

Media Visibility and Informational Deficiency

A data-driven analysis of newspaper coverage of violence against women in Bangladesh.

SCOPE	VAW reports published in 2025
SOURCES	21 Bangladeshi print and online outlets
EVIDENCE	2,255 reported incidents analysed
FOCUS	What coverage records - and what it leaves missing

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OVERVIEW

What this research examines

Bangladeshi newspapers frequently report violence against women (VAW), but visibility does not necessarily mean informational completeness. This study examines what is reported, what is missing, and how those gaps affect the usefulness of news coverage for understanding patterns of violence, institutional response and accountability.

Increased visibility has not been matched by informational completeness.

1

Introduction

In the case of violence against women, media visibility can support social recognition and awareness. Yet visibility without contextual completeness can also produce fragmented narratives. News reporting often relies on episodic storytelling, highlighting individual incidents while giving less attention to systemic causes, gendered power relations and institutional accountability.

These gaps matter because newspapers shape public understanding, policy discourse and legal accountability. When coverage omits survivor perspectives, contextual patterns, legal processes and case outcomes, audiences are less able to understand VAW as a persistent social problem requiring structural intervention.

This study adopts a data-driven analytical framework to examine the relationship between media visibility and informational deficiency in Bangladeshi newspaper reporting of VAW. It asks whether frequent reporting contributes to informed public discourse or reproduces momentary crime snapshots.

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Materials and methods

The study uses secondary data drawn from VAW reports published during 2025 by 21 Bangladeshi print and online news outlets. It combines quantitative frequency and cross-tabulation analysis with qualitative assessment of reporting gaps, source dependence and follow-up coverage.

The dataset includes murder and attempted murder, rape, attempted rape, gang rape, sexual harassment, physical violence and related categories. Key variables include victim age, offender age, incident type, district, number of accused, number arrested and legal action.

Missingness is treated as an analytical finding because the absence of core details limits what can be learned from published reports.

Dimension	What was examined
Coverage	VAW reports published in 2025
Sources	21 Bangladeshi print and online outlets

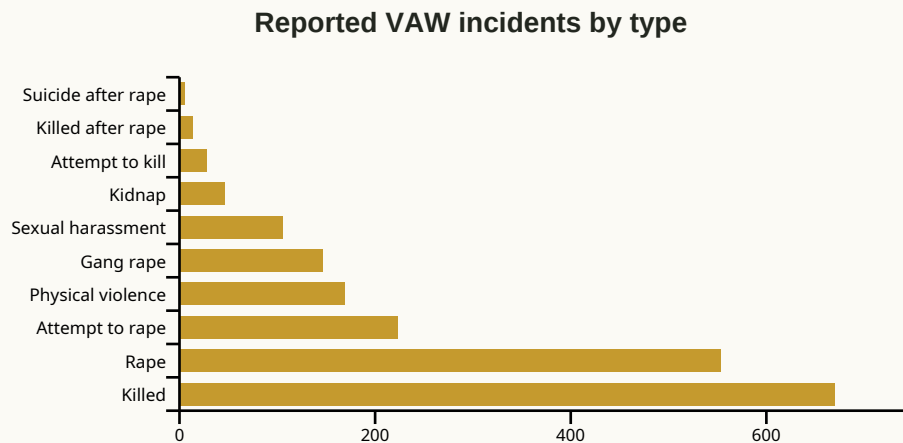
Dimension	What was examined
Analysis	Frequencies, cross-tabs, missing-information analysis and qualitative review
Core variables	Incident type, district, victim/offender age, accused, arrests and legal action

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Results

3.1

What kinds of incidents received coverage?



Cases in which women were killed formed the largest category of reported violence (29.7%), followed by rape (24.5%). Attempted rape accounted for 9.8%, physical violence 7.4% and gang rape 6.5%. The distribution shows that severe and lethal incidents dominate the recorded news dataset.

3.1

Where did reported incidents concentrate?

District	Reported incidents	Share
Dhaka	296	13.12%
Chattogram	113	5.01%
Narayanganj	103	4.56%
Cumilla	74	3.28%
Bogura	72	3.19%
Mymensingh	68	3.01%

Dhaka recorded the largest number of reported incidents. The dataset should not be read as a direct measure of district-level prevalence: population size, reporting mechanisms and media visibility may also shape these counts.

3.1

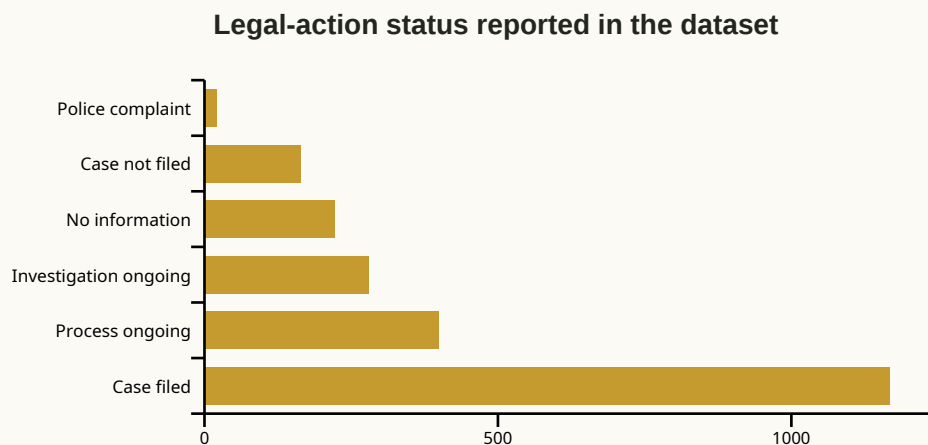
Who appears in the reports?

Victim age	n	%
<12	243	20.26
12-15	153	12.76
16-18	101	8.42
19-25	236	19.68
26-35	213	17.76
>35	253	21.10

Offender age	n	%
<18	34	4.55
18-25	202	27.07
26-35	236	31.63
36-45	135	18.09
46-55	84	11.26
>55	55	7.37

3.1

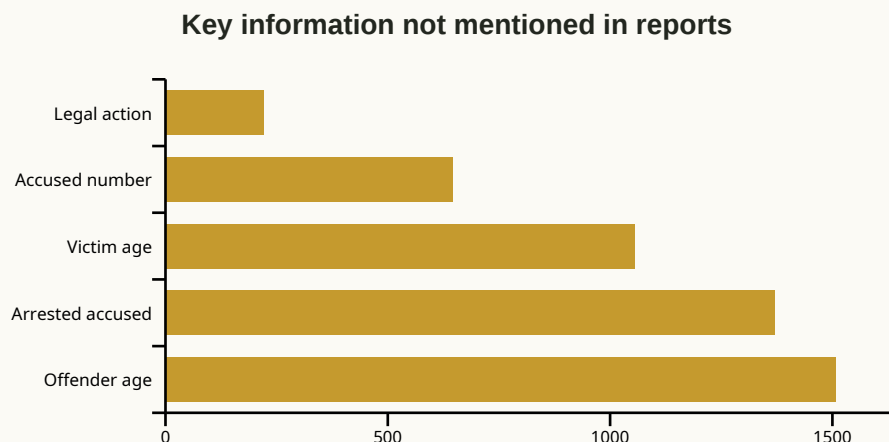
What did reports say about legal action?



More than half of reported incidents said a case had been filed. Nearly one-third were described as still in process or under investigation, while 9.84% contained no information on legal action. These categories describe what reports recorded at publication; they do not establish final case outcomes.

3.2

The reporting gap



Missing information is the core empirical concern of the study. Offender age was absent in 1,509 reports, arrest information in 1,370, and victim age in 1,056. Even where an incident receives media visibility, these omissions restrict the ability to compare cases, understand enforcement outcomes or track accountability.

3.3

How did reporting vary through the year?

Monthly patterns vary across districts rather than following a single national trajectory. Several districts show mid-year peaks. Because the dataset is based on news reports, changes over time may reflect changes in incidence, reporting intensity, editorial attention, or a combination of these factors.

3.4

Dependence on official sources

The qualitative section argues that VAW reporting relies heavily on police and other official statements. Official data are essential to crime reporting, but disproportionate dependence on them can narrow the frame when survivor voices, gender experts and independent inquiry are limited.

The research therefore calls for greater source diversity: official information should be contextualized with independent reporting, survivor perspectives where ethically appropriate, and expert analysis.

3.5

What happens after the first report?

The study identifies limited follow-up reporting as a major weakness. Initial reports often describe the event and identify victims or alleged perpetrators, but later reporting on investigations, legal proceedings, corrections and case outcomes is comparatively rare.

The paper does not contain an exact count of follow-up reports. Its conclusions on continuity are therefore qualitative and should be interpreted within that constraint.

4

Conclusion

This study highlights a central contradiction in Bangladeshi newspaper coverage of violence against women: increased visibility has not been matched by informational completeness. Frequent reporting

establishes VAW as a serious public concern, but episodic and crime-focused narratives often provide too little information to understand structural causes, institutional responses and justice outcomes.

The findings point to a need for reporting that is not only frequent, but more complete, contextual and sustained.

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Limitations

- The analysis is based on secondary data collected from 21 Bangladeshi print and online news outlets.
- The source paper does not include a literature-review section.
- The study does not provide an exact count of follow-up reports.

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Recommendations

- Report incidents with fuller, better-authenticated information.
- Complement police reports with independent investigative findings.
- Publish more comprehensive reports and provide regular follow-up updates.
- Clearly identify alleged perpetrators where ethically and legally appropriate, and report the status of legal action.