“The role of mass media in a democratic country is similar to the role of judiciary and executive. To some extent, it plays a more effective role than judiciary and executive organs of the country.” Dhaka University Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique came up with these remarks while chairing a journalism workshop in the capital of Bangladesh. And still I can remember this.

Prof Arefin was highlighting on the role of mass media in the socio-economic and the educational development of a developing country. His message was that both the print and broadcast media can play a vital role in enhancing education in a developing country. It can shape and create public opinion towards related issues by applying its strength and bring changes among individual. I fully agree with him.

We in Bangladesh are now in a state of media expansion. A large number of people here depend on newspapers and broadcast media for entertainment. But media also has an important educational role: Students from rural areas can take lesson from watching certain television programmes. They also can learn a lot of things listening to radio. And almost every national daily, both Bangla and English, has its education page; they published both institutional and general knowledge based reports for students.

Education is much more than going to schools and colleges, its purpose is to create awareness among people. Mass media is providing this kind of knowledge outside of the schoolroom. Thus it is playing a vital role in creating mass awareness both in rural and urban areas in our country.

Role of print media

Print media in our country is very powerful. People, especially, the students read newspapers for learning different aspects about life, art, culture and science of both home and abroad.

Almost every newspaper has its own education page. In the page, they published educational articles written by teachers, trainers, students, and experts. It also publishes different difficult explanations, questions and answers of secondary and higher secondary levels.

Some English dailies publish the techniques of teaching English language and grammar, while some scientific magazines scientific explanations and new inventions. Some dailies publish ‘weekly magazines’, which focuses mainly on the higher education. In addition, they publish the prospectus of different educational institutions.

Again, students as well as adults can learn good English from the English newspapers. They can read articles about a certain topic and enrich their language knowledge.

Some newspapers have their “reader’s forum”. Through this forums they, try to enhance education and awareness in different areas of the country. The readers of different newspapers, who also work for it as volunteers, teach the deprived children in their free time. Sometimes, they provided books and related materials for slam children, who never got any chance to go school.

I know some journalist. They try to create awareness among the working children and adults. They
do this either provoked by their own interests and sense of responsibility or assigned by the office. Besides, national dailies, both Bangla and English often organize some discussion meetings, workshops and seminars for students and professionals, which is very powerful to create mass awareness.

**Role of Broadcast media**

As I said earlier, we are now in a state of “Media Expansion”, we have lot of TV and radio channels and every day new channels are coming. Broadcasting media is the most common & popular media in our country.

In the cases of developing countries, like Bangladesh, implementation of education fully depends on appropriate use of broadcasting media technology. And the government as well as private organizations are using Radio and television for meeting these demands.

A significant result has already been achieved in the field of mass education of Bangladesh by using broadcasting media. All the TV and Radio channels present various educational programmes for the students. These programmes become very popular in the country.

**“Meena” cartoon to create awareness**

For example, Bangladesh government in association with UNICEF Bangladesh is presenting a cartoon show “Meena”. In the serial Meena is the main character. She represents the common village girls of our country. She talks about serious issues such as education, early marriage, unequal food and other sensitive social issues.

This cartoon show created a huge mass awareness in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, there is universal awareness of Meena and 95% know the Meena television series. Now she became a role model of south Asian girl fighting against the society without any weapon.

The state run radio channels also organize educational programmes for the children and adults. They arrange live grammar classes, explanation classes and public awareness programmes.

In my childhood, I heard a radio programme regularly. That was “Gombhira song show” (A type of popular local song), which created a huge mass awareness among people. In the songs some “Gombhira” artists explains the fundamental rules, regulations of the society and their positive impact on people’s life.

Thus, the broadcasting media in our country, over last few decades is trying to expand classrooms for people without building any school.

**Conclusion**

In Bangladesh, the reach of mass media has gradually increased in the last few decades. Now people are more conscious about issues like education and health. The government and human rights organizations are giving various social awareness advertisements in newspapers, Radio and TV, which plays a vital role in expanding education among people.

Although, currently, 20 per cent of the population is under some form of media darkness, Bangladesh has experienced phenomenal growth in education by using mass media. Especially, this penetration has increased more rapidly in rural areas, compared to urban dwellers.