

Smart Bangladesh: Media's Role for the Vision for 2041

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Bangladesh has made remarkable progress since its independence in 1971. Over the years, the nation has achieved significant milestones, transitioning into a digitally advanced state by 2021. Looking ahead to 2041, the aspiration of a Smart Bangladesh takes center stage, driven by the vision of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. This transformation hinges on technology, innovation, and inclusive development, aiming to create a multifaceted nation that benefits all. In this endeavor, the media, encompassing platforms such as TV, radio, and newspapers, holds a pivotal role. Smart Bangladesh seeks to utilize these mediums to share information, raise awareness, and foster a united effort towards this ambitious goal.

Bangladesh's journey toward becoming a Smart Bangladesh goes beyond mere digitalization. It is a comprehensive vision that encompasses economic prosperity, social equity, technological advancement, and sustainable growth. A "smart nation" harnesses emerging technologies, networks, and data to build tech-enabled solutions that contribute to nation-building.

The Smart Bangladesh vision for 2041 covers a range of important goals. These objectives encompass achieving a high-income status, which means having a GDP per person of at least \$12,500. This goal aims to improve the country's economy and raise the living standards of its people. Another key goal is to create a society without poverty. This means getting rid of extreme poverty completely and reducing overall poverty to below 3%. This shows a commitment to balanced growth and making life better for everyone.

Maintaining stable economics is a crucial part of this vision. This involves keeping inflation rates low (around 4-5%), having small deficits (only 5% of the country's economic output), increasing investment (up to 40% of the GDP), and collecting more taxes (around 20% of the GDP). These measures demonstrate a strong commitment to responsible financial management and ensuring the country's long-term economic growth.

The vision also places a strong emphasis on high human development. This entails achieving 100% high-school education, including digital literacy, as well as establishing universal healthcare coverage, maximizing the nation's demographic potential and ensuring the holistic well-being of all citizens.

Sustainable urbanization is another critical pillar, wherein the goal is to embrace eco-friendly urban development. This involves achieving 80% urbanization and ensuring 100% electrification, primarily sourced from renewable energy, promoting environmentally conscious growth and resource utilization.

The vision's commitment to accessibility is evident in the aspiration to provide 100% paperless and cashless public services, tailor-made to individual preferences. This streamlined approach aims to facilitate efficient and convenient interactions between citizens and public services, marking a defining feature of Smart Bangladesh.

Central to the Smart Bangladesh vision is the creation of an equitable nation. This principle underscores the core goal of eliminating disparities, fostering equal rights, and creating opportunities for all segments of society, ensuring that progress is inclusive and far-reaching.

The media holds a crucial role in the transformation of Bangladesh into a smart nation. It serves as the conduit of public opinion and information dissemination, significantly shaping the trajectory of Smart Bangladesh. Here are the four core pillars of Smart Bangladesh and the ways media can contribute to their realization:

In a nation driven by technology, the media's role in shaping smart citizens is of utmost importance. As a bridge between innovation and the public, the media plays a pivotal role in disseminating information about the latest technologies and their real-world applications. Through accurate reporting and educational content, the media can equip citizens with the essential knowledge and skills to actively participate in the

digital landscape. This involves championing digital literacy campaigns to ensure everyone can navigate the digital world effectively. By showcasing success stories of individuals benefiting from technology and by facilitating public discussions on technology-related topics, the media not only informs but also empowers citizens to embrace and contribute to the ever-evolving technological realm.

In a smart government setup, transparency and accountability are vital. Here, the media functions as a vigilant watchdog, ensuring authorities remain accountable for their actions. Through impartial coverage of government initiatives, policies, and their consequences, the media can guarantee citizens are informed about the nation's status. Investigative journalism can uncover inefficiencies or corruption, compelling the authorities to adopt data-driven choices aligned with the vision of Smart Bangladesh. This media-driven accountability fosters a governance structure that resonates with the principles of progress and transparency.

With the ability to influence societal norms and values, the media holds remarkable sway. In a smart society, where inclusivity and social cohesion are crucial, the media takes center stage. It has the capacity to spotlight narratives that exemplify diversity, gender equality, and societal advancement. By showcasing grassroots initiatives, collaborative community efforts, and innovations that bridge societal divides, the media may cultivate a collective sense of unity and shared objectives among citizens. Through its storytelling prowess, the media shapes a social landscape that embraces differences, equality, and collective progress, embodying the very essence of a smart and harmonious society.

In an era of technological advancement in Bangladesh, the media emerges as an invaluable guide, navigating the intricacies of economic transformation. Through comprehensive analysis, expert insights, and tales of triumph in innovation-led economic expansion, the media plays a pivotal role in fostering citizen comprehension. By delving into the potential implications of novel technologies on industries, employment landscapes, and overall prosperity, the media equips citizens with insights to make informed decisions.

Furthermore, the media's role can extend to facilitating dialogues on the emerging technologies. This ensures a harmonious equilibrium between economic advancement and societal welfare. As an advocate for responsible growth, the media serves as a platform for discussions that promote not only financial progress but also the preservation of ethical values and the well-being of society at large. In this journey of transformation, the media's multifaceted role ensures citizens are empowered, informed, and engaged in shaping the evolving landscape of Smart Bangladesh.

The shift from Digital Bangladesh to Smart Bangladesh by 2041 is a monumental endeavor that demands the collective efforts of citizens, the government, industries, and stakeholders. In this transformative journey, the media can emerge as a linchpin, weaving together the fabric of a technology-enabled society. By empowering citizens with knowledge, holding institutions accountable, fostering inclusivity, and guiding economic progress, the media can accelerate the realization of the Smart Bangladesh vision. As the nation propels itself toward a future of innovation and equity, the media stands as a beacon of information, enlightenment, and inspiration.

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