how people are represented as speaking in language. The way quoting verbs are used in texts to represent how someone has spoken can be very revealing. For example, a quoting verb can be used to exaggerate or emphasize a specific situation. Similarly, it can be used to dramatize an event or elicit empathy for the participant represented in texts. According to Machin & Mayr (2012), verb quotations are a potent linguistic device an author can use to significantly alter readers' perceptions of events or persuade them to form specific assessments. Different quoting verbs can have different meaning potentials based on the author's intent and what they are attempting to accomplish through language. Consider the following quotes as an illustration: *Maria whispered, "I am frightened."* Instead of a natural verb form, such as said, the verb "whispered" is used in the sentence. According to Machin & Mayr (2012), "whisper" is a descriptive verb used as a voice qualifier in the quotation, indicating Maria's attitude and emotion, which intensifies the event significantly. Using quotations and quoting verbs is a common practice in mainstream media that can serve multiple purposes. First, it increases the news's creativity, and second, it can sometimes be used to change people's perceptions of an event (Harcup, 2006). I have utilized this tool to analysis quotations and quoting verbs that has been used in newspaper as children's voice in representation. It will surely give me important insight to gain more nuanced understanding of how children in street situations are represented in newspaper.

Modality in CDA refers to the linguistic tools speakers or writers use to convey their attitudes, beliefs, and view of the world. Modality can be used to express the speaker's or writer's attitude towards the information being presented and to convey the degree of certainty or possibility of a statement (Halliday, 1994). Modal auxiliary verbs, such as "may," "can," "shall," "must," "ought to," and so on, are how modalities are expressed in language. Halliday (1994) argues that writers can use modal verbs in several ways to effectively convey and negotiate information as follows: Obligation, e.g. *You must receive a high grade on your thesis.* Inclination, e.g. *I would have chosen different topics if I had known that discourse analysis is a time-consuming and tedious process.* Probability, e.g. *I'll be finished with my writing soon.* Usuality, e.g. *Every day, I would work on my thesis.* Ability, e.g. *The thesis can be completed on time.* Modal verbs, on the other hand, can be high modality or low modality, indicating the degree of strength of the opinion. Words like "must" and "should", "ought to" are examples of high modalities, while "may" and "could" are examples of weak modalities.

In addition to the modality, **hedging** is another useful strategy for creating ambiguity in language. Hedging in a language is when a speaker or writer avoids being direct or making a promise, even though it can give the impression of being precise and unambiguous (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.192). For example, by using words and phrases such as "some people say," "I believe," and "we suggest" in language, authors can give the impression of being precise without making a firm statement. To demonstrate hedging in sentence, consider the following sentence: *Experts say that cardio is better than heavy lifting.* The hedging phrase "experts say" provides a sense of authenticity without being overly direct. Although, the sentence does not specify who these experts are or what impact their

opinions have on the statement. Hodge & Kress (1993) emphasize the significance of paying attention to these modalities and hedging in texts, as it is a vital tool for expressing ideas or beliefs without being overt. I will pay close attention to modal verbs and hedging words used in the news coverage and their underlining meaning.

4.2.2 Social actor analysis

Social actor analysis is another semiotic choice analysis tool that examines how a person is named and represented in language, referred to as "representational strategies" in CDA (Fairclough, 2003). The linguistic choices made by authors in representing individuals or groups of people can serve to emphasize particular aspects of identity. Machin & Mayr (2012) claims that "language is not neutral, and every decision an author makes will serve to highlight a particular aspect of identity linked to certain kinds of discourse" (p.77). Moreover, these lexical choices can sometimes allow authors to convey a set of ideas and values centered on the social actor being represented without explicitly articulating them. The book by Machin & Mayr (2012) mention several representational strategies that are crucial to consider recognizing ideological works done thorough language. However, the analysis focuses on some of the most common representational strategies used to depict children in street situations. First, I will describe the naming or representational strategies employed to analyze newspaper contents. In the next section on image analysis, visual representational strategies will be outlined.

Individualization versus collectivization is a useful analytical tool for determining who is individualized or collectivized. It helps identify what aspect of a participant is foregrounded and what is backgrounded in representation. Identifying ideological effects in CDA also requires paying close attention to how participants are described as individuals or collective (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Consider the following scenario: *Two Muslim people came into my store last night and stole house utilities*. The use of "two Muslim people" in the text reflects collective identity, and the participants are collectivized. If the sentence is written as follows: *Two suspicious-looking Muslim men, Rahim and Karim, came by my store last night and stole house utilities*. The second sentence individualizes the participants by using names like Rahim and Karim. Furthermore, additional information about their character, such as "suspicious looking," is used to foreground their mischievous entities via text. Machin & Mayr (2012) claims that depending on how participants are individualized in texts reflects whether they are humanized or dehumanized. It is a useful tool for journalists because it enables them to make their readers feel more connected to the subject by personalizing certain actors and providing additional information about them. Thus, I will closely examine the newspaper contents to determine whether children in street situations are individualized or collectivized, as well as the meaning and ideas behind their representation.

Functional honorifics in print media is another representational strategy journalists often employ to situate social actors in the social sphere, revealing their status and significance in society. According to Machin & Mayr (2012), the term "functional honorifics" suggests a degree of seniority or a role that requires a degree of respect. This may involve the perspectives of officials and experts in certain fields, such as president, teacher. The use of honorifics in media discourse not only increases the credibility of the news but also make the speaker appear more important and authoritative in language. (Machin and Mayr,

2012, p.83). CDA relies heavily on the analysis of honorifics in texts because it provides insight into the status and identity of a group. In media reports, the way people are represented by using honorifics may accentuate or downplay the role of a social actor by highlighting officials' perspectives. Therefore, analysis of functional honorifics will be beneficial to gain a more nuanced understanding of the representation of children in street situations in press media.

Objectivation refers to the process of representing people in language through features rather than by their names or function. Consider the following sentence as an illustration: *Alex, being a person of color, had a difficult upbringing.* According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, "people of color" is typically used to refer to anyone who is not white. In the sentence, Alex is reduced to a feature his color. His individuality, personality, upbringing is characterized through his feature as being "people of color". Van Dijk (2006) stress the importance of paying close attention to objectivation in language as it can reveal any implicit meaning and ideological work accomplished through language. I have observed such representational strategies in depictions of children in street situations and will consider them in textual analysis.

Aggregation is a linguistic term that describes the process by which individuals are quantified and treated as statistics (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In mainstream media, the use of terms, such as many, some, few is commonly used. According to van Dijk (2006), terms, such as "many" and "some" gives the impression of objective research and scientific credibility without providing the number. Thus, paying attention to these terms in language can be revealing in determining whether or not ideological work is being done.

Us versus Them is a well-established term in CDA and important analytical tool to identify how individuals or a group of people are represented in language. In language, pronouns such as "us," "them," "we" and "They" are used to support or oppose specific ideas. According to Machin & Mayr (2012), "We" and "Us" are tricky words in language because they can cause ambiguity and can be used to convey a sense of shared ideas and values without being explicit. In CDA, it is crucial to determine which group is represented favorably in language and which group is not. The process of positive representation of one group (we) and negative representation of others (us) in a language which Van Dijk (2000a) referred to as ideological squiring. These words, such as we, they, and them, are frequently used in newspaper depictions of children in street situations. Therefore, I will closely examine these words and phrases in my analysis to determine which concepts and values are emphasized in the representation of children in street situations.

4.2.3 Rhetoric tropes analysis

Lastly, Rhetoric is an important semiotic resource that can be used to convey meaning and ideas via texts. Rhetoric is the art of communicating effectively and persuasively, and tropes refers to the deviation from the ordinary and principal signification of a world (Richardson, 2007, p.65). In texts, a trope can connote or denote something other than its original meaning. Such tropes can be strategically employed in media discourse to attract our attention, not with the intent to mislead or alter the event, but to influence how we interpret it (Machin and Mayr, 2012). There are five types of tropes mentioned by

Richardson (2007). However, during in-dept coding, I have identified three of them are frequently used in the selected news contents: Metaphor, Metonym, and Hyperbole.

Metaphor is a potent linguistic device that can profoundly affect how we understand and make sense of the world around us. Metaphor has been recognized one of the most important rhetoric devices in CDA which can be generally defined as the process by which we understand one concept in terms of another (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Typically, a conceptual metaphorical construction in language typically consists of a source domain and a target domain. According to Lakoff (1993), the target domain is the concept we want to describe through metaphor, whereas the source domain is the concept from which the metaphor is derived. Consider the following expression: *Life is like riding a bicycle*. "Riding a bicycle" is the source domain from which the metaphor is drawn when describing "life". Holmgreen (2008) points out that the media frequently uses metaphors in texts to promote and legitimize particular points of view with a moral or ethical tone.

Hyperbole refers to exaggeration in language, a rhetoric device typically employed to increase impact or draw attention using language (Richardson, 2007). Considered the following sentence as an illustration: *I have told you a million times to clean your room*. The phrase "million times" is hyperbole in the sentence as it has been used to convey an exaggerated sense of urgency without explicitly stating the number. Exaggeration (hyperbole) can often use in texts to create humor or to emphasize something significantly. Furthermore, hyperboles can also be used to highlight one version of reality while downplaying others. As previously stated, this is also known as ideological squiring through language.

Metonymy is the replacement of one thing with something similar (Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp.123). As an illustration, consider the following sentence: *the kitchen is busy tonight*. In the sentence, the word "kitchen" has been replaced with "people" because it is not the kitchen itself that is busy but the cooks and chefs who work in it. Richardson (2007) explains that metonymy is a crucial aspect to consider in CDA because it enables researchers to identify underlying power dynamics and ideological perspectives in language. Metonymy can be used in language to construct specific narratives, emphasize, or downplay certain aspects, and create associations that influence people's perceptions of a given idea or problem. Thus, it is essential to pay close attention to the newspaper's content and how metonymy is used to represent children in street situations, which will be explored in depth in the analysis chapter.

4.2.4 Image analysis

In their book *Critical Discourse Analysis: A Multimodal Introduction*, Machin & Mayr (2012) discuss the significance of visual analysis alongside textual analysis in order to gain a more nuanced understanding of prevalent discourses and ideologies communicated through mainstream media. I will discuss some of the tools used in visual semiotic choice analysis, as multimodality has been the focus of the research design and data analysis.

Object analysis in MCDA focuses on the ideas and values communicated by objects as well as their visual representation. Machin and Mayr (2012) highlight the significance of analyzing objects and their underlying meanings and discourses. By looking at the objects

in an image, we can learn about the social and cultural setting of the image as well as the values, beliefs, and attitudes communicated by the objects. For example, a woman wearing a skirt, sweatshirt, and hat may suggest modernity and western identity, whereas a woman wearing a hijab (object) may indicate her religious identity. Moreover, object analysis can show how objects are used in other forms of communication, such as texts, to create meaning (Kress & Leeuwen, 1996, pp.232). For example, a drug in an image accompanied by texts discussing the benefits of taking prescribed medications may suggest the idea of healing and prevention. However, if the accompanying text discusses the issue of drug abuse, a drug-related image could exacerbate destruction and cause harm. Therefore, object analysis of images depicting children in street situations is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of the image and its connotations. The objects (attributes) of the selected images depicting children in street situations in Bangladesh will be included in my analysis.

Settings analysis in MCDA looks at how settings are used in an image to convey specific ideas, discourse, values, and identities. It is an important strategy to consider when analyzing images because it aids in determining how visual elements such as background, landscapes, and environment are used to convey meaning. Kress & Leeuwen (1996) asserts that image settings can provide crucial contextual information regarding an image, such as its cultural and social contexts. For example, the background of an image can provide valuable information about the time, place, or social setting. Furthermore, image settings can be used to complement or contradict other modes of communication, such as text and sound. For instance, an image accompanied by texts discussing urbanization may suggest modernity and growth, as well as the idea of dynamism and progress. On the other hand, an image of a person sitting alone in urban settings may suggest isolation and loneliness. Consequently, it is essential to analyze the image settings to comprehend how the visual context contributes to the overall multimodal texts and how it may influence the interpretation of the image.

Saliency in images refers to compositional elements that are made to stand out to highlight certain meanings (Machin & Mayr, 2012, pp.54). Saliency analysis is essential for determining which image elements or features are most prominent and what meaning each salient feature conveys. Machin & Mayr (2012) demonstrate that saliency in an image can be achieved in a number of ways, including through size, vivid colors, varying levels of focus, foregrounding elements, and brightness. These elements will be considered in the analysis of selected images to explore how meaning is conveyed through these salient features. These elements will be taken into account during the analysis of selected images to determine how these prominent features convey meaning through the depiction of children in street situations.

Gaze is also an important visual semiotic tool that can help identify the attitude, personality, and identity of the depicted person. Different meanings are attributed to gazes based on how the people are depicted in an image, such as whether they are looking out at the viewer, they look downwards or upwards (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Although it may not be explicitly stated, gaze can help viewers determine how to evaluate the subject depicted in an image. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) distinguish two types of images based on how gaze is depicted: offer and demand images. In a demand image, the subjects look directly at the camera, as described by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996). Eye contact with the audience can be interpreted as a form of visual address. Addressing the audience in this way creates an imaginary relationship with viewers. Moreover, gaze acts can also

be emphasized with facial expressions and gestures. Machin & Mayr (2012) describe that the mood of the address can affect the perception of demand. For instance, if the depicted subject smiles while looking directly at the viewer, this can be interpreted as welcoming. In contrast, a slight frown could be perceived as unwelcoming or as maintaining social distance. However, an offer image occurs when a person looks off-frame or away from the viewer. No viewer response is required. Instead, it is presented to the viewer for open interpretation and consideration. Off-frame gaze can have multiple meanings. In Western society, for example, looking up or down has metaphorical associations with higher or lower status, power, or dominance. Depending on the gaze and camera angle, an image can convey a such interpretation of higher or lower status or power dominance. In addition, if a person is depicted looking up, it can imply resilience, confidence, and self-esteem, whereas looking down can indicate vulnerability and submission.

Pose analysis entails looking at the physical alignments and movements of the people in the picture as well as their gazes, facial expressions, and other nonverbal gestures. Pose analysis is a crucial aspect of MCDA that should be performed with other modes of communication presented in the image, such as texts, symbols, or other visual elements. According to Machin & Mayr (2012), certain poses in photographs have connotations that can allude to broader ideals, concepts, and identities. For example, if a depicted person's pose indicates activity or movement of the legs or hands, it may imply fun and enjoyment. In contrast, if the depicted person's pose suggests stillness, it may connote sadness, worry, or a lack of interest. These image acts, such as pose and gaze, cannot be explained with words alone because they can imply different meanings in different visuals. Visual and other forms of communication, such as texts and headlines, are the best ways to illustrate these image acts.

Distance has meaning potential and signifies social relations in visuals just as it does in reality. For instance, if someone is close and likeable, we prefer to communicate with them, whereas we prefer to maintain a safe distance from a stranger or a potential threat. Distance in image can be created by different sizes of frames, namely, close-up, medium and long frame. Close-up frame, which begin at the shoulder and end at the top of the head, are commonly used in film and photography to highlight details of specific objects or people. Different meanings are attached to close-ups depending on the context and setting. For instance, it can be used to create a sense of intimacy and emotional connection with the viewers. A close-up frame can also create tension or discomfort by focusing on a person's face. On the other hand, a long frame, also known as a wide shot, typically reveals the entire subject, making them appear relatively small and providing a wide-angle view of their surroundings. Wide frame can be used to convey a feeling of solitude and isolation. It can represent mass movements by depicting the subjects moving through their surroundings. Machin and Mayr (2012) point out that this type of frame is often used in newspapers to show people's suffering, such as in stories about war, famine, or illegal immigration. Lastly, a medium frame, also known as a mid-shot, captures subjects from the top of their head to roughly their waist, typically framing them in a way that includes both their body and surroundings. Mid-shot can be used for various purposes, including displaying emotions, providing context, and establishing a sense of balance in image.

An angle in an image refers to the direction or perspective from which it was captured. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996), different angles have distinct meaning potentials and can significantly affect how a viewer interprets an image. For example, if a photograph is taken from a low angle, usually below the subject, the angle gives a sense

of the subject's height and power. In contrast, if someone is captured from above and placed on the ground, it signifies helplessness and vulnerability. Similarly, showing someone at eye level creates a sense of familiarity, making the subject seem approachable while showing their back or having them not look at the camera can create a feeling of mystery and distance. However, Machin & Mayr (2012) assert that angle and distance in images are both crucial components that work together to convey meaning. Therefore, these compositional elements will be considered during image analysis.

Visual modality markers, such as color, brightness, and saturation, are the last semiotic resources and equally important to look at in MCDA as modality markers in language. Machin & Mayr (2012) argue that not only can language express different levels of commitment, judgement, and evaluation about a subject, but also visual communication has significant modality makers and must be considered in MCDA. Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996) demonstrated a number of modality markers that can be found in images. Nonetheless, two of these modality markers are extremely important and pertinent to this thesis. The first one is color and saturation. Color saturation ranging from black and white to saturated colors has meaning potential. Black-and-white images may convey a sense of drama, while images with lots of saturated colors may convey a strong feeling of emotion. Kress & Van Leeuwen (1996) illustrated a modality scale for color saturation from the lowest modality (black and white) to the medium modality and highest modality (over-saturated colors). These modality scales are helpful for determining whether or not a photograph is heavily graded and its underlying meaning. The second modality maker can be realized through the degree of detail articulation. An image's level of detail can range from very little to natural to extremely high. Color saturations, degree of details, highlights in image can contribute to the overall representation of modality. Kress and Van Leeuwen identify four distinct image types with different modality markers. The first one is perception image can be seen as modified by the naked eye. For instance, images that are close to naturalistic with moderate (not excessive) color saturation, representation of details, and adequate brightness. On the other hand, images that closely resemble what we see in real life and cannot be distinguished with the naked eye are regarded as highly naturalistic images, which Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996) referred to as pragmatic images. Third, sensory images with high modality include vivid colors and overly detailed images. Lastly, abstract images lack specific details and are abstract from naturalistic and artistic details like black and white photos. These modality indicators are crucial for image analysis to determine whether an image is pragmatic, natural, sensory, or abstract and its underlying meaning (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996). I will pay close attention to these modality markers in the images and how they contribute to meaning-making.

4.3 Sampling

In order to critically examine the newspaper portrayal of homeless children, I selected 35 news articles from four major newspapers (The Daily star, Bangla Tribune, Business Standard and Prothom alo) between 2002 and 2022. These newspapers are ranked highest in circulation per year: Prothom Alo (approx. 246 198), The Daily Star (approx. 123 450 circulation) Dhaka Tribune (approx. 32 653) and The Daily Ittefaq (approx. 12 093). The first two is English Newspaper and the last two newspapers are in English. The reason for

choosing both Bangla and English newspapers was to get a rich and balanced sample as newspapers in both languages are predominate in Bangladesh and have different targeted audiences. For instance, the English newspaper is mainly distributed to the upper class, and the Bengali newspaper is for the mass population. In addition, I chose to focus on news articles published between 2002 and 2022 for two reasons: the availability of news articles, as children in street situations is a long-standing social issue in Bangladesh, and to identify any changes in the representation of children in street situations. I accessed the articles through the online platform of each newspaper and searched the keywords for English newspaper "street" "homeless" "children" and Bangla newspaper "পথ", "শিশু", "টোকাই". Newspaper articles were selected based on the following criteria:

- (1) Articles must be multimodal in nature, including both images and texts.
- (2) Articles must consist of between 400 and 2000 words.
- (3) Articles must be published between 2002 and 2022.
- (4) Articles must be about children in street situations in Bangladesh.

I selected news articles between 400 and 2000 words in length to get a rich sample. As lengthy feature articles usually contain interviews, personal narratives and detailed descriptions of the phenomenon, it will be beneficial to identify recurring patterns, themes and representational strategies used in texts. In addition, the sample consisted of three different genres (see, table 5.1). It is important to mention that each genre reflects perspectives from different people and investigative subjects who are directly or indirectly involved in the production of news. For instance, editorials are generally written by the editors, whereas opinion pieces come from people or organizations that have a great deal of knowledge about the investigative subject. The news featured on the front and back pages contains field reporting from an event, sometimes comes with interviews with participants. Editorials and op-eds are usually longer than the news featured on the front and back pages, containing approximately 700–1000 words. Selecting different genres from each newspaper enables me to critically analyze different views, perspectives and ideologies in news media representation of children in street situations.

4.4 Coding

The analytical procedure follows several stages. First, in the initial stage of search using keywords, 526 articles were identified between 2002 and 2022. Of 526 articles, only 35 articles were selected, and 491 articles were deducted as they did not meet the selection criteria mentioned above. In the second stage, I analyzed tone of the selected articles using headlines and leads. Headlines typically are concise statements summarize the article's main idea or the most newsworthy aspects. The lead is known as the hook because it is intended to grab readers' attention and attract their interest. Both headline and lead are crucial in CDA as they set the tone for the reader and encourage them to continue reading (Van Leeuwen, 2002). All headlines and leads of the chosen articles were carefully read and categorized as negative, positive and neutral/balanced (containing both positive and negative features). If the headline and lead were unclear, I read the whole article to determine the tone. Reach (2002) states that "newspaper headlines and leads reflect ideological values and attitudes; therefore, analyzing the lexical choices and syntactic structures of newspaper headlines and the captions of photographs permits researchers to

determine the underlying meaning of news reporting” (p.07). I chose to use headlines and lead analysis of the selected articles in the initial phase to look at the overall sample in a more simplified way to get an overview of the data. It is important to note that details and complexities are lost in this way of doing it. But the more complex aspects will be explored in the in-depth multimodal analysis. Since the purpose of this thesis is to investigate the representational and underlying discursive strategies of news coverage of children living on the streets, I have developed a set of criteria that enables me to determine the underlying meaning and tone of the selected news articles to gain an initial understanding of the news contents. Therefore, the chosen articles (36) were carefully read, reviewed, and categorized as positive, negative, or neutral tone based on the following criteria:

Table 4.4.1: Criteria for identifying the tone of 29 newspaper articles.

Negative tone	Positive tone	Neutral tone
Contain language that are inappropriate may result in stigmatization, such as criminal, drug addicts, menace, street urchin, delinquent, scavengers.	Avoid using inappropriate and stigmatizing language.	Avoid using inappropriate and stigmatizing language.
Contain language that is intended to appeal the audience using sensationalizing or emotionally charged stories, words, and phrases, such as shock, stolen, lost, plight, devastating.	Contain language that are empowering, such as outstanding, excellent, courageous.	Articles that provide fairly balanced perspectives (both positive and negative)
Contain language that frame the phenomenon negatively, such as alarming, plight, tragic, grim.	Contain language that highlight their potential strength, such as resilience, resourcefulness, skills, expertise, ambition using words, like creative, adaptive, hope, incredible, skilled	
Contain language that express disapproval, such as failure, terrible, disastrous.	Avoid using sensationalizing stories, words, phrases, such as shock, stolen, lost, plight, devastating.	

The initial phase of analysis demonstrated that the negative tone was predominant (n=29), compared to positive (n=5) and neutral (n=2) respectively (see, table 5.1). As the news

stories regarding children in street situations were predominantly negative in tone, I decided to focus my analysis on these 29 news articles. As a result, the next step of coding process followed a systematic thematic analysis on the 29 articles in order to identify prevalent discourses and the process of constructing these negative discourses. I relied on Attride-Stirling's (2001) thematic network technique to find major thematic categories through coding (see, appendix). First, I have made a doc file containing 29 articles and imported the file into NVivo software. Then, I carefully read through each line and made code segments in NVivo identifying meaningful chunks in the texts through open coding. The open coding resulted in 86 meaningful pieces. Some of them are recurrent or repetitive, some of them are not. Then I reread and reviewed the texts segments that were not recurrent to identify whether they belong to one of these recurrent categories, useful or isolating for this thesis. Some of these chunks deducted in this process. Afterward, I assembled them into several coherent groups based on similarity and shared features. Then I reread and reviewed the texts segments of each group and renamed them as basic themes (see, appendix: 1). Once these basic themes were identified, I rearranged them in a way that make sense, relevant to this thesis and named it organizing themes. In this way, I identified the following key themes that reflect organizing themes: children in street situations as ideal victims, children in street situations as delinquents and children as objects of investment.

The second part of the coding process involved with identifying patterns or commonalities in representational strategies in these themes. At this point, I revisited and reviewed between the lines in the text's segments containing basic themes in NVivo. I identified several main representational patterns within these themes. For instance, news coverage tends to employ several representational strategies to portray children in street situations as ideal victims, including individualizing children's names, and ages, using quoting verbs, and opposing concepts, such as Us versus Them (see, chapter six). Similarly, the delinquency of children in street situation is highlighted by using various rhetorical tropes, lexical choices and referential strategies. However, I noticed that these representational strategies are sometimes overlapping and used in texts together.

The final stage involved with identifying images. The process was relatively easy. I revisited the texts segments containing basic themes and reviewed the image carefully. I chose to critically analyze the few images with significant multimodal characteristics and also relevant for the analysis. All the multimodal tools I elaborated above are used in the textual and image analysis of newspaper representation of children in street situations.

4.5 Methodological limitation and reflexivity

Although CDA is an effective analytical tool for exploring underlying discourses, ideologies, and power dynamics communicated through texts or visual features, it is by no means without limitations. These caveats are mainly derived from the criticisms directed at CDA. There are several criticisms that can be found in scholarly debate regarding CDA. The first claim has to do with the lack of guidelines to conduct a systematic and substantiated analysis of texts. The lack of guidelines doesn't necessarily mean a scarcity of the theoretical foundation of CDA, but quite the opposite. In fact, the theoretical underpinning, according to Breeze (2011), is too vast and ambiguous to produce coherent and

standardized results through CDA. Another influential claim in CDA research is that the subjective bias that allows researchers to yield findings in accordance with the research objectives (Wodak, 2001; Breeze, 2011). Subjectivity refers to projecting a researcher's own opinion onto a text and manipulating findings according to research aims. Wodak (2001) asserts that CDA runs the risk of injecting personal and political interpretations into analysis. Thus, the validity and reliability of CDA research is accused of lacking academic rigor. In his book, "Discourse Analysis: A Critical Review," Widdowson (1995) presents two major limitations of CDA. Firstly, he claims that CDA is not an analysis but rather a partial interpretation of texts. In addition, he argues that discourse is multi-layered and context-dependent, which yields different meanings through social practice. CDA is therefore claimed to be the "interpreter's own ideological position, allowing them to select texts that fit into the particular discourse" (Widdowson, 1995, p.168). These limitations are also applicable to multimodal discourse analysis.

In response to these critiques, CDA scholars have defended its interdisciplinary approach to analysis and argued that their political stance is a strength, not a limitation, especially in studying how power dynamics work at the social level (Dijk, 2001). However, it is important to mention that CDA researchers are mostly aware of the subjective bias that might influence textual interpretation. To address these limitations, this study recognizes the potential bias and therefore constantly questions my positionality through self-reflexivity. According to Zienkowski (2017), reflexivity is crucial in doing critical discourse analysis because it allows "critical scholars to investigate how subjects engage with the logics, rationalities, and ideologies that infuse their discursive world with meaning at different levels of analysis" (p.10). While practicing self-reflexivity throughout the research process, I believe that the conceptual framework based on established literature and theories will certainly bring transparency to the study of media representation of children in street situations.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter, I have elaborated and reflected on the methodology and methods that is used to analyze the selected articles. Furthermore, I have explained the process of data selection and analysis in this chapter, such as sampling, coding. The methodological limitations and the importance of reflexivity is explained to conduct a multimodal critical discourse analysis of newspaper texts and images. In chapter 5, the results from the data analysis will be explained. Chapter 6 presents the findings of the study, in which the major themes that have emerged from the selected articles will be explored in detail using the MCDA tools described in this chapter.

5 Overall sample characteristics

As explained in the previous chapter, 36 of 526 articles met the inclusion criteria and were selected for further analysis. These articles (N=17) are primarily opinion pieces, while the remaining articles are collected from editorials (N=9) and news reports (N=10). Most of the news articles published between 2012-2022 (N= 21). The preliminary screening of newspapers also revealed that the circulation of news articles about children in street situations was higher from 2012 to 2022 than from 2002 to 2012. It might be due to the global pandemic in 2020, which had the greatest impact on disadvantaged children and received significant print media coverage. Out of 21 news articles published between 2012-2022, 15 were published in 2020 and onwards. The selected articles contained positive (n=5) and negative (n=29), as well as stories that are neutral (n=2) in tone (both positive and negative features) in their portrayals (Table 5.1)

Figure 5.1: Sample distribution

	Positive tone	Negative tone	Neutral tone	Total	
Sample characteristics	n	n	n	N	%
Newspaper					
Dhaka Tribune (Eng)	0	8	0	8	23%
The Daily Star (Eng)	3	7	0	10	29%
Prothom Alo (Bangla)	2	8	2	12	31%
The Daily Ittefaq (Bangla)	0	6	0	6	17%
Year published					
2012-2022	4	16	1	21	58%
2002-2012	1	13	1	15	42%
Publication type					
News reports	0	10	0	10	27%
Editorials	1	8	0	9	25%
Opinions	4	11	2	17	47%

In addition, the analysis revealed that news contents regarding children in street situations is mostly negatively constructed. Initial analysis of headlines and leads of the selected articles indicate that news articles that are negatively constructed tend to use sensationalized and emotionally charged words, phrases, such as “lost”, “stolen”, “tragic”, “shocking” to highlight certain aspects of identity of children in street situations. This will be explored more in-dept in the next chapter. As illustrated in Figure 5.1, (n=29) articles portray children in street situations in negative tone, whereas (n=5) were positive and (N=2) were neutral in tone. Of the five news articles depicted positively, four are from opinion pieces. Interestingly, four of these opinion pieces were written by researcher and academic professionals from various institutions in Bangladesh and abroad. For instance, the following opinion piece comes with the headline **“Politics of survival: Listening to the (street) children in Dhaka”**. The writer is from Bangladesh and is a doctoral researcher in human geography at Durham University, UK. He is currently conducting his fieldwork in Dhaka. In this article, the authors initially make a conscious decision to refer

to children in street situations as "children" without stigmatizing or victimizing them in the report. The example below demonstrates how street children are introduced.

- ⇒ "It might be important to note here that I put the word 'street' within parenthesis because my intention is to not portray a broad picture about the children who take part in the research about their connection to the street, although most of them are. Furthermore, rather than labeling even those who are connected to the streets as 'street children', I would like to consider them as simply children, not associating them with any forms of stigma, negatively portraying their childhood, or victimizing them" (*The Daily Star*, 17.05.2019).

Although the author acknowledges the challenges children face living on the streets, he stresses the importance of their recognition agency and resilience for social inclusion of these children through the representation without victimizing them. For instance, the article portrays children and their economic activities in a positive light defining them as "smart salesman", "intellectual", "excellent collaboration skills", "resilient" and so on. Most importantly, the author still sees hope in the lives of children in street situations despite their uncertain, risky, and vulnerable existences on the street.

- ⇒ "We want to be in a world full of angels where there are no lies, no dishonesty, no sorrow, no insult, no beatings; where everyone — 'choto', young, 'boro', adult—is considered to be equal; where life is built on love and affection" (*The Daily Star*, 17.05.2019).

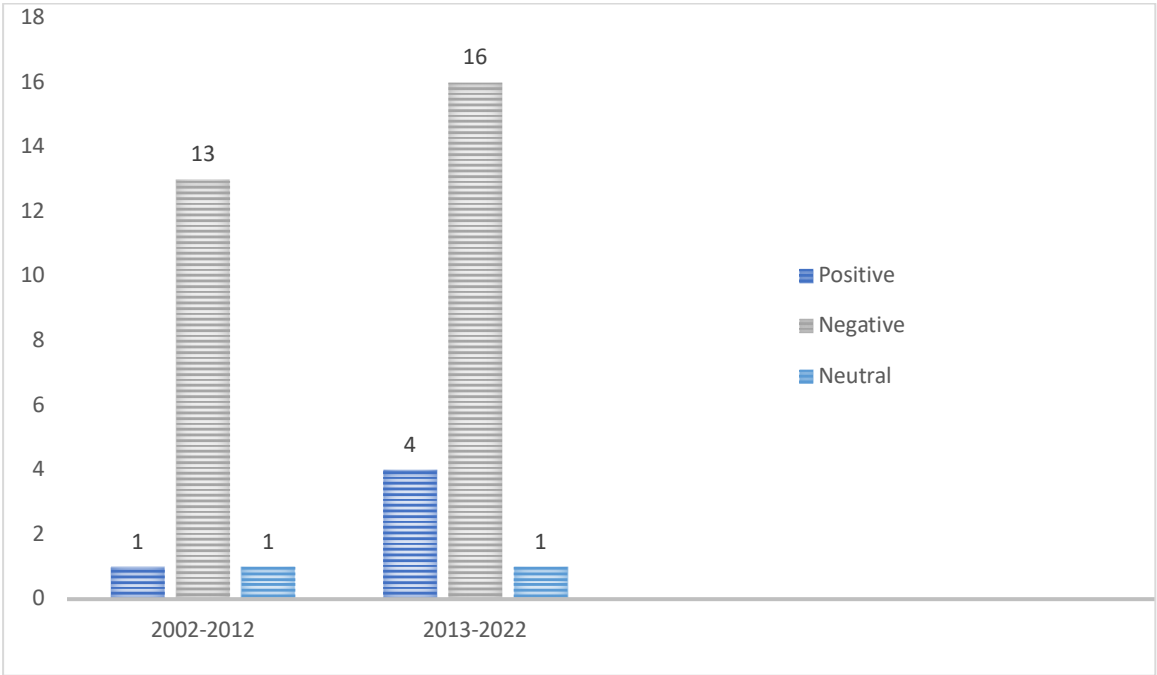
In addition, positively framed news articles tend to provide children's perspectives that are not vulnerability-focused as negatively constructed articles. For example, the following headline is taken from an opinion piece of Prothom Alo "**Exploring the complexities of children's lives on the street**". The writer is from Bangladesh and is a professor of Anthropology at university of Chittagong. The article mainly discusses the multifaceted reasons for mitigating children on the street. The writer highlights economic and other social factors, such as "excessive control of their parents", "emotional violence", "physical and sexual abuse" in a domestic environment, and "feeling of worthless" that sufficiently contribute to the street migration. This articles also contain children's perspective. The analysis reveals that children's quotes in these articles are positively framed compared to negatively framed. Consider the following quote from children mentioned in this article:

- ⇒ "It is not easy to live on the street. I want to have a life that Rafi has, want to eat good food every day and wear nice clothes to go to school. But I feel a sense of freedom and belonging now which I never had while living with my stepmother" (*Prothom Alo*, 20.07. 2018).

The initial analysis also demonstrates that only two articles represent children in neutral tones (see table 5.1). Similar to positively framed articles, these articles avoid using inappropriate and stigmatizing language. However, I have found that neutrally constructed articles tend to have a balanced perspective (both positive and negative) of the phenomenon of children in street situations (see, articles in appendix 2). In these articles, the authors intended to provide the strength and potential of children living in street situations by highlighting positive experiences, such as making friends, providing financial support for families, and learning new skills through work. However, these narratives are constrained to the romanticized notion of childhood, emphasizing children's inherent innocence and vulnerability and how these children are victimized and abused while living

on the streets. For instance, the following headline is taken from an editorial piece of Prothom Alo **“The reality of street-living children.”** The article mainly discusses various aspects of children’s economic activities on the street. In this article, the author acknowledges the importance and opportunities that various economic activities provide for children, such as “supporting families, “learning new skills” and “making friends”. However, the sheer amount of statistical data and evidence of children’s physical and mental abuse, exploitation is provided in this article outweighs these positive narratives. Moreover, the author tends to use terms “tender age”, “draining out the true essence of childhood”, “nightmare for girls”, “burden for children” when describing children’s economic activities.

Figure 5.2: Representation of children in street situations in last 20 years



N=28

Although it is difficult to say anything certain about developments over time based on a small sample, the initial analysis revealed that the majority of news articles are predominantly negative, and positive representation is becoming more apparent (n=4) in the last ten years compared to 2002–2012 (n=1) (See, figure 5.1). As news articles regarding children in street situations is mostly negatively constructed, the analysis only focused on the 29 articles in order to identify prevalent discourses and the process of constructing these negative discourses through texts and visuals. Systematic thematic analysis of 29 of these articles revealed three major themes in the representation of children in street situations (see, chapter 4). These themes are children in street situations as ideal victims, children in street situations as delinquents and children as objects of investment. Each theme will be critically discussed through the analysis of written texts and images.

6 Analysis of negative representation of children in street situations

This chapter provides a critical analysis of newspaper articles that are framed in a negative light, using MCDA tools. As mentioned above, the theme analysis of these articles suggests three main themes, and using MCDA tools helps identify how these themes contribute to identity construction and reproduction of ideologies about children in street situations. The analysis of each theme commences by examining the lexical selections employed by the authors, specifically headline writers, in crafting the headlines, followed by newspaper stories and images using the MCDA tools described in Chapter 4.

6.1 Children in street situations as ideal victims

A major theme that emerged during the analysis is representing children as ideal victim through texts and images. A close reading of the selected articles revealed that news coverage tends to construct victimization narratives in a number of ways: 1) Individualizing children's traumatic encounters in the past 2) Foregrounding children's vulnerability by using quoting verbs 3) Placing children in street situations structurally opposed to the ideal image of childhood. The headlines of these articles typically include words and phrases with negative connotations to elicit sympathy and emotion. I argue that the extensive focus on children's innocence, vulnerability, and victim status in news coverage may have the unintended consequence of disempowering those who live in street situations by obscuring their agency through representation. In the following section, I will demonstrate a few examples of how words and phrases used in headlines to convey a negative tone, potentially positioning them as victims, and then explain how these victimization narratives are used in texts and images.

- I. **Precious** childhood lost on the street (*Daily star*, 19.05. 2019)
- II. The **grim picture** of street children's lives (*Dhaka Tribune*, 08. 11. 2003)
- III. The **plight** of street children in Dhaka city (ঢাকা শহরের পথশিশুদের দুর্দশা) (*The Daily Ittefaq*, 12.10. 2021)
- IV. The **danger** of children's work on the streets (*Dhaka Tribune*, 15, 05. 2014)

In these headlines, there are a range of lexical choices made by the headline editors to make it more effective and striking for the readers. Lexical choices in language refers to word choices used by the author to represent a something or someone (see, chapter four) It includes what kind of words are used, predominance of certain words, and how these words connotation convey certain meaning in texts. Machin & Mayr (2012) stress the importance of analyzing different lexical or word choices in texts as it can signify certain kinds of identity, values which are not explicit in the text. Moreover, examining the underlying connotation associated with words is also important as words contains positive and negative connotation. Connotation refers to the additional meanings ascribed to words and images beyond their literal sense (van Dijk, 2006). These headlines above present children in street situations as victim of their circumstances. This is achieved by using words, such as "**lost**", "**grim picture**", "**plight**" and "**danger**" that are striking and convey strong negative connotations. These words are used to describe the situation of children

living on the street as challenging, troubling, dangerous, unsafe. All these words evoke feeling of sympathy, sadness, despair and helplessness. In this way, children's presence on the streets is constructed and presented negatively, causing harm to the lives of children. Not only does this grab the audience's attention, but also it emotionally engages them with the subject. Reach (2002) points out that "in media reporting such striking, and emotionally loaded words is usually used to present a problem to attract the readers to a story" (p.08). Using emotionally charged words in headlines to represent children in street situations can be problematic as it can create a narrow and potentially harmful narratives about their experiences. Dijk (2005) argue that such language may risk obscuring children's agency by perpetuating negative stereotypes, about children in street situations as innocent victims. In addition to headings, the victim narratives are also prevalent in news stories. A close reading of these articles revealed three ways these narratives come to life in representation of children in street situations as ideal victim.

6.1.1 Individualizing children's past traumatic encounters

News coverage regarding Children in street situations tends to represent children as ideal victims by highlighting their traumatic experiences in the past, such as parental loss, family dysfunction, abuse, and the suffering of children. A common strategy observed in news articles to construct victim narratives is through individualizing children's names, ages, and traumatic experiences. Machin & Mayr (2012) describe that "language is not natural, and thus the way people are represented draws attention to certain aspects of identity and values that are often associated with certain discourses" (p.77). In news articles, journalists often individualize or collectivize children in street situations as one of their main representational strategies. Identifying ideological effects in CDA requires paying close attention to how participants are described as individuals or collective (Machin & Mayr, 2012). For example, it is a useful tool for journalists because it enables them to make their readers feel more connected to the subject by personalizing certain actors and providing additional information about them (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The examples below demonstrate how children in street situations are individualized, representing them as victims and the meaning and ideas behind their representation.

- 1) "Jisan (10) **lost his father** when he was five years old. His father was a CNG-run auto-rickshaw driver, who was hit by a truck. After **his father's death**, he was **disowned by her mother**. Jisan ended up on the streets, begging for food and eventually being physically abused by bystanders and police" (*The Daily Star*, 17.05.2017)

The extract is taken from an editorial piece in the daily star newspaper discussing the phenomenon of children in street situations and the challenges they face on the streets. In the above extract, the child is individualized by his name and age, which helps bring the readers closer to the child and his experience. Additionally, the choice of emotionally charged words, such as "**lost his father**" and "**disowned by his mother**", to depict the child's parental loss and abandonment evokes pity and sympathy for the child. The writer also uses additional information about "**his father's death**" to emphasize his helplessness and humanize the event.

- 2) **"Ruby, a 10-year-old girl, could hardly hold her tears** yesterday when she was talking about the history of her life which was **full of pain, torture and deprivation**. At a view exchange meeting at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium, Ruby said soon after **the death of her parents** she **was forced to** start her life on the street at the **age of six**. Ruby was adopted by a group of organized beggars who raised her and taught her how to ask for money. They frequently physically torture her for minor flaws." (*Dhaka Tribune, 09.05. 2016*)

The second extract is from a news report about a child who experienced physical abuse while living on the streets. Similar to the first extract, the writer uses the girl's name (Ruby) and age (10), as well as describes her emotional state, such as **"could hardly hold her tears"** and traumatic experience on the streets (**full of pain, torture, and deprivation**), when speaking to news reporters at a meeting. The child's female identity and young age add a new dimension to her experience, allowing for a more empathetic and emotional connection with the readers. Moreover, additional information regarding her **"parent's death"** at the **"age of six"** is provided to humanize the event and elicit sympathy for the child. However, what is interesting the author chose to use passive verb form, such as **"was forced to"** with strong negative connotation instead of using more neutral form, such as migrated. The use of passive verb form helps conveying his helplessness in the news report. In both cases, the authors construct the children as unique individuals with distinct histories, experiences, and identities. In this way, their age and life experiences distinguish them as vulnerable victims from others in the news report.

6.1.2 Forgrounding children's vulnerability and suffering using quoting verbs

In addition to the individualizing children's past traumatic experience, another common strategy is used to emphasize their vulnerability and suffering in news articles by using quoting verbs. Quotation is essential in news reports as it helps to bring attention to important social issue by providing personal perspectives and experiences. However, the way quotations, especially quoting verbs is used in news reporting might be problematic if they do not represent the children's experience and perspectives accurately. The analysis of quoting verbs serves two purposes: to identify how authors in the texts represent children's experience in their own language, and which aspects of their lives are foregrounded, and which are backgrounded (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Quoting verbs can be used in news reports to exaggerate or emphasize a specific situation (see more in chapter four). Similarly, it can be used to dramatize an event or elicit empathy for the participant represented in texts. According to Machin & Mayr (2012), verb quotations are a potent linguistic device an author can use to significantly alter readers' perceptions of events or persuade them to form specific assessments. They claim that quoting verbs is an essential component of discursive strategies that can reveal the writer's ideological position concerning a particular discourse. The following examples illustrate how quoting verbs are used to emphasize children's innocence, vulnerability, and passive victim status.

- 3) "When I was only seven, I **ran away** from home and **ended up on the street**, I had no place to go, **Fatima** said, **pausing for a moment before continuing in a softer tone**, "sometimes, men asked me **to sleep with them** for a few takas only. Now, I sell newspaper on the street, the owner gave me a place to sleep near the newspaper shop" (*Dhaka Tribune, 09.12.2002*)

In the extracted piece from Dhaka Tribune, the writer states the child's gender and age, **Fatima (7)**, to highlight her female identity. Furthermore, the writer uses striking phrases such as "**ran away**," "**ended up on the street**," and "men asked me **to sleep with them**" to direct the reader's attention to a specific section of the report. By doing so, the author has succeeded in obscuring other aspects of street life. For example, the girl's agency, independence, and resiliency, such as selling newspapers and earning a living, and social relations, such as the fact that she earns the owners' trust and owns a place to stay near the shop, are downplayed in order to emphasize her passivity and vulnerability. Furthermore, the author connects two unsettling events that happened to the child's life by using voice qualifiers. "When I was only seven, I ran away from home and ended up on the street, I had no place to go, **Fatima** said, **pausing for a moment before continuing in a softer tone**, sometimes, men asked me **to sleep with them** for a few takas only". The author could have used quoting verb "said" without voice qualifiers. However, the voice qualifiers are used in this quote to draw our attention to the child's worst experience as a girl, such as "**men asked me to sleep with them**," emphasizing Fatima's femininity, fragility, and vulnerability that comes with her gender.

- 4) "**Karim responded soberly** "The night I came to Dhaka I had no place to sleep, so I slept at the Tejgaon station. I woke up to **being baton charged** by policemen. Police occasionally stop me when I beg on the street, **I have no fear of policemen because I beg for food, don't steal**" (*The Daily star, 12. 04. 2020*)

Likewise, the report from Daily star demonstrates the boy's experience on the street. As a reader, if I read the text, my attention will be drawn to the part that the author wants it to be. It has been possible because of use the voice qualifier. For example, the voice qualifier, such as **Karim responded soberly** draw readers' attention to his helplessness (**no place to sleep**) and exploitation (**being baton charged**) that he faced by policemen. However, the resilience, confidence, and coping ability (**I have no fear of policemen because I beg for food, don't steal**) that the boy demonstrate in later part of the text is backgrounded. Using voice qualifiers such as "**somberly**", the author succeeded highlighting the boy's lack of control and agency and emphasizing his vulnerability as a street kid. As I previously stated, such representational strategies are visible throughout our data, which van Dijk (2006) refers to as 'ideological squiring', emphasizing negative experiences and downplaying positive ones.

6.1.3 Positioning children's economic activities structurally opposed to the ideal image of childhood

Finally, news articles tend to victimize children involving in various economic activities by framing it as structurally opposed to the ideal image of childhood. As stated in the methodology chapter, opposing concepts in language, such as good-bad and men-women, are referred to as structural oppositions (Machin & Mayr, 2012). These opposing concepts are often dichotomous and mutually exclusive, which constructs categories, reinforces social hierarchies, and establishes power relationships through language. When used in context, some words in texts can bring with them a set of ideas or imply a distinction between the qualities of their opposites without being explicit (Machin & Mayr 2012:36). Nonetheless, these opposing terms can also be expressed explicitly in language, that Van Dijk (2006) refers to as ideological squiring. Ideological squires in a sentence can be seen when opposing classes of ideas are built around the same people. It does not have to be stated overtly in a sentence but can be demonstrated in texts how these concepts are applied (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The following examples shows how the structural opposing concepts is used to portray children as ideal victims through texts.

- 5) "**Under the scorching heat of the sun**, Shakil, **a skinny boy** of seven with a **toothless smile**, runs to different cars as the signal turns red. **Tapping furiously** on the windows, he channels all his **pent-up anger** his **little heart** can harbour towards **the privileged** sitting inside the bubble of their **bourgeois life**. Three **frustrating taps** on the windows. His regularly practiced **tuneful pleading** and his **animated face** fail him as a salesperson of flowers. He moves on to the next car" (*The Daily Star*, 19. 05. 2019)

The Daily star report above, for example, states the boy's name and his age using words, such as "**Shakil, a skinny boy of seven**", with a "**toothless smile**", who is working under **the scorching heat of the sun**, on the street. The author represents the boy's identity through a set of physical features, using emotionally loaded words, such as "**a toothless smile**", "**a skinny boy of seven**", and "**little heart**", which highlight the vulnerable physical state of the child. In addition, words such as skinny and toothless indicate that the child is not in an ideal physical state and that working on the street is detrimental, which is not in tune with the image of ideal childhood (healthy, happy, responsibility-free childhood). Such portrayal foregrounds the child's innocence and inherent vulnerability while obscuring his identity as a human being attempting to earn a living by working as everyone. In addition, overlexicalization is also used to highlight the challenging working conditions on the streets. Overlexicalization refers to overemphasis on certain terms or excessive description that connote movement and change (see more in chapter four). It gives a sense of over-persuasion in language, especially if something is problematic or ideologically contentious (Machin & Mayr, 2012: 37). For instance, the report demonstrates the working condition that the boy is working, such as "**under the scorching heat of the sun**" in which the author over lexicalized the situation by using excessive words, such as "**scorching heat**". The author may have written more simply, such as "working under the sun". However, the author employs overlexicalization to convey that engaging in street work poses challenges and risks to children, thereby hindering a desirable childhood experience. Similarly, when describing the children's work as a flower seller, the author used overly persuasive language such as "**tapping**

furiously," "pent-up anger," "tuneful pleading," and "little heart" to highlight the boy's despair, agony, desperation, and helplessness as a flower seller which is contrasted to the reality of the privileged entity sitting inside the luxury car and **"his bourgeois life"**. According to Rayan and Thon (2014), depicting contrasting realities in the media landscape is a common strategy for highlighting the disadvantaged status, vulnerability, pain, and suffering of one group compared to the privileged one.

6) সকালে যখন অন্য শিশুরা ব্যাগ কাঁধে স্কুলে ছোটে, তখন ফরহাদ (১২) ছোটে অন্য গন্তব্যে। কাঁধে ব্যাগের বদলে থাকে প্লাস্টিক কুড়ানোর বস্তা। সারা দিন কাগজ আর প্লাস্টিক কুড়িয়ে দিন কাটে তার। সন্ধ্যায় সেই প্লাস্টিক বিক্রি করে নিজের মুখে আহার তোলে ফরহাদ। প্রকৃতির বুকে যখন অন্ধকার ভর করে, তখন ফরহাদের ঠিকানা হয় ফুটপাথ অথবা মার্কেটের নিচে। ফরহাদের মা নেই, বাবা কোথায় মনেই পড়ে না তার। (*Prothom Alo, 02.01.2004*)

English Translation:

(6) In the morning, when **other children run to school** with bags on their shoulders, **Farhad (12)** runs to **another destination**. Instead of a **shoulder bag**, there is a **plastic bag**. He spends the whole day collecting paper and plastic. Farhad feeds himself by selling that plastic in the evening. When **darkness fills** the bosom of nature, Farhad's address is either the **footpath or under the market**. **Farhad doesn't have a mother, and he doesn't remember where his father is** (*Prothom Alo, 02.01.2004*).

A similar depiction of children's economic activities can be found in Bangla newspapers. The critical analysis of the report above revealed structural opposing concepts in the texts. Machin and Mayr (2012) defines structural opposing concept as a distinction between the classes of concept that authors use to emphasize one over the other through word choices. Nearly all news articles contain words, phrases, expressions that differentiates children in street situations and their activities by placing them on opposite ends of the ideal spectrum. In the article above, different sets of words are used to differentiate normal and abnormal childhood. For example, **"school"** and **"shoulder bag"** are used to represent normal childhood, whereas **"collecting plastic"** on the street to feed himself, sleeping on **"footpath" or "under the market"**, and **"plastic bag"** symbolize unfitting to the dominant ideals of childhood and thus define abnormal childhood. Such distinctions in word choices when describing children in street situations emphasize the notion of ideal childhood and deemphasize the other aspects of street lives, which Van Dijk (1995, 2008) refers to as "ideological squiring." It generally entails the representation of "Us" as "good" and "Them" as "bad" (van Dijk, 2006, p.05). Additionally, both Bangla and English newspaper articles include names and ages. Machin and Mayr (2012) refer to it as "individualizing the subject, which brings the reader closer to the subject in the news report" (p.80). Even more intriguing is how the authors use additional references to humanize the street children. For example, the report from Prothom Alo introduced the child by his actual name and age: Farhad (12). By personalizing it, the author humanizes the boy and the work he performs on the streets to connect with readers emotionally.

Additional details about Farhad's suffering and loneliness are also highlighted to emphasize it even more, such as the fact that **Farhad doesn't have a mother and does not remember where his father is**. According to Reach (2002), In news media, journalists often offer individualized and additional referential information to humanize the subject to evoke sympathy and emotional response from the audience.

6.1.4 Work as hazardous labor: using lexical choices and hedging words

In addition to positioning children's work as opposed to the ideal childhood, news articles tend to portray children's economic activities as risky or hazardous activities. The emphasis on work as potentially detrimental for children indicate their involvement with various economic activities is constructed negatively in press media. It also leads to reinforce the idea of children are more likely to exposed to physical and mental abuse at workplace. The following example shows how children's various economic activities on the streets are portrayed harmful and dangerous.

- 7) "Child labor is an **acute problem** in Bangladesh. Children in the country are engaged in **many 'worst forms** of child labor', primarily in **hazardous** activities in formal and informal sector. They are also involved in **risky** unskilled **physical labor**, including ship-breaking and recycling operations, production of soap, matches, bricks, cigarettes, footwear, furniture, glassware, jute and leather goods, textile products, work in garment factories, **garbage picking and trash hunting, vending, begging, work as porters, van pulling, day laborer etc"** (*Dhaka Tribune, 09.05.2016*)

The extract is taken from an opinion piece discussing the potential danger of children in street situations working in various formal and informal sectors. As illustrated in the extract, a range of lexical choices made by the author serve to cast children's work in a negative light. For example, work is constructed negatively by using a range of words, such as "**labor**", "**acute problem**", "**worst forms**", "**hazardous**" and "**risky**". However, instead of clarifying the definitions of worst form, hazardous, risky when addressing the labor issue, the author used vague aggregation, such as children in the country are "**engaged in many 'worst forms of child labor'**". The interpretation, such "**many worst forms**" of labor, does not specify what types of work is considered worst, harmful, and hazardous. Mayr (2012) claims that terms, such as "many", or "some" entail ambiguity and can be used in news reports when there is a lack of interpretation and evidence. Moreover, the author presents a wide range of street activities, including "**garbage picking**" and "**trash hunting**", "**vending**", "**begging**", "**work as porters**", "**van pulling**" and labeled it as "**risky physical labor**". However, the author does not explain why these street activities are dangerous or the definition of risk associated with children's street work. The generalization of all types of work in news articles as dangerous and risky, suggests that children's economic activities is negatively constructed which fails to distinguish suitable work from its worst form of labor. Nearly all news articles about street activities fail to distinguish between suitable and harmful work. The ambiguity in defining children's work and labor has resulted in the implementation of ineffective policies that seek to eliminate children in street situations economic activities in Bangladesh (Myer, 2001).

8) সূমন (১৩/১৪) লেগুনার পেছনে এক হাতে রড ধরে দাঁড়িয়ে অন্য হাতে পাশে বা উপড়ে থাপ্পুর দিয়ে চলার বা থামার সংকেত দিচ্ছে। পেছনে দাঁড়িয়েই আবার যাত্রীদের কাছ থেকে ভাড়াও আদায় করছে। ক্ষুদে এই কন্ডাক্টর ঢাকা মহানগরীর সিপাইবাগ-গোড়ান থেকে গুলিস্তান রুটে এই ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ কাজ করছে। এমন অনেক শিশু শ্রমিককে বিভিন্ন ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ কাজে দেখা মেলে রাজধানী ঢাকাসহ দেশের প্রতিটি নগরীতে। (*The Daily Ittefaq, 12.07.17*)

English Translation

8) Suman (13/14) stands behind the lagoon holding a **rusty rod** in one hand, **shouting** and gives signals to go or stop by **slapping the side** or the top with the other. He is also collecting fare from the passengers while standing behind. This **small conductor** is doing this **dangerous work** on Sepaibagh-Goran route in Dhaka city. **Many street children, like Suman** are seen in various dangerous jobs in every city of the country including the capital Dhaka. (*The Daily Ittefaq, 12.07,2017*)

Similarly, the news report above from the daily ittefaq depicts 13-year-old boy who assists a minivan driver. As an assistant, his primary responsibility is to navigate the driver and collect passengers' fares. The boy's work could be explained in the same way that I just did. However, the author described his work in a way that creates a sense of unease; something is potentially dangerous. For example, the author has chosen words that connote violence to describe how the work is performed, such as "**holding a rusty rod**", "**shouting**", and "**slapping the side**". This could have been written in more neutral language. Moreover, the work is lexicalized as "**dangerous**", even though, the author doesn't clarify what danger entails with the work he does entails. The word dangerous has strong negative connotation which is usually used if something can potentially kill someone. For instance, cancer is dangerous because it can lead to death. Terms like "**small**", "**conductor**" and "**danger**" are used to emphasize his small physical state and the inherent danger that comes with it, casting the job in a negative light. In addition, the use of hedging word, such as "**many**" the author created a strategic ambiguity within his claim that "**Many street children, like Suman**" are seen in various dangerous jobs in every city of the country including the capital Dhaka. How many is many here? Hedging in a language is when a speaker or writer avoids being direct or making a promise, even though it can give the impression of being precise and unambiguous (Machin & Mayr, 2012, p.192). Machin and Mayr (2012) claims that terms, such as "some", "many", and "others" can be used to obscure a lack of concrete evidence.

6.1.5 Image analysis: Innocence, vulnerability, and suffering through images

A similar result can be found in images analysis of news articles portraying children in street situations as ideal victims in news reports. This section will provide a critical analysis of visual elements, focusing on images that accompany news stories. According to van Leeuwen (2013), discourse analysis from a multimodal perspective looks at how meaning is constructed not only through texts but also through the use of multiple modes of communication, such as, images, videos, layouts, colors, etc. Thus, an in-dept analysis of images along with the texts is necessary in order to comprehend the ideas, values, and identities of children in street situations communicated in news reports (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). All the news articles that I analyzed contain different photographs that are appropriate for conveying the narrative. However, during initial image analysis, I discovered a pattern of using images depicting working children on the streets to highlight vulnerability through images. I purposefully selected a few images with significant visual characteristics for multimodal analysis that correspond to the textual analysis to gain a more in-depth understanding of how meaning is conveyed through different modes, such as texts and images in representation of children in street situations.



Source: *The Daily Star*, 20.01.2019

The first image is from the Daily Star and depicts two children in street situations called "Tokai" in Bengali who collect plastic bottles, irons, scrap metal, and glass in the street of Dhaka city. The boy is wearing a dirty shirt that is half open, exposing his chest, and a lungi (in Bengali), as well as a girl wearing a frock and shorts. The boy holds two trash bags in each hand, whereas the girl holds a moving box in both hands. The photo was

captured as they ran from the street to seek shelter from the rain. If we look closely, the boy stands out more than the girl in the picture, which Machin and Mayr (2012) refer to as salience in photos. Machin and Mayr (2012) point out that "the process by which particular aspects of a composition are made to stand out in order to bring salient features at the forefront of our attention is called salience" (p.54). In the image, the boy is clearly the salient feature which has been achieved in a number of ways: size, colors and focus. First, the size of the boy appears to be larger than that of the girl due to the placement of the boy in the center of the image while the girl is in the background. The boy is also wearing more vivid color than the girl, and he is depicted more in motion than the girl. Finally, the focus in the image composition is on the boy while the girl and the background are bit reduced. The above image exhibits prominent characteristics that may not be deliberate. But it effectively highlights certain elements, such as vulnerability, the unpredictability of urban living, socio-economic disadvantage, and others, which are best represented through the salience of the young boy. In terms of setting analysis, the photo contains only two children even though it was taken from the street. Streets are usually busy with people, shops, cars and buses in Bangladesh. However, in the photo the street is almost empty. The emptiness of the street can signify isolation of children in street situations from mainstream society.

Distance analysis also demonstrates similar interpretation of the image. Machin and Mayr (2012) describe that distance analysis is an analysis of the size of the frame used in an image, such as close, medium, and long short. Different frame sizes have different connotations. For example, the image is taken from a distance, revealing a moderate view of the scene, such as empty road and the subject, which may convey a sense of loneliness and isolation. In media discourse, such as war-related news reports, the use of long shots to depict human suffering is quite common (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Furthermore, the weather appears to be gloomy, and the photograph was taken while it was showering outside. In the midst of the rain, the children in street situations are rushing to find shelter to protect themselves from the rain. It may highlight their bleak, uncertain lives on the street. The setting of the above image gives a sense of their innocent and vulnerable status.

In terms of object analysis, the image reveals that the boy is carrying garbage bags and the girl is holding a moving box. Now, if we focus on the boy's clothing, especially his shirt, we can see that it is dirty and half-open, exposing his body as he runs. In addition, the boy wears a piece of red and orange fabric known as a lungi in Bengali. He has no shoes on his feet. This is not the typical attire for children in Bangladesh. In the image, the children in street situations are portrayed as "others" highlighting street presence, unusual attire, thin bodies, and garbage bags. This contradicts the hegemonic concept of childhood, which correlates with home, school, clean attire, etc. Finally, we will focus on how the participants are represented in the photo through gaze and pose analysis as it conveys implicit meaning. In the image, both kids looking away from the frame with intense facial expressions conveying to the viewers a sense of unease and concern about the street lives. According to van Leeuwen (2013), looking off the frame has meaning potential. In the image, the kids are looking off the frame with uncomfortable facial expression convey the feeling of discomfort and insecurity being on the street. Another important aspect of the image is the pose. The photo is composed in such a way that both appears to be in motion, such as with their feet off the ground, clothes blowing in the wind, exposing the boy's chest and his hands spread out as if about to fly while holding garbage bags. This kind of moving pose adds an additional dimension to the image. It may serve to highlight the urgency of

getting out of the rain which give a sense of discomfort and insecurity of the children's situation.



Source: *Dhaka Tribune*, 13.02.2008

The second image is taken from an opinion piece of Dhaka Tribune which discusses various economic activities that expose them to abuse and exploitation. As presented below, the photograph depicts a boy wearing a dirty and stained shirt carrying a load of bricks on the street. Looking at the photo, loads of bricks and the boy's expression is the salient feature in the image which casts the work in a negative light. In terms of setting analysis, the image reveals the street, people, and vehicles in the background and gives the impression of an event occurring in the present. However, what is interesting is that the image foregrounds the boy carrying bricks and clenching his face while obscuring the background to highlight the pain, suffering, and exploitation that work brings to children in street situations. Object analysis of the image also reveals similar interpretation, such as the weight that the child carries represent the pain and vulnerability that early involvement in the workforce might entail.

Regarding distance analysis, the image is a medium shot, somewhere between a close up and a wide shot, showing the subject more in context, such as his clothing, the weight on his head, and his surroundings, while keeping the focus on the subject's face. The image conveys a sense of intimacy, showing the boy's facial expression more in detail (Machin and Mayr, 2012). For instance, the clenched teeth and closed eyes while balancing the weights with the hands in a medium shot indicate the pain due to the heavy pile of bricks on his head and the smallness of his body through the depiction of work in the photograph. In addition, in the image, the boy is depicted with his eyes closed, not looking at the viewer even though the photo is taken from a front face angle. This type of gaze is quite

unconventional and has ideological meaning in representing the subject in the image. Hall (1985) explains that depending on how the gaze is portrayed, an image can either offer or demand information. For example, if the subject is looking directly at the viewer, a close-up or medium shot creates an imaginary relationship with the viewer, making them feel acknowledged. However, in offer image, the facial expression has meaning potential depends on how the image is interpreted by the reader. For instance, the image from Dhaka Tribune is a medium shot and offer image, but the boy is not looking at the viewer rather his eyes are closed, even though the photo was taken from a frontal angle. It may indicate that the viewers presence in the image is not acknowledged, and the boy's facial expression of discomfort signifies that the viewer is merely a bystander as the boy suffers on the street.

The analysis of texts above revealed that news coverage tends to portray children in street situations as ideal victims by individualizing children's traumatic encounters in the past, foregrounding children's vulnerability by using quoting verbs and placing children in street situations structurally opposed to the ideal image of childhood. The image analysis above also demonstrated a similar pattern highlighting children's innocence, vulnerability and suffering through images. I argue that the extensive focus of children as vulnerable victim in news coverage contribute to the disempowerment of these children. Such representation can be problematic as they are heavily focused on negatives aspects of their lives, such as loss and suffering. Most importantly, it may risk obscuring their agency and resilience through the portrayal of children in street situations as ideal victim instead of empowering them through representation. In addition to disempowerment, news coverage tends to stigmatize children in street situations through representation which is presented below.

6.2 Children in street situations as deviants and delinquents

A second theme that emerged during the analysis pertains to deviancy and delinquency, with a particular emphasis on the prevalence of substance abuse and other forms of antisocial behavior among children in street situations. Deviance refers to actions that contradict accepted norms, values, and behaviors. Delinquency, on the other hand, is generally defined as criminal behavior committed by children under the age of 18 (Hirschi, 1969). Both are harsh and stigmatizing terms with a strong negative connotation (Jordan, 2007). A delinquent is a person who causes trouble or a problem. Every delinquent is a deviant, but not every deviant is a delinquent. The public perceives children in street situations as deviant and delinquent because they spend a significant amount of time on the street and do not necessarily share the characteristics of what is considered normal (Swart, 1998). The analysis demonstrated that the antisocial activities, such as substance abuse, theft, robbery and petty crimes, are frequently reported in newspapers. Close reading of the news stories also revealed that children in street situations are frequently labeled, such as street addicts, street gang, delinquents, criminal, threats. Moreover, the headlines of these articles tend to use negative and stigmatizing word, phrases to highlight the delinquency among children in street situations. I argue that such stereotypical representation in news subtly can contribute to stigmatization and discrimination of children in street situations. Such stigmatizing and potentially discriminatory language are reflected in news articles and in headlines such as the following:

- V. Glue sniffing among **street urchins** is **shockingly** high (*Dhaka Tribune, 03.12. 2017*)
- VI. Number of **child drug addicts** is on the rise across the country (*The Daily Star, 23. 11. 2018*)
- VII. The **menace** of **teen street gang** in Bangladesh (বাংলাদেশে কিশোর রাস্তার গ্যাং এর আতঙ্ক) (*The Daily Ittefaq, 20. 02. 2009*)
- VIII. **Teenage gangs** on the streets getting involved in dangerous crimes (*Dhaka Tribune, 19.02. 2012*)

These headlines present children in street situations as delinquents and potential threats. It is evident that a range of sensationalized words, including negative noun (**child drug addicts, teenage gangs, teen street gang, street urchin**), adjective (**menace**) and adverb (**shockingly**) is used in these headlines and throughout the data discussing children's antisocial activities on the streets. According to van Dijk (2005), sensationalized language is stigmatizing because it reinforces stereotypes and a negative attitude toward marginalized groups. The term "sensationalism" refers to the practice of provoking emotional stimulation, particularly fear and panic, beyond what is considered appropriate by social norms (Haw, 2019). Reach (2002) states that "sensationalized words are often used in news headlines to grab the reader's attention by making the events more pressing" (p.18). Scholars argue that sensationalism in the media generates and normalizes moral panic about minority groups in society (Pantti, 2010). Moral panics, according to Victor (1998), "is a societal response to belief about a threat from moral deviants" (P.524). The headlines emphasize that children in street situations are an "at-risk group," resulting in panic and outrage over drug abuse and other delinquent activities by the construction of children in street situations as both victims and threats. In addition to headlines, news stories tend to portray and level as street addicts, street gang, delinquents, criminal, threats using a number of strategies. I argue that such negative and stereotypical portrayals contribute to the stigmatization of children in street situations and moral panic at the societal level.

It is important to note that news reports on the phenomenon of children's deviancy are primarily focused on substance abuse. However, various delinquent acts associated with drug abuse, such as stealing, robbery and petty crimes, are also discussed and sometimes incorporated into the same news reports. Out of 35 articles, I have found 11 articles discussing about the issue of substance uses whereas only 4 articles focus on other delinquent acts, such as, theft, robbery and murder. I have found that there are a number of representational strategies that have been employed in news reports to depicts delinquency among children living in street situations. However, the use of rhetorical and metaphorical language, as well as referential strategies, such as honorifics, is the most prevalent. First, the analysis will look at how rhetorical tropes are used in articles focus on the phenomenon of substance abuse. Then, it will focus on various referential strategies that have been employed to represent other antisocial activities. Rhetoric is the art of communicating effectively and persuasively, and tropes refers to "the deviation from the ordinary and principal signification of a world" (Richardson, 2007, p.65). In texts, a trope has conotive meaning. Machin & Mayr (2012) states that such tropes can be strategically employed in media discourse to attract our attention, not with the intent to mislead or alter the event, but to influence how we interpret it (Machin and Mayr, 2012). There are five types of tropes mentioned by Richardson (2007). However, three of them are frequently used in news stories: Metaphor, Metonym and Hyperbole (see, chapter 4). The following

examples demonstrate how rhetorical tropes are used to depict deviance and delinquency among children in street situations.

6.2.1 Substance abuse as alarming and favourite pastime: using rhetoric tropes

- 9) "Children's substance abuse has **skyrocketed** in the ten years since 2012- **an alarming development for society**. However, the most concerning part is that **80% of them** are children in street situations. Of the **street addicts, most of them** of them are involved in criminal activities, such as drug dealing, theft, robbery etc. The situation will be **catastrophic** if we do not address it immediately." (*Daily star, 23.01.2018*)

The above extract is taken from opinion piece of the daily star newspaper addressing the phenomenon of substance abuse among children in street situations in Bangladesh. The lead contains metaphor and rhetoric. Initially, the author used the term "**skyrocket**" to demonstrate a rapid change over a certain period and addressed it as an alarming development for society. According to Collins dictionary, "skyrocket" is a noun form that refers to a firework rocket that explodes in midair, showering sparks. Children's substance abuse skyrocketing, the term "skyrocket" used in the sentence has additional meanings ascribed to words and images beyond their literal sense. The word is used not to be interpreted with its literal meaning. However, the author used the term "**skyrocketed**" here instead of more neutral word, such as increased to depict a negative picture, causing serious problem. The term "**skyrocket**" in the sentence is bit extreme and gives a sense of exaggeration which is refers to as hyperbole (Lakoff, 1993). In media discourse, the term, skyrocket is commonly used to depict rapid changes if there are serious consequences. The author addressed the consequences as "**an alarming development for society**". The word "Alarming" is generally used in an event of crisis, which draw on the metaphor of 'Fire alarm' to convey urgency and emergency. I completely agree with the fact that the dependency of substance uses among young people in general is a problem and requires a comprehensive and effective planning to address it. However, I wonder if there is any relation between children's substance abuse and the alarm! Or the writer may perceive it as a crisis and framed it as "**an alarming development for society**" because children in street situations deviate from the norm of ideal childhood. In addition, the author used stigmatizing rhetoric, such as "street addicts," in language and backed it up with statistical evidence. The author also employed vague aggregation (participants are quantified or treated as statistics in language), such as "most of them are engaged in criminal activities", to highlight delinquency of children in street situations. Using statistical data and vague aggregation, such as "**80%**" and "**most of them**", the writer was able to make the issue more pressing through languages. This serves two purposes. Firstly, incorporating numbers to depict social issues enhances the report's credibility and objectivity (Jones, 2013). Secondly, it is a rhetorical tactics that is strategically used to support a specific social, institutional, or ideological goal (Chitty 1991). Finally, the author utilized the term "**catastrophic**" to convey a sense of urgency through language. Richardson (2007) notes that the word "catastrophic" in language

reinforces negative stereotypes when describing a particular group of people and contributes to stigmatization.

10)“It is mentionable, **sniffing dandy** has **turned out** to be a **favorite pastime** for many of children in street situations and **some of them** are addicted simultaneously to two or more drugs. After completing the glue, the children started behaving abnormally. They were **laughing loudly, scuffling one-another, using abusive words** and so on. **“We are flying in the sky.** Now, we can do everything what we wish,” said Anwar Hossain, another **member of the gang”** (*Dhaka Tribune, 28.02.2017*)

Similarly, the extract above is taken from Dhaka Tribune which also addresses the issue of substance abuse among street-connected children. The substance discussed is widely known as Dandy, a glue-like substance, used mainly to repair shoes. The author depicts the event in a way which comes as a surprise or just discovered. It has been done by using the phrasal verb **“turns out”** with a metaphor **“favorite pastime”**. Although the metaphor itself in the sentence looks an unfitting as favorite pastime is used to describe good and positive experience something is fun and bring joy to life. For example, reading novels or working around the park give positive experience and therefore, it can describe as favorite pastime. However, the author altered the tone by referring sniffing dandy as favorite pastime for children in street situations. According to Richardson (2007), contrasting terms, such as **“sniffing dandy”** with **“favorite pastime”** carry strong negative connotation that is used in media discourse to highlight the actor’s identity, in this case deviancy of these children. Additionally, the author chose to employ vague terms, such as **“some of them”** who are addicted to two or more drugs. Machin and Mayr (2012) notes that “this type of statistics can be used in media discourse to give the impression of objective research or scientific credibility without mentioning the specific features” (p.84). By abstraction of real figures and vague aggregation (see, chapter four), such as **“some of them”** the author has succeeded in labeling children in street situations as drug addicts as well as conveying a sense of anxiety and panic on their action. In addition, children in street situations deviant acts have been foregrounded to the audience by depicting their aggressiveness, such as such as **“laughing loudly”, “scuffling one-another”, “using abusive words”**. Finally, the author chose to use quotation from the children in street situations and introduced him as **“member of the gang”**. The boy’s feeling after taking drugs has been interpreted by the author using metaphor, such as **“we are flying in the sky”**. There is no literal meaning of substance abuse and flying in the sky. However, it has been interpreted as drugs give the boy a wing to fly in the sky and do everything what they want. By employing metaphorical language, the author not only succeeded in portraying the children’s drug dependency negatively but also in labeling them as deviants.

6.2.2 Children in street situations are referred to as gangs

In addition to substance abuse, a few articles discuss children’s other delinquent acts, representing them as gangs and threats through using various representational strategies. As stated above, the initial data screening of 35 articles revealed four articles discussing the involvement of children in street situations in petty crimes, such as stealing, robbery, and murder, compared to eleven articles on substance abuse among children in street

situations. The representational strategy of children in street situations in these articles differs from that of articles discussing substance abuse among children in street situations. For instance, when discussing violent acts committed by children in street situations, reports tend to use stigmatizing and derogatory words and phrases such as "street gang," "teen gang," "murderer" and "criminal" to represent them. In contrast, the issue of drug abuse among children living in street situations is depicted more subtly using metaphors, as demonstrated above. Although several strategies have been used to represent children in street situations in newspapers, I have discovered that journalists tend to focus more on referential strategies to highlight particular aspects of children’s identities in discussing delinquent acts. According to Wodak and Mayr (2001), examining referential strategies in language reveals important information about 1) how people are referred to and named in language and 2) what traits, characteristics, qualities, and features are attributed to them. This analysis just focuses on the four articles about other forms of delinquency portrayed in the news media. In order to examine the word frequency, I made a doc file containing 3200 words from 4 articles. Afterwards, I imported the file into NVivo software to detect word frequency. I believe that this part of the analysis will benefit from highlighting the most frequently occurring words in four news articles to demonstrate the representational strategies used in articles discussing others form of delinquency among children living in street situations. The result demonstrated some of the most frequent words has been used in reports discussing delinquency among children living in street situations (see, table 6.2.1). For example, the most frequent terms, such as "gang" and "street", appeared 465 and 268 times in four articles, respectively. Other words used frequently in newspaper articles are teenagers (184 times), delinquency (105 times), and crime (69 times)

Table 6.2.1: Frequency of lexical pattern in four articles discussing delinquency.

Word	Length	Count	Weighted percentage	Similar words
gangs	5	465	4.81%	Gang, gangs
street	6	268	4.81%	Street, streets
teenage	7	184	1.90%	Teenage, teenager, teenagers
children	8	143	1.48%	children
juveniles	9	130	1.34%	Juvenile, juveniles
delinquency	11	105	1.09%	Delinquency, delinquents
members	7	91	0.94%	Member, members
active	6	76	0.79%	Active, actives
crime	5	69	0.71%	Crime, crimes

In order to get a more nuanced understanding of how these words have been used in four news articles, I will provide a list of examples below.

Gang

detained more than 300 **street gang** members from different parts of the city (Daily Star, 10.09.2020)

hacked to death by members of the '**007**' **gang** at Barguna (Prothom Alo, 21.01. 2003)

how brutal these **teenage gangs** can be (The Daily Ittefaq, 10.08. 2016)

Law enforcement start cracking down **on gangs** after (Dhaka Tribune, 27.04.2019)

teenage gangs are involved in conflict in the name of seniority (Daily Star, 14. 06. 2003)

These **street gangs** are mainly involved in petty crimes such as extortion, pilferage and drug abuse, especially snorting Yaba (Dhaka Tribune, 19.12. 2021)

Delinquency / Delinquent

a rise in teen-gang culture and violence stemming from **juvenile delinquency** (Dhaka Tribune, 09.02. 2019)

these delinquents can no longer be identified as mere nuisance (Daily Star, 12. 11. 2002)

Like matured criminals, **street delinquents** take advantage of it (Dhaka Tribune, 30.11. 2004)

Children in street situations are more likely to **be delinquents** as they live on the street unsupervised and unprotected by adults (Prothom Alo, 02.04.2019)

culture of impunity in **juvenile delinquency** in Bangladesh (Daily Star, 15.04. 2020)

helpful in eradication of **street delinquents** in Bangladesh (Dhaka Tribune, 09.11. 2017)

Crime/ Criminal

Street gang create violence and take part in **criminal activities** (Prothom Alo, 19.12. 2020)

these teen delinquents fulfill **criminal objectives** with the help of seniors (The Daily Star, 06.08. 2007)

most of them are involved in **violent crime** (The Daily Ittefaq, 28.12. 2022)

They do not have moral sense, often **commit crime** by praying on children and girls (Dhaka Tribune, 19.11. 2020)

teenagers had become gang members under the leadership of petty local **young criminals** (Dhaka Tribune, 25.09. 2019)

zero tolerance policies can help to reduce **the crime** in cities and **criminal activities of children in street situations** (Prothom Alo, 02.11. 2003)

The analysis of lexical choices reveals that children in street situations in print media are frequently referred to as gangs, delinquents, and criminals. These stigmatizing terms are often used in media discourse to portray children in street situations in a negative light, which can have a significant impact on how mainstream society perceives these children (van Dijk, 2005).

It is also evident in news reports that officials, professionals, and the general public have expressed their opinions and perspectives regarding the antisocial behaviors of children in street situations and how they view them. This is what Machin and Mayr (2012) refers to functional honorifics a referential strategy to represent a social subject (see more in the methodology chapter). According to Van Dijk (1995), all representational choices highlight identity associated with specific discourse because there are no natural ways to represent a person in any language. Therefore, the analysis of honorifics will be helpful to get more nuance understanding of how children in street situations are viewed and how it contributes to identity construction of children living in street situations. The use of functional honorifics in language implies a certain level of seniority and requires a level of respect. This may involve the perspectives of officials and experts in the field. The use of honorifics in media discourse not only increases the credibility of the news but also allows experts and officials to express their views on pressing social issues (Machin and Mayr, 2012:83). CDA relies heavily on the analysis of honorifics in texts because it provides insight into the status and identity of a group. Machin and Mayr (2012) point out that "the way people represent in texts can be altered and transformed by using functional honorifics"(p.82). In media reports, the usage of honorifics may accentuate or downplay the role of a social actor by highlighting officials' perspectives. The following examples include functional honorifics, such as experts' and officials' perspectives on substance abuse and other delinquent activities of children in street situations.

6.2.3 Children in street situations are referred to as threats

- 11) তেজগাঁও থানার ভারপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা (ওসি) বলেন, এই শিশুদের কোনো নৈতিক বোধ নেই, শিক্ষা নেই। আমরা সত্যিই তাদের জন্য খুব চিন্তিত" (*Prothom Alo*, 03.09.2007)

English translation

- 11)Officer-in-charge (OC) of Tejgaon Police Station said "**These children** don't have **any moral sense or education**. We are really very worried about them" (*Prothom alo*, 03.09.2007)
- 12)"Since the management of children in street situations, particularly **addicted children** are different, it is **risky** to allow them to **stay with other kids**," one humanitarian worker said (*The Daily Star*, 05.09.2014)
- 13)"City dwellers said that "Children in street situations are engaged in various **anti-social activities** to get money for purchasing drugs. After growing up, they will engage in **committing big crimes**" (*Dhaka Tribune*, 29. 03. 2022).

The quotations above are collected from three different newspaper reports discussing children's various anti-social activities, such as pickpocketing, substance abuse, stealing. For instance, the first extract from Prothom Alo includes the viewpoints of Officers-in-Charge (OC) who are familiar with children's involvement with antisocial activities and have dealt with similar cases on the street. The author used the law enforcement official as a witness and credible source to substantiate the claim he or she is attempting to make in the news report about the delinquent activities of children in street situations. Furthermore, the statement demonstrate how children in street situations are viewed. Firstly, the police officer used the term **'these children'** as a generic type where children in street situations in general is presented as a problem. As mentioned above, dominant notion view children in street situations as deviant and label them as delinquent because: they are homeless, the street is their primary source of income, and they are not adequately cared for, protected, or supervised by responsible adults (Swart, 1988:21). The police officer's statement may be influenced by normative views of childhood, and therefore children in street situations are characterized as immoral, senseless, and uneducated. Does it mean only uneducated and senseless people take drugs or involved in anti-social activities? Such interpretation fails to recognize the multifaceted aspects of street life, which leads to the stigmatization of children in street situations (Beazley, 2003). Similarly, the author from the Daily star used statements from Humanitarian worker who has sufficient knowledge dealing with children in street situations. The humanitarian worker introduced children in street situations as **"addicted children"**. He or she also considers children in street situations as **risky for other kids**. Moreover, the use of stigmatizing terms, **"addicted"** **"risky"** constructs a negative image of children in street situations as potential threats to other children. Finally, the texts from Dhaka Tribune contain commentary from city residents. The author used residents as witness of children's antisocial behaviors on the streets. According to city residents, children's involvement in **"antisocial activities"** is motivated by the desire to manage funds for drug purchases. The statement not only conveys a sense of desperation among children in street situations but portrays drugs as a malevolent force that drives them to commit crimes on the street. It demonstrates that city residents tend to view these children as criminal and addicts and believes that children in street situations will likely commit **"big crimes"** when they will grow up.

6.2.4 Image analysis: Moral panic and threat conveyed through images

As demonstrated above, drug abuse among children in street situations is a common theme in news reports, which frequently portray it as a favorite pastime for children in street situations or as an alarming phenomenon. In addition, analysis of the honorifics used in the reports also showed that children in street situations were often seen as dangerous. O'Halloran (2005) states that images contribute significantly to the construction of meaning alongside the text (p.09). Therefore, in order to get a more nuanced understanding, this section will take a close look at the possible meanings behind the images that accompany the texts discussing children's anti-social activities. As stated above, news reports regarding children's delinquent activities are primarily focused on substance abuse. However, various delinquent acts associated with drug abuse, such as stealing, robbery and other petty crimes, are also discussed and incorporated into the same news reports. Consequently, most news reports depicting children's anti-social behaviors contain a combination of pixelated and online stock photographs of children in street situations using drugs, and sniffing glue, smoking cigarettes due to sensitivity and privacy

concern. In addition, I discovered that various compositions, such as close-up, medium, and long shots, have been used to make explicit and implicit representations of the phenomenon through images. Close-up images are usually front-facing and blurred, whereas long-short images use a back or top-down angle to conceal the identity of children in street situations, making the visual analysis more challenging. Therefore, in order to demonstrate various compositional aspects and meanings conveyed through visuals, the analysis will be conducted thoroughly on one image with significant multimodal characteristics and briefly on two others with the most striking visual features. As the selected images are incomprehensible without the accompanying headlines and contexts, the following visual analysis begins with a brief summary of the report, followed by the headline and image analysis.



Source: *Dhaka Tribune*, 13.09.2016

The photograph was taken from a Dhaka Tribune and discusses the prevalence of drug abuse among street-connected children. The reports state that these kids take adhesive drugs—a glue-like substance known as "dandy" in Bengali—in front of law enforcement officials in various places during the day. It underlines that these officers are bystanders as children become addicted to these drugs due to a lack of measures to address the issue. Finally, the article ends with the efficacy of rehabilitative and punitive approaches in reducing antisocial behavior among street children. The news report contains the headlines "**Street children are taking drugs openly**", followed by the image displayed above. First, in the headlines, the writer used the term "**Street children**" instead of simply using the term "Children". Furthermore, the actors in the headlines are represented actively doing something, such as "**are taking drugs**" to emphasize the ongoing nature of their action

and attitude. Moreover, the author's use of the adverb "**openly**" in conjunction with the continuous verb form in the headlines conveys a negative sense of change and development over time regarding street lives and their activities. By employing the term "**Street children**" and the continuous verb process such as "**are taking drugs openly**," the author not only succeeded in implicitly stigmatizing street children as "drug addicts" but also in creating and disseminating negative meanings, stereotypes, and narratives about certain actors, portraying their behavior as deviant and harmful. Welch et al. (2016) point out that such stereotypical portrayal of street children contributes to the creation of moral panic in society through writing and widespread dissemination. Moral panics, according to Victor (1998), "is a societal response to belief about a threat from moral deviants" (P.524). The headlines emphasize that street children are an "at-risk group," resulting in panic and outrage over drug abuse by the construction of street children as both victims and threats. The visual representation complements with the headlines, emphasizing negative conceptualization of street children. For instance, the image depicts a group of four kids sitting on the footpath and doing something during daytime. Although it is difficult to pinpoint what these children are doing in the photograph, I assume they are consuming or in the process of consuming illegal substances, as the image comes with a report discussing the issue of drug abuse among children in street situations. A close analysis may help better understand the image its underlining meaning. If we examine the image's details and setting closely, we can see four street kids wearing worn and dirty clothes sitting in the middle of a sidewalk with a car in the background. The children in street situations in the image are clearly depicted as having a low social status due to their unkempt appearance and exposure to the filthy street environment. Moreover, although the image is implicit, the pose analysis shows that the participants in the photo are represented as actively doing something, but in an idle and suspicious manner. For example, the boy sitting to the right of the image is consuming something from a small container, whereas the other two boys to the left appear to be occupied with something. The boy in the middle, wearing a bright red sweater, is gazing away to his left as if he is keeping an eye on them from the general public as they engage in suspicious activity on the street. It creates a negative suspense in the image, suggesting the deviancy of children in street situations through pose and gaze. Additionally, the image depicts children in street situations as a homogenous group by highlighting their filthy appearance and anti-social activities on the street, such as drug use in this case. Such stereotypical depictions of children in street situations not only generalize them but also label them as "delinquents", obscuring their individuality by emphasizing filthy appearance and delinquent behavior on the street (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p.101).

Regarding composition, the meaning potential of the image is as significant as other visual semiotic modes mentioned above, such as objects, settings, pose, and gaze. Therefore, this section will analyze the compositional elements of the image, namely distance, angle, and framing, to examine the underlying meaning conveyed through composition. First, the introduction of several sharp, pointy strings in the foreground enhances the image's aesthetic appeal and potential meaning. For example, the composition of the image conveys an impression of children in street situations trapped in the dark world of drug addiction. This has been accomplished introducing the pointy strings in the foreground and blocking the background with a car while positioning the subject in the middle. Nonetheless, the object in the foreground may be devoid of significance, and the meaning may be incomplete without positioning the salient feature (the children in street situations) in the middle. Due to such composition, our attention is drawn to the prominent feature (children in street situations engaging in illegal activity) in order to emphasize the

children's delinquent behavior, which contributes to shaping the identity of children in street situations. People who are addicts or dangerous tend to be left alone because we avoid them or maintain distance from them. Similarly, the image is captured from a distance, exposing the pointy strings in the foreground to convey a sense of alienation from mainstream society. Moreover, the image is captured from a slightly elevated angle with the subject on the ground, providing a top-down perspective to emphasize the danger and vulnerability associated with living on the street.



Source: *Dhaka Tribune*, 13.09.2016

The second image comes with the same news reports that I mentioned above. It shows a young boy with his right hand covering his mouth and nose with a polythene bag, supposedly filled with glue. The boy's face on this photograph is pixelated often used for anonymizing in media which makes the analysis challenging. However, I will focus on some of the most important visual aspects, and underlying meanings conveyed through the image. As we can see that this photo is different compositionally than the first one. For instance, the first photograph is a long shot, while the second is a medium shot. It is worth noting that the page editor chose to use two different photographs with different compositions in the same report to present the subject and his action to the viewers from a different angle and perspective. The second image, for instance, depicts a lone street boy engaging in illegal activity on the street. This photograph highlights the boy's action (glue sniffing) by distorting his face and blurring the background. Furthermore, the news editor used a medium shot photograph that revealed his clothing and the road, offering viewers a closer look at the subject, his surroundings, and his behavior. The boy's action in the image is portrayed as illegal and worrisome, considering his age, condition, and surroundings. Using a medium shot, the photographer conveyed a sense of anxiety,

concern, and panic over the boy's action, which Victor (1998) regards as "moral panic" through visuals. In addition, the boy's off-frame gaze invites viewers to look at the subject as an observer rather than interact with him (Machin and Mayr, 2012). Such depiction connotes a sense of isolation as the image successfully portrays the boy as unapproachable and deviant by establishing an invisible boundary between the viewer and the subject through the boy's pose and gaze. Moreover, the image depicted the subject from side-on-angle, looking off-frame. Although the medium shot brings viewers closer to the subject, the side-on angle and gazing away from the frame create a sense of distance and loneliness in the image.

Finally, a close look at the image's visual modality suggests that the image has been either converted to black and white or replaced with its original color. Modality in image refers to how visual elements such as color, line, shape, and texture contribute to the construction of meaning-making (Machin and Mayr, 2012, p.201). The image's color is simplified or generalized by replacing it with neutral colors that can have multiple meanings. For instance, the use of black and white photograph rather than color photograph may have been intended to convey a sad tone. By using black and white image, the author has successfully accomplished to portray a bleak picture of the child's life on the street. It may be also used to sensationalize the issue substance abuse to evoke sympathy and panic by highlighting the potential harm. Finally, the picture could be used to elicit an emotional response from viewers regarding the plight of homeless children who are battling substance abuse. As I mentioned, the deviance among street-connected children is emphasized through visuals, which complements the textual analysis discussed previously. Although most news articles regarding children's delinquency are primarily focused on reports about substance abuse, there are few reports on their other criminal behavior depicted in print media.



Source: *The Daily Ittefaq*, 20.05.2013

For instance, the final image is taken from a news report discussing the prevalence of street gang culture in Dhaka following the murder of a young girl by a group of teen children in street situations. It mentioned the names of several street gangs and various types of criminal activities they are engaged in, such as murder, robbery, theft, and eve-teasing. It concludes with a statement from Dhaka's police commissioner emphasizing the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy to eradicate all teen gang culture from the city. The image depicts a man holding a sharp knife in the foreground and three girls in the background. Even though the image is a metaphorical visual representation of an event gathered from online stock galleries, it conveys certain ideologies and meanings that shape the identities of street-connected children. Initially, one of the most salient features of this image is the boy holding a knife. The reason is that the background is out of focus while the boy holding a knife is in sharp focus. In addition, the amount of detail and tonal contrast between the blue sweater and white knife enhance the object's visual appeal and draw our attention to it. However, it is worth noting that the significance and meaning of the salient may not be the same without the girls in the background. Even though the photo is a close-up, three girls in the background are still visible. The composition of the image gives an impression of the boy as a threat to the girls in the background.

As demonstrated above, substance abuse is the primary focus of the reports on the delinquency of street-connected children. The textual analysis revealed that substance abuse is portrayed as a popular pastime and an alarming social development in the print media. However, a few reports discuss the other delinquent acts of children in street situations, such as theft, petty crime, robbery, representing them as street gangs and threats. Similarly, the visual analysis demonstrated a negative portrayal of children in street situations, such as drug addicts or potential threats. I argue that such negative representation contributes to stigmatization of children in street situations and moral panic in society. In print media, the presence of children in street situations in Bangladesh is considered a social issue. Consequently, most news reports typically conclude with a discussion of policy implementations, interventions, or strategies to address the issue. It is equally important to conduct a critical analysis of the recommendations discussed in media to get a more nuanced understanding of how it contributes to the construction of children in street situations, which leads to another prevalent media discourse outlined in the following section.

6.3 Children in street situations as objects of investment

Emphasis on education is one the most common themes that emerged from the analysis. Nearly all articles discussing about the phenomenon of children in living in street situations highlight the importance of education. However, a majority of these articles does not clarify how a specific action can improve the lives of children. Children in street situations in Bangladesh is a complex social phenomenon that requires a holistic approach. Although education is certainly a crucial component, it cannot be regarded as a simple solution. Furthermore, the media tend to portray children's presence and activities on the streets as detrimental to their and the nation's future development. The policy recommendation is based on a neoliberal perspective of children, which regards them as individuals in the process of becoming and as valuable investments for the future. This viewpoint, which positions children in street situations as objects of investment, prioritizes future outcomes over present circumstances (Kjørholt, 2013). Researchers have called for a shift from

viewing children in street situations as an "object of investment" to a "politics of recognition" that value their identity, experience, knowledge, contribution, and expertise and upholds their dignity and respect (Kjørholt, 2013; Boyden and Mann, 2005, Abebe, 2008; Ansell, 2010). Researchers argue that Western neoliberal policies such as child development, education, and protection policies have proven ineffective in addressing children living on the streets in the global south because these policies fail to recognize children from local perspectives and explore their particular circumstances (Fottrell, 2000, Rizzini et al, 2010). They recommend a more all-encompassing strategy that aims to implement a set of coordinated policies that give children a voice and recognition and take into account their lived experiences. I therefore argue that emphasis on education can contribute to ineffective policies and interventions that can further marginalize children in street situations.

The analysis of newspaper contents finds that policy recommendations usually come towards the end of a articles, often in the concluding section. For example, in an article discussing the phenomenon of substance abuse, the author initially introduces the topic, provides contextual information, and presents multiple perspectives and opinions on the matter. The article typically includes headings and visuals related to substance abuse among children living in street circumstances. By the end of the article, the writer usually provides their own analysis and suggestion for policy recommendations. I believe it is essential to critically analyze policy recommendations about children in street situations to discern the dominant perspectives and ideologies being promoted or challenged through news coverage. I have discovered that a majority of reports use modal verbs or adverbs to present authors' and experts' propositions regarding the issue of children in street situations and ways to address it. Therefore, I believe that modality analysis will be useful in identifying concealed ideologies in the text. This section begins with modal verb analysis, followed by metaphors analysis to illustrate how recommendations presented within texts that communicates certain values and assumptions.

6.3.1 Education as key

- 14) "**To make a sustainable change**, the government **should make** a ward-wise list of children in street situations and provide them with **food and education** through continuous **rehabilitation** projects. If these two basic rights **can be ensured**, chances of them getting back to the street **will reduce significantly**" (*The Daily star, 05.09.2014*)

The extract is from the Daily Star discussing the impacts of pandemic on children in street situations. It stresses the importance of taking necessary measures to prevent a dramatic rise in the number of children living on the streets. In the report, the writer came up with recommendations with displaying authority and certainty through language use. For instances, the author used positively connoted catch phrase '**To make sustainable change**' to sound professional and convey a sense of expertise in writing. However, even though the authors express it with authority, the process of achieving sustainable change is somewhat unclear. First, the author demonstrates what the government should do and asserts positive changes by employing modal verbs such as "**should make**," "**can be ensured**," and "**will reduce significantly**." According to Machin and Mayr (2012), "the

use of modals reveals the author's identity, commitment, ideology, and most importantly their control over others and over knowledge" (p.190). Second, the report asserts that providing **food, education and rehabilitation** will result in sustainable change. This may be a stereotypical way to formulate recommendations regarding such a complex issue. Numerous scholarly articles demonstrate and provide evidence that neoliberal thinking and education as investment fail to recognize children in street situations from local perspectives, such as multifaceted challenges, poverty, socio-structural limitations, poor quality education, education expenses, dropout, etc. (Klees, S.J.,2008). Such misinterpretations, along with flawed policies imposed by the West, resulted in unsuccessful and ineffective measures addressing children in street situations in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the author believes that ensuring food and education will **significantly reduce** the chances of them getting back to the street. It may have ideological significance as the goal here, according to the author, is to reduce children's presence on the street.

- 15) "**Childhood** is the time for children to **go to school and study**. The government **should** give more emphasis to protect these children and ensure their education. We **must** create an environment so that the children are encouraged to pursue education" (*Dhaka Tribune*,28.02.2017)

Likewise, the report from Dhaka Tribune depicts similar interpretation in which education is considered optimal in addressing street situation. The author believes that childhood is the time to "**go to school and study**", whereas children in street situations do the exact opposite of what the author believes is ideal for children. As demonstrated, the prevalent notion of childhood also influences the recommendations, such as their emphasis on education and protection. However, the author chose to use modal verbs, such as "**should**" and "**must**" to demonstrate authority and certainty and to influence and instruct in language at the same time. Although, the report lacks answers regarding how to protect children in street situations, how to ensure and encourage to pursue education. In fact, the majority of news provide a very generic and similar interpretation as if education and rehabilitation are the magic words, just saying these words would fix everything. From examples above, it is evident that news reports regarding children in street situations are mostly ideologically constructed where children are considered as future citizens as becoming rather than beings (Qvortrup, 2009). Therefore, rescuing children in street situations from the street and protecting them through education and rehabilitation is viewed as optimal solution of addressing street situation in news reports. Such interpretation is closely linked to the romantic notion of childhood which views childhood as a period of idyllic innocence when children should be free to play, educated and protected from outside world (Rousseau, 1712).

In addition, another important reason to prioritize education for street-connected children is that children are viewed as a social investment, emphasizing childhood in the future rather than the present. The examples below illustrate how such interpretation is accomplished using metaphorical language in news articles. Metaphor is a potent linguistic device that can profoundly affect how we understand and make sense of the world around us. Metaphor is one of the rhetoric tropes mentioned in the methodology chapter, which can be generally defined as the process by which we understand one concept in terms of another (Machin and Mayr, 2012).

6.3.2 Children as becomings and future investment

- 16) "Despite **our strong belief** in the notion of children being **the leader of tomorrow, our negligence** towards these sufferings children in street situations only goes to show our hypocrisy. **Our collective responsibility** is to make sure that **their fingers are busy with running through lines of books, not tapping on car window**" (*The Daily Star*, 28.01.2021)

For example, in the Daily Star report, the author used pronouns such as "**our strong belief**," "**our negligence**," and "**our responsibility**" to convey his or her own ideas as being our shared ideas. By doing so, the author succeeded in establishing a collective entity with a common objective of addressing a street issue. Furthermore, children in the text are represented as "**leaders of tomorrow**" using metaphor. The use of the source domain "**leader of tomorrow**" highlights certain characteristics of childhood, such as the temporality of childhood, children as becoming, and adult in making (Hammersley, 2017). This concept clearly demonstrates that children in street situations are viewed as incompetent and incomplete in comparison to adults. In addition, the author mentioned why children in street situations are perceived to be incompetent and incomplete as they work on the street instead of attending school. First, using the pronoun, such as "our collective responsibility", the author accomplished conveying a collective identity as well as a common objective of how children in street situations should be conceptualized and addressed. Furthermore, expressions such as "**their fingers are busy with running through lines of books, not tapping on car window**" highlights children's innocence, need for schooling whereas work is portrayed in negative light. If we critically analyze the metaphor, it portrays children's finger is special and different than adults. Therefore, work is not ideologically suited with children instead schooling and education in early age make them prepare for becoming a competent adult. The metaphor may entail ideological significance as the author believes that "**running through the lines of books**" will make children in street situations become competent future leaders. The use of metaphor clearly emphasizes education and learning and deemphasizes children's works. The ideology is closely related to the long-standing emphasis of western development strategies, which serves two purposes: education contributes to the development of children, and society benefits from a well-educated workforce (Tarabini, 2009). First, dominant notion view children's participation in economic activities as a potential threat to their development because it prevents children from attending school. However, proponents of childhood studies argue that children's work can contribute to schooling in many ways. Through work and apprenticeship, children can acquire social, cultural, and life skills that are not typically taught in formal education (Bourdillon, 2011). In addition, there is evidence in the global south that children's employment often enables them to continue their education instead of preventing them from it.

Lastly, the focus on children's education is inextricably linked to society and development. This is what Kjørholt (2013) refers to as "neoliberal thinking of childhood," which sees children as a social investment. Neoliberalism, according to Wendy Brown (2016), is "the economization of everything," such as the extension of market metrics and economic

activity into every dimension of human life, including the political, cultural, personal, occupational, and educational" (P.03). The neoliberal way of conceptualizing childhood and education is related to particular value-laden concepts, such as "outcomes," "testing and evaluation," "interventions and programs," "investment and human capital," "readiness and preparedness," etc. (Moss & Roberts-Holmes, 2022). Such ideologies have become dominant in the global south and are promoted by donor organizations such as the WB and IMF (Tarabini, 2009). The following example demonstrates how neoliberal ideology can be found in news stories by emphasizing education and social investment.

17) "শিশুরা একটি জাতির ভবিষ্যত হিসাবে, তারা জাতি গঠনে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করে" তাদের ব্যর্থ করা আমাদের ভবিষ্যত ব্যর্থ হবে" (*The Daily Ittefaq*, 03.11. 2009)

English translation:

(17) "In the end, we are **duty-bound** to **give our children education** without forcing them into work or other activities that deprive them of an education. As **children** are **the future of a nation**, they play a **vital role in nation building**" To fail them **would be to fail our future**" (*The Daily Ittefaq*, 03.11. 2009)

The reports in Bangla newspaper conveys similar interpretation mentioned above in English newspaper, which considers children's work is a deterrent of education and their development. In the report, for example, the author's use of words, such as "**duty-bound**" indicates firmness and confidence in his or her assertion that ensuring education for children in street situations is optimal and their work is forceful and deterrent to education. In addition, in the extraction, children are viewed as the future of nation and vital part of nation building. If we focus on the use of metaphor, children in the texts are the target domain that has been described and explained using the metaphor, such as "**future of a nation**" and "**vital role in nation building**". Such interpretations are mainly influenced by neoliberal ideologies that have been promoted and expanded in the global south by donor organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF (Tarabini, 2009). According to Finn et al., (2010), "the emphasis on early childhood education and care is associated with neoliberal ideals, which contribute to national development and success in the global knowledge-based economy. It is also considered as an effective strategy for reducing poverty and fostering economic growth in the future" (p.248). Market-oriented politics and the global image of childhood promote certain ideologies that view children as human capital and objects of investment rather than active subjects who deserve recognition. Within these neoliberal perspectives, investing in children's education is deemed optimal in order to generate skilled workers who will contribute to economic growth in the future. It has been best represented through phrases such as "**To fail them would be to fail our future.**" For example, the use of pronouns like "**them**" and "**us**" creates ideological categories of who belongs in a certain group (Us) and who does not (Them). The author was able to create a "collective other" in this way that is outside of the shared understanding of what is considered normal childhood. In addition, depriving them of education, care, and protection entails "**failing them,**" which is interpreted as "**failing our future.**" in the report. Such an interpretation is connected to the emphasis on education as preparation for future citizens and workers, as well as dominant notions of children as becoming as opposed to being (Qvortrup, 2009). From the multimodal analysis of texts and images, it is evident that dominant notions of children and childhood are

prevalent in the representation of children in street situations and in the recommended solutions.

6.4 Summary

In chapter five, I have demonstrated the overall sample characteristics of 36 news articles. The analysis revealed that most of these articles (n=29) are negatively constructed whereas only five were positive, and two were neutral in tone (containing both positive and negative features). Initially, I have presented an overview of positively and neutrally constructed articles and how they represent these children. The analysis revealed that although articles that are positively framed address the difficulties children encounter while living on the streets, these narratives are constructed in a way that does not cast these children as victims. Instead, these articles accentuate positive attributes of children's lives, such as "smart salesman", "intellectual", "excellent collaboration skills", and "resilient". It has also observed that children's quotations in articles with a positive framing are not oriented towards vulnerability, whereas a significant proportion of children's quotations in negatively framed articles are about their experiences of loss, suffering, and abuse. In neutrally framed articles, it has also observed that positive aspects of children's lives are discussed and highlighted, such as "supporting families, "learning new skills" and "making friends". However, However, these narratives are constrained to the romanticized notion of childhood, emphasizing children's inherent innocence and vulnerability and how these children are victimized and abused while living on the streets. One commonality I have found in both positively and neutrally framed articles is that these articles avoid using inappropriate words, phrases and terms that may result in stigmatization.

In chapter six, I have critically analyzed 29 news articles that are negatively constructed using a multimodal discourse analysis framework to identify prevalent discourses and the process of constructing these negative discourses through texts and images. I have employed various multimodal tools to conduct textual and image analysis, such as semiotic resource analysis, social actor analysis, rhetoric tropes analysis. The findings suggest that the representation of children in street situations in four news media is highly influenced by an idealized model of childhood, resulting in predominantly negative and stereotypical portrayals. The analysis demonstrated that news media tend to represent children in street situations as ideal victims, delinquents and objects of investment using various discursive and representational strategies. I argue that such portrayals significantly contribute to the process of othering by disempowering and stigmatizing these children, as well as oversimplifying the policy recommendations, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

We live in a media-driven society, so how disadvantaged children are portrayed in the news has the potential to drastically alter public opinion and policy. For example, stereotypical portrayals of children in street situations perpetuate dominant ideals that may stigmatize children in street situations rather than including them in mainstream society. Such representation results in ineffective policies and interventions. On the other hand, holistic representations, when combined with children's perspectives, makes the news more credible and provides the public with alternative ways of thinking about street-connected children. This is important in the context of Bangladesh to ensure that children living on the streets are heard and treated equally by the general public.

Finally, I must acknowledge that the purpose of engaging in a critical analysis of news articles is not to criticize the news media or to discover the truth or lack of truth underpinning these news coverages but rather to gain an in-depth understanding of how the phenomenon of children in street situations is discussed, as well as its underlying meaning and ideological significance. The findings do not imply that news reports about the multifaceted challenges children face on the streets, such as abuse, exploitation, substance abuse, or involvement in criminal activity, are unwarranted, nor do they call into question the importance of protection and education for these children.

7 Discussion and conclusion

The overarching aim of this thesis was to try to understand the explicit and implicit meaning conveyed through news coverage of children in street situations and how it contributes to shaping their identity and public perception in Bangladesh. In order to explore the overarching aim, I have studied the subsequent research questions using multimodal critical discourse analysis framework: 1) How children in street situations are represented in four major Bangladeshi newspapers? 2) What ideals can be found in representations of children in street situations in news coverages? The analysis above provides valuable insights for addressing the research questions this thesis initially intended to explore. I will first answer the research questions by providing an overview of the most significant findings from the analysis. Then I will discuss these findings reflecting on the central theories of childhood studies and critical discourse analysis presented in chapter three. Finally, I will present the strengths and limitations of this thesis, as well as the implications for future research and practice.

7.1 Summarizing findings

RQ1 aims to investigate the news media representation of children in street situations in Bangladesh. The findings suggests that children's presence on the street and their activities frequently receive stereotypical and negative portrayals in print media. As demonstrated above, such portrayals are achieved in news media in several ways. Firstly, the extensive focus on children's innocence and victim status is quite prevalent in print media representation. The analysis also reveals that the ideal victim narrative is mainly constructed in news media using emotionally charged words and phrases in the headlines. Similarly, several representational strategies are used to construct victim narratives in news stories, such as individualizing children's past traumatic encounters, foregrounding their vulnerability using quoting verbs and positioning them as structurally opposed to the image of ideal childhood. The image analysis also complemented the textual analysis highlighting children in street situations as innocent victim through visuals. The representational strategies used in these news articles indicate that victim narratives are mainly constructed to elicit sympathy and emotional response from the readers.

Secondly, children in street situations are represented negatively in print media by highlighting their deviance and delinquency through representation. Using sensationalized language in headlines and news stories is also prevalent in the news media to emphasize antisocial behavior. The analysis reveals that news articles tend to portray children's substance abuse as a favorite pastime and an alarming phenomenon. Moreover, other delinquent activities, such as mobbing and petty crimes, are also evident in news coverage, representing children in street situations as gangs, criminals and threats using referential and naming strategies. The image accompanying the texts also depicts children's substance abuse and other delinquent behaviors by using striking images with close-up, medium-shot, and long-shot to convey a sense of anxiety and moral panic regarding these antisocial behaviors. Finally, the analysis reveals that news media tend to prioritize the neoliberal perspective that views children as objects of investment through policy recommendations. The use of modal verbs, such as "must", "should", and "ought to," in conjunction with various metaphors, such as "future of a nation", "leader of tomorrow" in news stories, underscores education for the development of both children and nation. It suggests that news media tend to view these children as objects of investment rather than

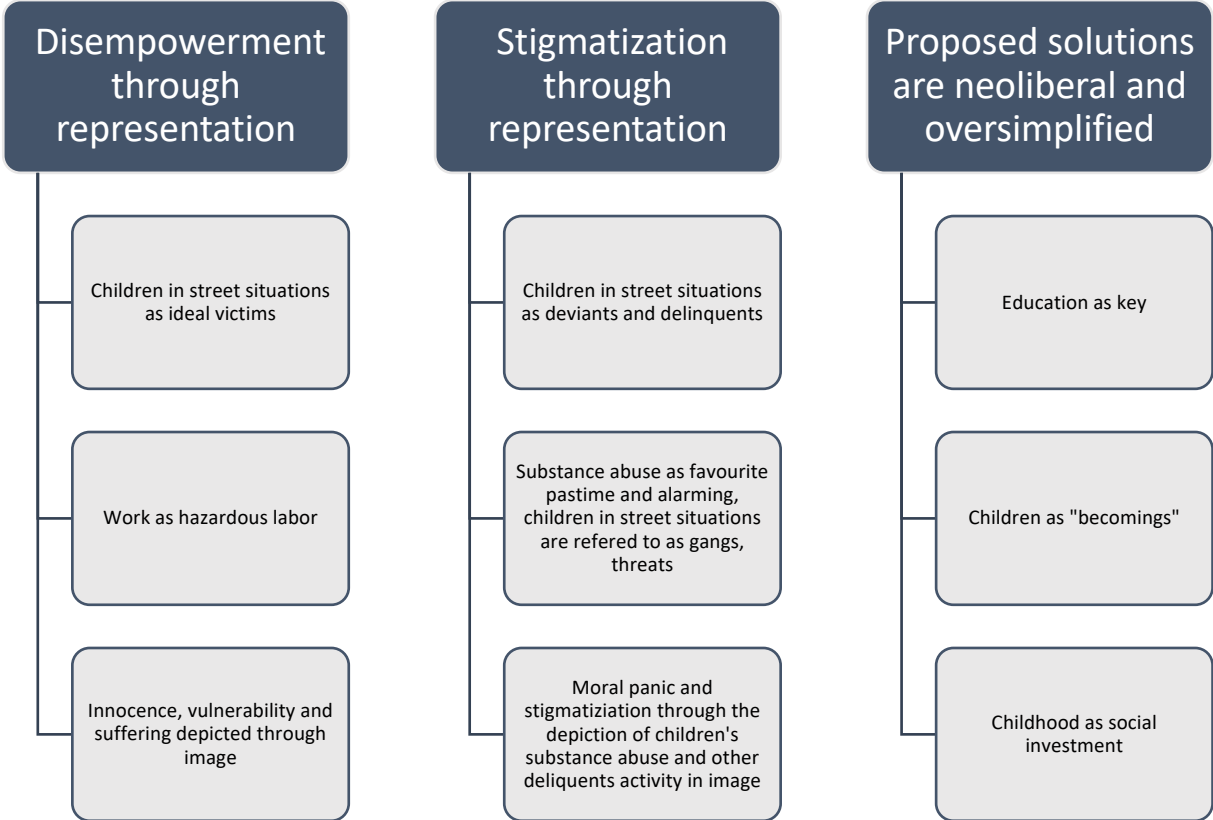
active agent in their own lives. Overall, the findings indicate that there is a propensity for negative and stereotypical portrayals of children in street situations in news coverage.

RQ2 aims to identify the ideals of children and childhood can be found in representation of children in street situations in news contents. The findings of this study suggest that dominant notions of children and childhood significantly influence the representation of street children in Bangladeshi print media. As described in chapter three, the dominant framework regards childhood as a natural stage of human development, exemplified by purity and innocence, is central which served as a foundation to what has been described as "the global model of children and childhood" (Prout & James, 2015). It is closely linked to developmental psychology and philosophy (Piaget, 1992; Rousseau, 1762), stemming from European enlightenment which view childhood as a biologically determined stage of "becoming" on the path to adulthood. In dominant discourse, the naturalness of childhood relates to irrationality, incompetence, and immaturity — a stage of learning at home and school to become a rational, competent adult (James and Prout, 1997). In this way, childhood becomes a distinct phase from adulthood, and children become the 'powerless other' in the world of adult. Within this constructed dichotomy, certain knowledge, practices, and activities, such as work, have become the exclusive rights of adults, while schooling, education, and play have become synonymous with childhood (Robinson & Davies, 2008:86). These ideals have been woven into a global model of childhood that has been exported in global south, particularly through NGO and donor policies between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Ansell, 2016). The global model thus becomes the dominant model in conceptualizing children and childhood in the global south and is idealized through policies and practices. Boyden (1995) asserts that "the modern ideals of a safe, happy, and protected childhood are culturally and historically based on the social preoccupations and realities of capitalist nations such as Europe and the United States" (p.189).

As shown in figure 7.1, the findings that emerged from the multimodal analysis share the characteristics of the global model, including children as becomings, innocence, vulnerability, education, protection from the outside world and economic activities. These ideals of happy, safe and protected childhood strongly influence the news media representation of children in street situations in Bangladesh, highlighting them as ideal victims and their economic activities as labor and hazardous (See, figure: 7.1) Furthermore, the emphasis on education through policy discussions in news media indicates a dominant conception of childhood that views these children as individuals in the process of becoming and as valuable future investments. This viewpoint positions children in street situations as objects of investment, prioritizes future outcomes over present circumstances (Kjørholt, 2013). Lastly, news media tend to portray children in street situations as "an at-risk group", susceptible to engaging in antisocial activities such as substance abuse and crime. This is mainly because of their exposure to the street environment, inadequate care and protection, and nonconformity to the dominant societal construct of an ideal childhood described above.

Overall, the findings suggest that the representation of children in street situations in four news media is highly influenced by the idealized model of childhood, resulting in predominantly negative and stereotypical representation. I therefore argue that such negative and stereotypical representation in news media significantly contribute to the process of othering by disempowering, stigmatizing these children and oversimplifying policy recommendation perpetuating neoliberal ideologies (See, figure: 7.1).

Figure 7.1: Main findings from the multimodal critical discourse analysis



7.1.1 Disempowerment through representation

As discussed above, news coverage tends to represent children in street situations as ideal victim by using emotionally charged headlines, highlighting their loss, sufferings and their presence on the street is potentially dangerous. In media reporting, the victim narrative is mainly constructed by using images and languages that evoke sympathy and emotion through representation. According to Zebra (2008), "narrative journalism is a kind of writing that may trigger emotion, create a sense of drama, and personalize the story for the readers" (p.235). Machin & Mayr (2012) argue that emotional narratives in news stories can have a disempowering effect in a number of ways. For example, the emotional turmoil and tragedies, exploitations that children experience are often the subject of news reports, which may reinforce the idea that children are innocent victim incapable of making decisions about their own lives. This may lead to social exclusion from mainstream society. In addition, by depicting children in street situations as innocent victims rather than active participants, emotional narratives can restrict the agency of these children. These children are coping with their circumstances and engaging in economic activities to improve their lives despite the difficulties. The predominance of news coverage that centers exclusively on the emotional distress and suffering experienced by the children in street situations

tends to overlook their coping mechanisms and resilience. It may further diminish their agency by reinforcing their sense of helplessness. Numerous studies indicated that media and charity organizations tend to over-romanticize children in street situations as helpless victims abandoned by their families and unable to care for themselves (Beazley, 2003; Warshel, 2009; Talaat, 2020). Scholars from the global south have criticized these stereotypical interpretations, claiming that children in street situations are not passive victims but active agents in their lives (Boyden and Mann, 2005, Abebe, 2008, Reza, 2017; Reza & Bromfield, 2019). Despite extreme adversity, children in street situations demonstrated resilience, coping mechanisms, independence, social identity, self-worth, and confidence linked to economic activities and financial transactions in their social network in several studies conducted in the global south (Beazley, 2003, Reza & Bromfield, 2019). Furthermore, a common misconception among the general public, decision-makers, and social workers is that children migrate to the streets and abandon their families because of economic poverty. Hulme and Conticini (2006) demonstrated in a study conducted in Bangladesh that “non-economic factors such as collective identity and a sense of belonging also influence children’s migration to the street, indicating that street life involves not only a process of vulnerability but also a process of empowerment in which children exercise their personal agency and develop innovative coping behaviors” (p.08).

In addition, news reports demonstrated the incompatibility of work and childhood by depicting street work as labor-intensive and dangerous, causing pain and suffering to the lives of children in street situations. Not only is children’s works is defined as labor, but it has been lexicalized as “worst form of labor”, “hazardous”, “dangerous”, “precarious” and so on. Child labor experts and empirical studies suggests that generalizing children’s work as labor, hazardous and dangerous is problematic which fail to acknowledge other aspects, such as working children’s rights, potential benefit, socio-structural context, etc. (Nieuwenhuys, 1996; White, 1999; Pierik & Houwerzijl, 2006). For instance, numerous studies have shown that work can be beneficial and contribute to the development and survival of children in street situations in the context of global south (Abebe & Bessell, 2011, Nieuwenhuys 1996, Bourdillon, 2011, Reza, 2007). Bourdillon (2011) discovered through his research in Africa that “children can acquire not only social, cultural and interpersonal skills through work but also gain self-esteem, a sense of belonging, and financial security” (p.105). Despite extensive research indicating that children can benefit from work in many ways, international policies continue to promote anti-child-labor campaigns in the name of children's well-being without considering the effects on their lives. As previously demonstrated, the newspaper analysis revealed similar interpretations and conceptual gaps in addressing children’s work, generalizing it as labor, hazardous and casting children’s work in a negative light. According to White (1999), “such ambiguous interpretation upholds universalizing principles in addressing the phenomenon of children in street situations instead of localizing them” (p.136). The ambiguity in defining children's work and labor, as well as suitable and hazardous work, has led to the implementation of flawed western imposed policies and interventions that aim to eradicate children’s works in Bangladesh. Under these policies and interventions, 38 formal and informal sectors in Bangladesh have been identified as hazardous for children and prohibited them from working in these sectors (Ministry of Labor and Employment, 2020). Considering the benefits of work for children in less developed countries, Aufseeser et al. (2016) argue that prohibiting children from working may be detrimental to their development and well-being.

7.1.2 Stigmatization through representation

In addition to ideal victim, delinquency is another prevalent theme that emerged from the analysis. News stories about children in street situations using drugs and engaging in other delinquent activities are often highlighted in the media. The analysis reveals that through sensationalized headlines and news content that employs rhetoric tropes, functional honorifics, and other representational strategies, children living on the streets are portrayed as drug addicts, gangs, and threats. The images analysis also revealed similar pattern, conveying a sense of anxiety and panic through using striking visuals. It is evident that through sensationalized news content and images, children in street situations are represented as “at-risk group”, resulting in panic and outrage over drug abuse and other delinquent activities by the construction of children in street situations as both delinquents and threats. Such portrayal normalizes moral panic and contributes to the stigmatization of children in street situations. Many scholars condemn such negative representation (Beazley, 2003). In addition, numerous studies conducted in the global south on children substance abuse among children in street situations suggest that they tend to use drugs as a coping mechanism to survive the challenging conditions on the street (Ali, 2011; Conticini & Hulme, 2006; Hills et al., 2016). For example, research conducted in Honduras by Wittig et al. (1997) on the substance use of children in street situations revealed that “the majority of these children use adhesive drugs, such as glue, to alleviate pain, cold, and hunger” (P.808).

Similarly, empirical studies have demonstrated a similar correlation between survival-related stress and criminal behaviour in homeless youth. Yu et al. (2019) mentioned lack of food, lack of employment, and lack of shelter as contributing factors to the propensity of children in street situations to commit crimes. In recent years, the international community has increased its efforts to prevent children from working, which has likely increased the strain felt by children in street situations (Abebe & Bessell, 2011). As demonstrated above, 38 formal and informal sectors, ranging from begging to factory work, have been banned by the Bangladeshi government in an effort to protect children from exploitation (Ministry of Labor and Employment, 2020). Previous studies have indicated that implementing policies aimed at preventing children from engaging in economic activities to protect them from exploitation may have unintended adverse consequences. These consequences may include the children being compelled to undertake more hazardous jobs or resorting to alternative means of subsistence, such as engaging in criminal activities on the streets (White, 1999). However, according to studies conducted in Bangladesh, most children in street situations get involved with criminal activities under the influence of gangs or political parties, including carrying weapons, selling drugs, collecting extortion money, committing political violence, and carrying out contract killings (Atkinson-Sheppard, 2016). The goal is not to romanticize children’s substance abuse or anti-social behaviors. The psychosocial and physiological effects of substance use have long been documented in empirical studies and must be addressed effectively (Aptekar & Stoecklin, 2004; Fahmi, 2007; Beazley, 2003). Similarly, it is critical to understand and address the factors that influence children in street situations to engage in criminal activity. The media must comprehensively present these issues, based on facts and sound research, without stigmatization or commonsensical reasoning. Stigmatization, negative and stereotypical portrayals in the news media have a significant impact on how the public and policymakers perceive these children and further exclude them from mainstream society.

7.1.3 Proposed solutions are neoliberal and oversimplified

Finally, journalist in print media tend to put overemphasis on education and schooling in addressing the phenomenon of children in street situations. It is repeatedly presented as the optimal solution for ensuring children's wellbeing. Moreover, recommendations in news coverage are made with authority and certainty using use modal verbs, such as "shall", "must", and "ought to". The analysis also reveals that the recommended policy is based on the neoliberal perspective of childhood, which regards them as individuals in the process of becoming and as valuable future investments. This perspective views children in street situations as the object of investment and prioritizes future outcomes over present circumstances (Kjørholt, 2013). Education and knowledge are valued in neoliberal doctrine because a nation can benefit significantly from human capital through education and learning. In today's knowledge-based economy, education is the new currency of opportunity for individuals and countries (Tarabini, 2009). Although education is undoubtedly important, but it cannot be regarded as a simple solution. Neoliberal educational policies emphasize the importance of formal education and market-oriented skills, which may overlook current needs, perspectives, and the complexities of children in street situations. It may jeopardize the effectiveness of policies by preventing them from adopting more flexible and adaptable learning.

Moreover, the analysis revealed that neoliberal policies tend to prioritize economic growth and development over equality and recognition of these children, which can perpetuate systemic inequalities that marginalize children in street situations in Bangladesh. Researchers argue that Western neoliberal policies such as child development, education, policies have proven ineffective in addressing children living on the streets in the global south because these policies fail to recognize children from local perspectives and explore their particular circumstances (Fottrell, 2000, Rizzini et al, 2010). In 2005, UNICEF found that 90% of children in street situations in Bangladesh dropped out of school due to poor education, hidden costs, and social, economic, and other constraints. Various government-led NGO education and development programs in Bangladesh also intended to improve the lives and well-being of these children by identifying them as "children in street situations," "difficult-to-reach children," "working children," "at-risk children," and "particularly disadvantaged children." Scholars recommend a more all-encompassing strategy that aims to implement a set of coordinated policies that give children a voice and recognition and consider their lived experiences (Aptekar, 1988a). Kjørholt, (2013) advocates for a shift from viewing children in street situations as an "object of investment" to a "politics of recognition" that values their identity, experience, knowledge, contribution, and expertise and upholds their dignity and respect. Although education and schooling undoubtedly benefits children in many ways, it is debatable whether putting neoliberal ideals into practice and the trade-off of work for education is the best approach for children in street situations. According to Aptekar (1988a), if policies and interventions are implemented based on these globalized ideals rather than localizing them and ignoring children's perspectives, the conditions of children in street situations are unlikely to improve, which can result in further exclusion.

Overall, the findings suggests that children in street situations tend to receive negative and unfavorable portrayal in newspaper which is heavily influenced by the dominant discourse of childhood. Newspaper reporting on children in street situations and how they represented in media can influence not only public perception of them but also the priorities and decisions of policy makers with regards to children in street situations in Bangladesh. Not only do negative and stereotypical portrayals of children in street situations promote

anxiety, panic, hostility, and disadvantaged status in mainstream society, but it also influences how they perceive themselves (Ross et al, 2019). Although very few studies have been conducted on the media's portrayal of children in street situations, minority studies have found that stereotypical representation is problematic because it constructs a negative identity by labelling and categorizing people (Haller & Zhang, 2013; Ross, 2019). In addition, Policy issues relating to children in street situations and their well-being tend to follow public opinion (West and Scott, 2020). Stereotypical representations influenced by dominant discourse usually detect policies and legislative boundaries in Bangladesh that limit the ability to set inclusive and effective agendas for children in street situations. Aptekar (1988a) suggests that intervention and policies would be more effective if government policy reflected holistic research on local perspectives reflecting children's voices and comparative analysis rather than public opinion. Considering the effects of stereotypical and negative representations of children in street situations in society and in shaping public policies, more ethical news reporting that recognizes their agency, resilience, and challenges is necessary to integrate them into mainstream society.

7.2 Strengths and limitations

The combination of different methods and fields of study is a potential strength of this thesis. For example, the analysis begins with an overall content analysis of selected data to obtain an overview of the data, such as tone, trend over a specific period. The study then proceeds to a more detailed analysis of texts and images by employing multimodal critical discourse analysis. However, considering the time and resources allocated for this master's project, using different approaches, especially in conducting critical analysis of media can also be a limitation. The process was challenging for using different approaches and choosing the suitable method to critical analysis of print media. King et al. (2008) state that the interdisciplinary nature and diverse theoretical and methodological approaches to critical discourse analysis can be challenging for a single researcher as it requires a lot of time and effort to learn and familiarize with different theoretical and methodological approaches to conduct critical analysis.

Using three distinct academic disciplines to address the research questions is another strength of this study. As stated in the theory chapter, using three different field of study to analyze news media representation of children in street situations helped investigate research questions critically and efficiently. Due to multimodal nature of this thesis, the integration of different theories has provided extensive resources and knowledge to identify explicit and implicit meanings in news reports. Moreover, this thesis has allowed me to critically reflect on representational strategies, taken-for-granted assumptions and stereotypical portrayals of print media that helps me immensely to strengthen my critical thinking skills. I believe that it will encourage future researchers to conduct more studies on the portrayal of children in street situations in the media, as relatively few studies have been conducted on this topic. However, the integration of three different fields has been a challenge for this research. It has been a tedious and illuminating process to gain insights in the new field of studies and previous research over the course of one year. According to Bamberger (2020), interdisciplinary research is always challenging because it requires expertise from various fields who have sufficient knowledge of these fields. In addition, the process was challenging because I had to learn a great deal about theoretical frameworks in Media studies and critical discourse analysis, as well as methodological approaches that did not cover in my courses at NTNU.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that conducting a critical analysis of news coverage has been a double-edged sword of this thesis. For example, when I began my thesis in 2020, Covid-19 was a potential setback. By selecting newspaper analysis, the process from data collection to analysis was relatively smooth and unaffected by the COVID restriction. However, this study could have benefited from the inclusion of children in street situations and journalist perspectives alongside newspaper analysis. An investigation from both perspectives could have revealed how journalists represent children in street situations, why they construct children in street situations in a certain way and not the other way around, and what children in street situations think and feel about the newspaper's representation.

7.3 Implication for future reseach and practice

Media representation on diverse issues, such as social, political, cultural, and religious, has been extensively studied across different disciplines. A Plethora of studies, for instance, have been conducted on race, gender, ethnic minorities, immigrants, region, sexual abuse, political discourses, and so on. Surprisingly, relatively few studies have been found on the portrayal of children in street situations and their voices in mainstream media. This may include the representation of children, their voices, and perspectives on various issues in national/international organizations working with children, mainstream media, and social media. These studies are significant for breaking the boundaries of stereotypes, negativity, and categorization against children, particularly disadvantaged children, and bringing the proper practice to the forefront among the public, the media, and policymakers.

In addition, as previously demonstrated, print media tend to emphasize the vulnerability of children in street situations. Although it appears that newspaper articles feature the views of children in street situations on some issues, the analysis shown in these citations highlights on the loss, suffering, and vulnerability of these children. Additional research on the portrayal of children's voices in mainstream media could be beneficial in several ways. Firstly, incorporating the perspectives of both children and journalists could be helpful to shed light on not only the underlying factors of representing children in a particular way but also what children think or feel about the matter. Second, it could also serve as a literacy and awareness-building tool for journalists who work on child related issues. As demonstrated in this study, although the examples of positive representation can be found, especially in more recent times, most of these articles appears on opinion pages written by researchers or academic professionals with sufficient knowledge in this field. It demonstrates a lack of knowledge and awareness in the relevant field. Therefore, it might be helpful to introduce a "literacy and awareness" programme to journalists who speak for children.

The overarching aim of this thesis has been to explore the portrayal of children in street situations in Bangladeshi print media. The analysis reveals that children in street situations receive stereotypical and unfavorable representations in print media that is highly influenced by idealized notions of childhood. When covering stories of children in street situations, journalists tend to focus on children's vulnerability and delinquency. The intention may be noble, and the media should bring these issues about the welfare of children in street situations to the public's attention. However, how media represent disadvantaged children can have profound impacts on how the public and policymakers view these kids. Negative and stereotypical representations may promote inequality, hostility, and stigmatization towards homeless children, rather than integrating them into mainstream society with respect and recognition of their rights, agency, resilience and competency.

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Appendices

Codes and themes

Codes	Issues discussed	Themes identified/Basic themes	Organizing themes	Main themes
Uncertainty	Street lives, sleep under open sky, lack of food	Children in street situations are helpless		
Factors	Loss of family members, poverty, lack of care	Children in street situations lack care, safety, security	Children in street situations are innocence and vulnerable victim	
Innocence	Age, physical states, activities, struggle	Children in street situations are innocent, abused		
Abuse	Physical, mental, sexual	Street lives is responsible for physical, mental, and sexual abuse		
Work	Physically demanding works	Street children's economic activities	Street children's economic activities considered as labor and dangerous.	Children in street situations as ideal victim
Substance use	Availability of cheap drugs, involvement	Substance abuse is reality	Substance use is common, alarming, and a	

	with gangs, lack of measures, lack of education and rehabilitation		result of street lives	
Antisocial activities	Substance use, robbery, petty crimes, murder	Substance use is common, alarming	Street lives drive them into addiction, involvement with gangs, lack of measures, and a lack of education and rehabilitation	Children in street situations as antisocial beings, potential threats to society
Education, schooling, development	Becomings child	Education as social investment	Education as key	Emphasis on education

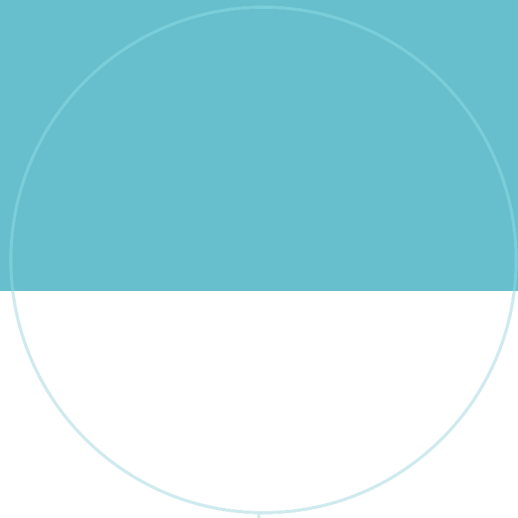
Newspaper articles

Newspaper	Tone	Author and Date	Headlines
The Daily Star	Negative	Ahmed Istiak, 28.01.2021	Nobody's children.
	Negative	Iqra L Qamari,19.05.2019	Precious childhood lost in the streets.
	Negative	Jamal Ali,05.09.2014	Abandoned children deserve better care.
	Negative	Mohammad Hassan, 28. 02. 2006	Street children speak of dreadful nights.
	Negative	Nayem Sheikh, 23.12. 2022	Sad state of street children
	Negative	Tonima sultana, 07.05. 2017	Khulna street children turning into criminals' accomplice.
	Negative	Evan Haque, 23.01. 2018	Number of child drug addicts is on the rise across the country.
	Negative	Mira Jaman, 12.04. 2020	Substance abuse in children spiraling.
	Positive	Iqbal Ahmed, 17. 05. 2019	Politics of survival: Listening to the (street) children in Dhaka
	Positive	Nasir Uddin, 20.07. 2018	Exploring the complexities of children's lives on the street.
	Positive	Monon Muntaka, 12. 01. 2022	Inclusion requires recognition of children living on the street.

Dhaka Tribune	Negative	Labib Hasan, 01.11. 2015	Lost childhood: The plight of street children
	Negative	Isfat Jahan Opsora, 09. 05. 2016	The danger of children's work on the streets.
	Negative	Istiaq Jaman, 08. 11. 2003	The grim picture of street children's lives.
	Negative	Rubel Bhuiya, 29. 03. 2022	With no care, street kids grow, face exploitation.
	Negative	Lamisha Haque, 05. 07. 2019	Where lost children, pickpockets, drug peddlers and the mentally ill live together: Inside Dhaka's largest government-run shelter for vagrants and the homeless
	Negative	Shan Rafique, 28. 02. 2017	Street children being addicted to drugs.
	Negative	Rubana Khan Joshi, 19.02. 2012	Teenage gangs on the street getting involved in dangerous crimes.
	Negative	Kamal Helal, 03.12. 2020	Glue sniffing among street urchins is shockingly high.
Prothom Alo	Negative	Munir Jaman, 20.10.2017	শিশুদের রক্ষার কঠিন কাজটি করবে কে? Who will do the hard work of protecting the children?
	Negative	Istiaqe Rabby, 09. 12. 2002	রাস্তায় বাস করা এবং বিপদ Street living and danger
	Negative	Pritom Kumar, 25. 03. 2016	পথশিশুদের জীবন এখন আরও কঠিন পথশিশুদের জীবন এখন আরও কঠিন Life of street children is more difficult now

	Negative	Sumaiya Jaman, 06.05. 2020	২১ শতাংশ পথশিশু মাদকের বাহক 21 percent of street children are drug carriers
	Negative	Linkon Prince, 12. 07. 2014	অভিবাসনের শিকার শিশুদের সুরক্ষার জন্য সমন্বিত প্রচেষ্টা প্রয়োজন Protecting child victims of migration requires concerted efforts
	Negative	Tutul Pasha, 10. 11. 2015	শিশুটির রাতও কাটে খোলা আকাশের নিচে The child also spends the night under the open sky
	Negative	Sahariar Sezan, 08. 06. 2019	কোনোমতে আমি টিকে আছি পথে Somehow, I survive on the way
	Negative	Kamrul Ullah Jahiri, 03.09. 2007	শিশুরা 'ডান্ডি' আঠা নিঃস্বাস নিচ্ছে, কেউ পাত্তা দেয় না Children are inhaling 'Dandy' gum, nobody cares
Prothom Alo	Positive	Nur Alam, 06. 02. 2012	শিশুরা বড়দের তুলনায় দ্রুত শিখে Children learn faster than adults
	Positive	Luba Tajrin Jessi, 21. 08. 2003	লিডো: পথশিশুদের জন্য কর্ণস্বর Lido: Voices for street children
Prothom Alo	Neutral	Salim Ahmed, 20.07. 2018	পথশিশুদের বাস্তবতা। The reality of street-living children.
	Neutral	Imtiaz Jaman, 03.06. 2020	রাস্তায় শিশুদের কাজ এবং বেঁচে থাকার কৌশল Work and survival strategies of street children
The Daily Ittafaq	Negative	Eman Aslam, 12.07. 2017	পথশিশুরা বিপাকে Street children are in trouble
	Negative	Tipu Sultan, 02.01.2004	পথশিশুর আর্তনাদ শুনতে পাই I hear the cries of street children
	Negative	Farhad Munim, 12. 03. 2021	কিশোর অপরাধ প্রতিরোধে চাই সামাজিক বন্ধন Social bonds needed to prevent juvenile delinquency

	Negative	Rumpa Jahan Prity, 03.11. 2009	ফেনীতে ড্যান্ডিতে আসক্ত হচ্ছে শিশু-কিশোররা Children and teenagers are getting addicted to Feni Dandy
	Negative	Babu Imtiaz, 18. 07. 2009	করোনার ঝুঁকিতে পথশিশুরা Street children are at risk of corona
		Habib Ullah, 20.12. 2017	বাংলাদেশে কিশোর রাস্তার গ্যাং এর আতঙ্ক Panic of juvenile street gangs in Bangladesh



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