The Bangladeshi film industry, ideas of national cinema and possible future directions for filmmakers

<u>Video Interview</u>

Rasheduzzaman Tusar

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Abstract

The thesis examines past and current perceptions of Bangladeshi filmmaking practices and Bangladeshi cinema history since 1971, through a series of video interviews undertaken in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is a relatively new state, which gained independence from Pakistan in 1971 following nine months of civil war. As a result, the country's political stability and its pre-existing film industry were destroyed and did not modernise in the same way as the industries in neighbouring countries such as India.

This unique study seeks to examine possible new directions for future filmmakers in Bangladesh. That is why the research process explores Bangladeshi national cinema, history, filmmaking, and training facilities. The thesis employs a film-focused qualitative approach and is influenced by my professional background and interest. The key to this study is using a visual qualitative method in the form of interviews undertaken by video, and then edited together to produce a video. On the one hand, this video is an artefact in its own right and, on the other, also a research method integral to my thinking and analysis. The interviewees who engaged in conversations with me were chosen based on their expertise in film, media and journalism in Bangladesh. In the video, I explore the issues related to Bangladesh film history, concerns about filmmaking in Bangladesh and film education in Bangladesh since 1971. In its analysis, the thesis further draws on my interpretation of the literature review and the video and provides a multi-layered argument about past and present understandings of filmmaking practices to look to the future of filmmaking practices in Bangladesh.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis has been carried out following the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire. I also declare that the work is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text—no part of the thesis has been previously submitted as part of any other academic award. I have not presented the thesis to any other educational institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent the University.

Date: 28/02/2021

Dedication

To my parents, Shah Samsul Islam and late Aisha Siddiqua: May Allah blesses them both.

And

My newborn son Zayan Rashed and his Mom.

Acknowledgements

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Preface

Film has been a fantasy world for me since my childhood. Some of my happiest memories from childhood involve watching films with friends and family. I still cherish the memory of watching the first film that swept my mind. As I completed my degrees in Multimedia Technology (BSc) and Cinematography and Post-production (MSc) at the University of Greenwich, UK, I began to recognise the significance of film in my life and in my thinking which ultimately led to my decision to complete doctoral-level research in this field. I have a particular passion and desire to see the national cinema of Bangladesh elevated, successful and celebrated on the global stage.

On a research basis, I mainly wanted to use my filmmaking as a methodological tool to research filmmaking and create a vision for the Bangladesh film industry and production companies. This prompted me to apply for a practice-led doctorate at the University of Gloucestershire, UK. In my ten years of filmmaking and post-production work, I have worked on many independent short film and video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ct9dbsUEZEA ; https://amitusar32.wixsite.com/rtusar). Several factors influenced the choice to produce the video interview, such as the cost and time required for overseas research, the practicality of single-handedly filming and interviewing and the challenge of travelling with shooting equipment in one of the most populated and congested cities in the world (Dhaka).

The research is important mostly for two reasons. First: it is the most significant and life-changing degree for me as it is attached to my professional and future research career. Second: it is more than a degree to me as I want to contribute to the development of the Bangladesh film industry and find ways to overcome on-going production difficulties and improve filmmaking practices. The study involves practice-led data collection by creating a video exploring issues related to Bangladeshi film that I encountered in my literature review and engages with key people in the Bangladeshi film and TV industry as well as film educators.

The thesis will explain the research context of the video process as a research method, and then develop an analysis of the themes explored in the video before discussing the findings and possible recommendations that may contribute to the Bangladeshi film industry and its filmmaking practices.

1. Introduction

This research was originally conceived of as the production of a 'series of video interviews' where the practice of data collection through video and interviews explores understanding of, and future directions for, Bangladeshi film. The national cinema of Bangladesh has undergone many difficult phases since the country become independent in 1971. Post-independence, its new film industry was fragile compared to other South-East Asian cinemas such as Bollywood, and over time this gap has widened monumentally. This thesis aims to explore and analyse past and current Bangladeshi filmmaking practices through textual research and interviews with relevant people from the Bangladeshi film and TV industry as well as educational institutions to understand and explain why this has happened. The study involved a significant amount of fieldwork in Bangladesh that led to the making of the video. Drawing on my exploration of literature, I generated the following objectives for my research:

- To examine the development of filmmaking practices in Bangladesh since the nation was founded in 1971, and explore whether this constitutes a Bangladeshi national cinema.
- To conduct a series of video interviews with key people related to filmmaking in Bangladesh to explore current working practices and concerns.
- To analyse the interviews to ascertain current perceptions of filmmaking practice and film education in Bangladesh, and identify possible new directions for the development of future filmmaking in Bangladesh.

Chapter one starts with establishing the research context, setting out the evolution of Bangladeshi film since its independence. It discusses the concept of a distinctive Bangladeshi national cinema and the growing crisis in the Bangladeshi film industry. The second half of the chapter outlines the growth of digital filmmaking in Bangladesh and discusses the limitations of film and media training and the related educational opportunities.

Chapter two addresses the research design. It introduces the five interviewees and outlines the interview process, with a reflection on this process being formed at the end of the chapter.

Chapter three examines themes that emerged from the interview transcripts, while chapter four reflects on the data produced in the video. Chapter five evaluates my analysis findings in the light of my research objectives, and chapter six is the concluding chapter, where I detail the recommendations to develop the Bangladeshi film industry and filmmaking practices based on the research data.

2. Developing the Research Context

The inspiration for this research stemmed from reading a journal from the 'Bangladesh Film Archive' about the Bangladeshi film industry, and how this industry has changed over time and become unprofitable. It made me more curious about the reason(s). Sadly, there was not any straightforward answer(s) to this and little textual evidence. This prompted my decision to undertake PhD research to investigate this area of study.

After commencing my doctoral studies, I set about exploring literature on national cinema and Bangladeshi film history. In addition to surveying its history, I uncovered various key areas for research, such as the challenges in producing national cinema in Bangladesh and the current perception of filmmaking practice and how it has changed over time, as well as the current establishment of film education and its impact on overall filmmaking practice. I then visited Bangladesh to undertake some initial research and collect evidence to support my PhD research at the University of Gloucestershire while living in London. I began to map out my research methods and design, and I also used my visit to Bangladesh to establish some relevant contacts that I might draw on at a later stage. The visit and the research circumstances planted the idea in my head that a video-based interview would be a novel way to explore my research objectives and connect them with the topic and practice of filmmaking. Apart from this, video interviewing also produces a shareable digital record to underpin the thesis.

2.1 Exploring Bangladeshi Cinema (Part 1)

Background
My initial findings suggest that even though Bangladesh was founded in 1971 as a new nation, a film industry already existed, which had been established during British colonial times (Raju, 2000; Bokul, 2016). Bangladesh was known as East Bengal during this period. For example, the first Bengali film, *The Face and the Mask,* was released while East Bengal was still under Pakistani rule (1956) and was made by Bangladeshi director Abdul Zabbar Khan (Raju, 2000). Its story was based around bandits, an injured child and a police officer who took bribes from the bandit's leader. It is a story about rebellious people. However, there were hardly any films made exclusively for East Bengali people, nor was there any remarkable progress in filmmaking. Instead, motion pictures were imported to make a quick profit during the British colonial era (Ahsan, 2009; Shorkar, 2014). Ashbury, Helsby and O' Brien cited (1998) that economic, social and cultural control was the key reason for not allowing any films to be made for East Bengal people as this could create aspirations for national independence in a country under foreign domination. Since films were mostly imported from France, Italy and America, Bangladeshi audiences could not relate to their taste, attitudes and emotions. Foreign cinema displayed exotic locations and unfamiliar settings, stories and foreign languages. The local audience expected to watch something that they could relate to, something that had a familiar surface and characters (Ahsan, 2009).

Bangladeshi Cinema: A Black Hole
After achieving independence from the Pakistan military government, Bangladesh's newly born state had a new start in every sector, including its film industry. A group of film scholars led by Zahir Raihan, the director of *Jibon Theke Neya* (1969), advocated bringing the film industry back into the public sector including distribution and exhibition under government control (Ahsan, 2009). He proposed a set of policies as cited in Kabir (1979):

- Film production shall be planned according to the need of the country to ensure quality, and to avoid unnecessary wastage through the duplication of identical themes and/ or story as happened before.

- A pool of directors, both experienced and new, shall be on the government payroll and shall have regular directorial assignments based on their individual experience, educational and technical ability, and other qualifications.
- The distribution of all films shall continue to be handled by the existing distributing firms whose owners shall automatically become paid managers of their respective concerns, the entire proceeds, after meeting the running costs, shall go to a central Cinema Fund
- All cinema houses shall become public property but shall be managed by their respective owners under similar terms and conditions as distribution firms. (p. 50)

The proposed scheme became uncertain after the abduction of Zahir Raihan by war criminals (Jhuma, 2014). Here, the term 'war criminals' refers to Pakistani militaries and people from Bangladesh who supported them to commit murder, abduction and arson at the time of the war in 1971 and after ("Bangladesh war crimes trial: Key accused", 2016). The actual reasons for Zahir's abduction remain a mystery, while how the abduction happened is still unknown. Zahir Raihan was renowned for many notable works related to the war in 1971. The documentary "Stop Genocide" was one of the most influential and resourceful documentaries to depict the Pakistani military's horrendous atrocities (Ferdous, 2015). However, Alamgir Kabir (1979) notes that the people who ran the first government of free Bangladesh had no serious intention of introducing meaningful socialistic measures in any sphere of the newly independent country's economic life, even though they continued to pay lip service to it.

After this shocking incident, new financiers who earned their wealth by corruption in wartime targeted the film industry. In the absence of a film policy, there was no control over the quality or nature of the films produced. Therefore, the fresh start of Bangladeshi films fizzled out to nothing. Some dishonest producers and filmmakers started copying Hindi and Urdu film to achieve a quick profit (Ahsan, 2009; Islam, 2009). Though the copying of a film was forbidden under the censor board policy, there was no enforcement of this policy. Instead, the censor board filed a lawsuit against the producers, directors, actors and film exhibitors. There were seventy cases of copyright violation pending at the end of 2005, all filed by the censor board against films on obscenity grounds. It was stated that rarely was a producer fined or a film banned outright because of filing a case because of obscenity and vulgarity (Hoek, 2008). Kader (1993) suggests at least eleven films copied a Bollywood film in 197 including *Adhare Alo* (1977), *Bichar* (1977), *Takar Khela* (1977), *Atithi* (1977), and *Daku Monsur* (1977)

Rising issues
Post-1971, the majority of Bangladeshi films were considered to be poor quality in terms of screenwriting, music (Imam, 2016) and originality (including the repetition of plots and narratives, the same hero and heroine (Bokul, 2016) and insertions of what Jhuma (2014) describes as 'vulgar cut-piece'. These vulgar cut-pieces were inserted into the film with little concern for the narrative. Defining 'vulgar cut-pieces,' Hoek (2014) suggests that they are shots with a different cast and crew inserted into the film purely to serve sexual pleasure. She states that these inserts/vulgar cut-pieces are focused on the female body, and they are always thoroughly shaven. Producers adopted this new cut-piece method to protect the film business from foreign competition. Hoek (2008) was hesitant to mention the real film titles, so she

instead used a symbol such as Cruelty to refer to these films. There was no discernible reason why Hoek was hesitant to mention the real name of these films. However, to support the statement above, the author notes that as the release date approached, the cut-pieces were taken out of storage and assistant directors were ordered to splice them into the film. Hoek claims most mainstream commercial films in Bangladesh made use of cut-pieces. Eventually, the corrupt producers introduced a new genre called "Action" along with "Fantasy". According to the film critic Towheed Feroze, as cited in Ahsan (2009):

> Action films are arguably a post-war phenomenon and, it all began with Rangbaz (1973). This film was the presentation of a protagonist in a different light. He was a contrast from all virtuous, educated and well-behaved heroes of the past. Of course, there was that Robin Hood quality in him. But, then the character added the unique elements of roughness, violence and aggression. (p. 84)

After introducing violence and aggression in the action film, Ahmed (2012) said sexual content and slang language had reached its maximum limit from 1990. The author refers to slang here as an abusive language from Dhaka (The capital of Bangladesh). The anti-hero Dipjol was blamed for introducing and making regular use of slang language in the film, which also contributed to destroying the Bangladesh film industry, the author claimed. A survey drawn on by Jhuma (2014) to understand the key issue for the destruction of Bangladesh film industry, claims that some 58.01% of the film audience suggested that low-quality films (insertion of vulgar cut-pieces) was the reason for the downward spiral of the Bangladesh film industry into a black hole (Bindloss, 2018; Bokul, 2016).

Although the exact numbers are disputed, Jhuma (2014) suggests that in 1974, the total number of cinema halls in Bangladesh was two hundred and eight, and this number increased to seven hundred and twenty-three by 1988. Producers of poor-quality films took the most advantage of this increased number of cinema halls. Nevertheless, some famous films (Jhuma, 2014) also benefited from the circumstances of growth and more extensive distribution. Tozammel Haque Bokul directed *Beder Meye Josna* (1989), the most successful film in Bangladeshi cinema history (Jhuma, 2014).

In 1976 and 1978, respectively, to revitalise and protect the film industry from its decline, the Bangladeshi government took direct action to encourage quality filmmaking. It inaugurated national film awards and set up the Film Institute and Archive (Ahsan, 2009). The archive aimed to ensure that prints of films, cinema history, books, papers, still photographs, trailers, censor certificates, disks, cassettes, tapes, screenplays, posters, and banners were catalogued and stored. The film Institute and Archive has continued its work since then, and it is an invaluable resource for scholars. Simultaneously, the government also began to provide financial grants for filmmakers during 1976-77 (Ahsan, 2009). The aim was to encourage films with good plots and artistic excellence suitable for export to both foreign and Bangladeshi film markets.

Despite these initiatives taken by the Bangladeshi government, most of these new Bangladeshi films were not popular with Bangladeshi audiences (except for some famous films suggested

below), because some corrupt producers continued to insert vulgar cut-pieces in films. Imam (2016) states that the audience watched television drama and film alongside a good film in the theatre even after jeopardising social security and the poor environment in the cinema halls. The family audiences had to stop going to cinema halls because of hostile business people who tried to make fast cash by inserting vulgar cut-pieces in films that are alien to Bangladeshi culture (Bindloss, 2018; Bokul, 2016). As a result, the Bangladesh film industry declined further rather than prospering by 2005. Investment dropped by half, and the number of cinema halls reduced from about 1,500 to just over 600 in 2011 (Ethirajan, 2011; Jhuma, 2014). Film critics (Ahsan, 2009) identified several grounds for the audiences' refusal to engage and see Bangladeshi-made films. According to Hayat (1987), educated people avoided going to cinema halls preferring satellite TV channels, home screening and computer CDs, which made films widely available at home. Many film producers made films with outrageous stories, scenes of violence and sexual themes to draw the public to cinema halls. Jhuma (2014) compared satellite tv with a "Tornado". With the help of satellite tv, she claims that people can watch any English and Hindi films without spending a fortune, which decimated the Bangladeshi cinema business. She also explained, and was supported by Bokul (2016), that an additional reason for the decline in the quality of Bangladeshi movies was that filmmakers also tried to copy Bollywood movies.

The struggle to build new modern cinema halls and poor facilities in the existing ones, and the decreasing number of cinema halls are a continuing issue in the Bangladeshi film industry. To counter this decline, the government considered allowing Bollywood movies to be played in Bangladeshi movie theatres (Bokul, 2016). This led to protests and chaos in Dhaka between filmmakers, actors and cinema hall owners. Though importing cinema from India and Pakistan was restricted in 1972 after the war of independence, many cinema hall owners believed it should be started again (Ethirajan, 2011). They believed that it would help improve the cinema halls' economic performance as it would lead to regular, bigger audiences in contrast to the present. Filmmakers, actors and film producers believe importing Indian mainstream cinema will destroy any hope for the Bangladeshi film industry and put around 100,000 people's jobs at risk. They fear audiences will be more drawn to watching cinema from Bollywood because of its use of advanced technology, and its ability to produce big budget films (Bokul, 2016; Ethirajan, 2011). A well-known Bangladeshi actor and director, Masud Parvez Sohel Rana, as cited in Ethirajan (2011) asked, "How can we compete with Bollywood?" He explains that "Bollywood is a big institution, their production cost of film is one hundred times more than our production value. It seems to me like you are asking a flyweight boxer to fight with a heavyweight boxer" (Ethirajan, 2011). He alarmed the government of Bangladesh by suggesting that even a one-off screening of Indian movies will put more pressure on the government to lift the ban permanently. If it happens, it is feared that the home-grown movie industry will vanish in no time (Ethirajan, 2011). Some cinema analysts and critics, such as Professor Fahmidul Haq, as cited in Bokul (2016), think otherwise. Fahmidul Haq stated that the audience has the right to choose what they want to watch, and no one has the right to restrict them from watching Bollywood movies. He argued that if movies from Hollywood can be imported and viewed by an audience in a Bangladeshi cinema hall, then why not Bollywood films? In support of this viewpoint, it can be noted that there were only twenty cinema halls in Pakistan by 2005. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, this increased to 104 by 2014 after allowing Bollywood

cinema releases to be shown in the country as claimed by Fahmidul Haq (Bokul, 2016). Pakistani national filmmaking and storytelling also progressed so much after 2005 that they were able to send a film to the Oscars for consideration in 2006, and after a long gap of 50 years. Viewed this way, allow the screening of Bollywood movies did not damage the Pakistani film industry but rather helped improve it indirectly. Bokul (2016) suggested that the initiative of the government initiative be viewed positively. Some film critics also argued that importing Bollywood films would force Dhallywood (that is, the Bangladesh film industry) to improve its filmmaking standards (Ethirajan, 2011). However, the government decided to stop importing Bollywood films into Bangladesh because of demonstrations (Bokul, 2016; Ethirajan, 2011). The decision was reversed temporarily at a recent meeting of the Bangladeshi Film Producers, Distributors Associations, Bangladeshi Hall Owners and Film Exhibitions Association, due to the impact of the COVID -19 Pandemic of 2020 (Shazu, 2021).

The Bangladeshi film industry and national cinema
Most Bangladeshi films do not reflect Bangladeshi culture and its people in the current state. Instead, it includes elements that are alien to Bangladeshi society. To support the statement above, Ahmed (2012) claims that the use of sexual content (as I have discussed earlier) and slang language had reached its maximum limit after 1990. *Danga* (1992) and *Trash* (1992), directed by Kazi Hayat, were the first few movies to introduce such slang language.
Yet, some films produced between 1960 and 1970 are considered good quality films (Imam, 2016), such as *Haroano din* (Mustafizul Haq, 1961), *Chokori* (Ehtesham, 1967), *Moina Moti* (Kazi Zahir, 1969), *Modhumilon* (Kazi Zahir, 1970) and *Jibon Theke Neya* (Zahir Raihan, 1970).

Among these films, *Jibon Theke Neya* (1970) is a timeless political satire of Bangladesh under the Pakistani rule, where an autocratic, dominant woman (actress: Rawshan Jamil) as Apa (in English Apa means elder sister) in one family symbolises the political dictatorship of Ayub Khan (President of Pakistan) in East Pakistan (Arman, 2014). The story is based around controlling her family members, such as her husband, two brothers and maid servant. Her power is signified by the keyring attached to her sari, which rings like a bell to announce her progress through the house. Her husband is a lawyer and amateur singer, who sings on the rooftop to escape her. Her two unmarried brothers, Anis and Faruk, are also under her total control. The family members decide to make posters expressing their demands and equality, and Apa threatens to starve and force them to clear out the posters, erasing their voices. The story becomes complicated when the two brothers get married, and ownership of the key is divided. Apa tries to poison and kill one of her sisters-in-law to take back power in the house. The struggle for freedom continues in this film on two parallel levels: one is in the home, and the other is outside, where the people of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) rise in political protest. The movie is inspired by events surrounding the mass uprising of 1969 and was released prior to the civil war but still represents the true spirit of independence by its storyline. The National Anthem of Bangladesh, *Amar Shonar Bangla Ami Tomay Bhalobashi* was played for the first time in this movie (Akhter, 2014). The national anthem was able to generate a sense of Bengali nationalism among the masses. The lyrics of the song by the Bangladeshi National Poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam, was sung inside the country's jails, and motivated the people of Bangladesh to push for independence. In English, the lyrics may be translated as 'break that lock, break that iron gate of jail, fire on the jails, fire on

the jails and release all victims. In this sense, the movie proved to be an effective catalyst in bringing together the people of East Pakistan to demand independence. For these reasons Masud (2004) and Imam (2016) assert that *Jibon Theke Neya* projected both Bangladesh's political socio-culture and its people, and produced authentic storylines and soulful music (Imam, 2016) to become the first example of national cinema in Bangladesh, even before its emergence as an independent country.

By presenting contemporary facts through a fictional metaphor, the film portrayed the identifiable shared narrative and history of Bengalis (Arman, 2014). Alamgir Kabir writes, "In the film, through a metaphorically structured plot, Zahir Raihan not only epitomised the decade-long dictatorship of the Pakistani militarist Ayub Khan, but also provided the first filmed expression of the rising tide of Bengali nationalism that became the living spirit behind the War of National Liberation less than a year later." (Kabir, 1979, p.45). On this point, one needs to consider the context of the period in which this film was made. During the shooting of the movie, the film makers faced attempts by the authorities of Rawalpindi to stop production. As a result, the director revised the storyline and improvised the shooting location. The Dhaka branch of the Central Board of Film Censors hesitated to issue an approval to release because of the presence of the Pakistani authorities, even after tickets had been pre-sold for its planned release on April 10, 1970. On April 11, the authorities finally decided to authorise release because of fierce protests among the audience. Thus, this film can be simultaneously interpreted as political, symbolic, realistic and national (Akhter, 2014).

Though the number was lower, some successful national films deemed as good quality were created and released, albeit with great difficulty, between 1980 and 1990. Director and writer Abdullah Al Mamun made *Ekhoni Somoy* (1980). The story was an adaptation of his book *Shenapoti*. The director was awarded the Bangladeshi National Film Award for Best Director. Though the film was inspired and based on the novel, it was the story of the Bangladeshi people and their culture. *Devdas* (1982), directed by Chasi Nazrul Islam, is based on the novel of the same name by Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay. The director made the first, post–1971 full-length film based on the Bangladeshi Liberation War *Ora Egaro Jon* (1972), and its story depicted the war and its impact on society in Bangladesh. The film's essential aspect and influence are the producer, director and the eleven protagonists who witnessed the war personally and made an essential contribution to the film's making. The cast of eleven protagonists acted in this film after returning from the war, which resulted in capturing the freedom fighters' raw experience. It did not end here, as the film was also shot in the liberation war's exact locations. That is how the film became a significant masterpiece that depicted the liberation war. The Bangladesh Film Archive has selected the film for preservation because of its uniqueness. The director also made *Chandranath* (1984) and *Shuvoda* (1986) based on Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay's writing, which featured the renowned actors Abdur Razzak and Suchanda. Both films won the Bangladeshi National Film Award in multiple categories such as best director, best film, best actor, best-supporting actor, best music director and best female playback singer. Abdur Razzak directed *Chapa Dangar Bou* (1986), which was a hugely successful film that featured the highly regarded actress Shabana. However, the story also borrowed from the writing of Bonkim Chandra Chatterjee. Alamgir Kabir made *Parineeta* (1986), the famous actor Bulbul Ahmed

made *Rajlokhi Srikanto* (1987), Mohiuddin Faruque made *Biraj Bau* (1987), and Kamal Ahmed made *Bethar Dan* (1989) based on Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay's novel (Awwal, 2018).

The 1970s and 1980s were considered the golden era of Bangladeshi filmmaking, when most films were profitable (Bhoumik, 2015). Tozammel Haque Bokul directed *Beder Meye Josna* (1989) and released it at the end of the golden era. In Bengali, "Bede" means a caste or group of people who make their living by catching snakes and entertain people by 'snake charming' (making the snake dance to the tune of their flutes). The story was inspired by a traditional Bengali play based around the character, Josna (actress: Anju Ghose) and a local prince (actor: Ilias Kanchan). Josna is bitten by a snake at the age of ten and sails away from her powerful father because there is no cure for the snake bite. She is then found, saved and raised by a gypsy leader as his granddaughter. The gypsy leader teaches her snake-charming skills, and she becomes a member of that gypsy gang. One day a poisonous snake bites a local prince. A bede is called to cure the prince. He sees the wound and declares that only Josna can extract the poison from the prince's blood. The king calls Josna and asks her to save his son, in exchange for which he agrees to give her anything she wants. Josna cures the prince but becomes ill in the process. After her mother and the queen pray for her, she recovers and demands the hand of the prince as her reward, but the king becomes enraged by this demand. The king orders the banishment of the gypsies from the kingdom. When the prince had recovered, he comes to know of everything that has transpired and falls in love with Josna. The prince finds her and marries her. The King orders the highest punishment for his son and exiles Josna to the forest. After a long tug-of-war, Josna finds her long-lost father and persuades the king to consent to their union.

Though the movie is inspired by a very old rural Bengali play of the same name, Bangladeshi cultural identity is clearly projected in the film by using the life of a snake catcher and rural life, the dominance of a rural king before and during the British colonial era, the myth around a snake and traditional folk music. *Beder Meye Josna* has projected this cultural identity and national myths simultaneously (Higson, 1989; Cameron, 1999). The movie was released prior to the end of the golden era, but still became the highest grossing Bangladeshi film of all time and is the most viewed film in Bangladeshi film history (Bhoumik, 2015). The film's story and songs became so popular that the leading cast became the most popular actors in Bangladesh. In this sense, the movie is proved to be an effective catalyst in revitalizing authentic folk stories from Bangladesh rural life. After analysing *Beder Meye Josna* Bhoumik (2015), argues that the storyline did not follow tradition (such as how Hollywood or Bollywood portrays) to depict the story. Still, famous rural Bengali stories, folk music, dazzling dance and loud acting like Jatra (Bengali rural theatre) by popular actors made a strong connection with the Bangladeshi audience. The title song "Beder meye Josna amae kotha diese, ashi ashi bole Josna faki diese" became anthemic, and was able to generate the sense of Bangaliana (authentic feel of Bangladeshi culture) by bringing back long lost, soulful musical films like *Rupban* (Salhuddin, 1965). The lyrics summarized like 'The daughter of Bede, Josna promised to meet but tricked me by not showing up.' By presenting rural facts through a fictional metaphor, the film portrayed national myths, identifiable shared narratives and the history of the decade-long dictatorship and cruelty of the king. The film provided an understanding of the hardships faced by itinerant snake catchers who struggled to find places to settle permanently. Thus, the film is portraying

myths that are traditional and national at the same time. Regarding portraying myths Cameron (1999) argues that national myths are inextricably connected to national identity concepts, where symbols circulate within cultures that people seize upon to denote their national allegiance. In this case, the myth around the snake charming projected in the movie (i.e. hypnotizing a snake with a Pungi also known as the Bean) is still believed in some rural communities. The myth perhaps represents national bonding. *Beder Meye Josna* (1989) inspired filmmakers before the onslaught of piracy, vulgar cut-piece insertions and poor-quality film. Some filmmakers attempted to make a similar type of film inspired by the success *of Beder Meye Josna* but could not reverse the decline of the Bangladesh film Industry after 1990.

After 2000, female and family audiences only watched films made by a handful of filmmakers due to the prevalence of the vulgar cut-piece insertion issue (Bindloss, 2018). Foremost among the handful of well-regarded filmmakers was the famous and popular novelist and filmmaker Humayun Ahmed. He wrote over two hundred fiction and non-fiction books, many of which were bestsellers in Bangladesh. Some of them were adapted into films that include *Aguner Poroshmoni* (1994), *Srabon Megher Din* (2000), *Chandrokotha* (2003), *Shamol Saya* (2004), *Nondito Noroke* (2006), *Daruchini Dwip* (2007), *Amar Ache Jol* (2008) and *Priotomeshu* (2009) (Awwal, 2018), thus conforming to a key element of national cinema definitions (Ruman, 2013). Humayun Ahmed received many Bangladeshi National Film Awards across multiple categories. Humayun's work provided a strong message for Bangladeshi audiences by depicting a simple, light-hearted, funny story using unusual characters and dialogue, and is a unique style the novelist and filmmaker Humayon Ahmed portrayed for most of his films, Ruman (2013) claimed. Some notable films by other filmmakers are *Ayna Bibir Pala* (Saud Salauddin Jaki, 1991), *Padma Nadir Majhi* (Goutam Ghose, 1993), *Poka Makorer Ghor Bosoti* (Akhtaruzzaman, 1996) and *Hangor Nodi Grenade* (Chashi Nazrul Islam, 1997) made between 1990 and 2000.

Alternative film as national cinema
In addition to the larger budget commercial films that conformed quite closely to academic understandings of national cinema, and aimed to produce high-quality, films conforming to the notion of 'alternative film'(Mokammel, 2017) were also produced to challenge cinema that did not reflect Bangladeshi cultural values (e.g., slang films and vulgar cut-pieces). Some young filmmakers started making alternative films and documentaries with original stories of Bangladeshi people (Bokul, 2016). Examples include *Hulia* (1985) by Tanvir Mokammel, *Agami* (1985) by Morshedul Islam, *Adom Surat* (1989/1991) by Tarek Maud (Bokul, 2016). These films were made using a 16 mm camera so that they can be projected using a 16 mm projector, which is easy to carry around. Tanvir Mokammel indicated a 16mm projector in a town hall or a school or university auditorium as the most critical initiative for developing alternative films in Bangladesh (thus by-passing the cinema halls). According to Mokammel (2017), alternative Bangladeshi film contains some or all of the following:

- The unique storyline is usually not considered in mainstream Bengali films. Such as *Chaka* (Morshedul Islam, 1994) is a story of a dead body travelled from one village to another or *Chitra Nodir Pare* (Tanvir Mokammel, 1999) featuring a Hindu family and its disaster at the time of the Pakistan ruling government.

- Low budget movie funding comes from a small loan or government aid. The alternative filmmaker will not seek funding from a corporate institution or any dishonest investor who will apply their power of money to change filmmaking's natural process.
- The film format must be 16mm, which supports projecting by a projector.
- Film casts are mostly composed of theatre actors or regular people. No film stars are cast to make it commercially successful.

While alternative Bangladeshi films are appreciated and loved by particular audiences, alternative filmmakers have faced great opposition. Political censorship and Islamic extremism are the two greatest reasons for the restrictions placed on many alternative films. *Lalshalu* (Tanvir Mokammel, 2002) for instance faced mass protests from Islamic institutions before release because the plot of the story (this film was based on a novel by Syed Waliullah about a Mullah who established a false shrine) was considered as anti-Islam (Mokammel, 2017). Alternative films are also known as the "alternative film movement" (Bokul, 2016, p. 16) because of how these films are made. Since alternative movies were introduced to overcome dishonest corporate producers and make economically independently films, they may also be considered Independent film and independent filmmaking. However, this does not preclude a movie from being a national film, rather the removal of financial barriers enables a filmmaker to express themselves unfettered and the resulting films may be both be unique and national. Some alternative films such as *Chitra Nodir Pare* (Tanvir Mokammel, 1999), *Kittonkhela* (Abu Sayeed, 2000), *Matir Moina* (Tareque Masud, 2002), *Nirontor* (Abu Sayeed, 2006) and *Runway* (Tareque Masud, 2010) are praised nationally (Bokul, 2016) at the National Film Awards in Bangladesh and internationally at the Cannes Film Festival, Marrakech International Film Festival and Directors Guild of Great Britain (Matir Moina - IMDb, 2021).

Among these films, *Matir Moina* (2002) (also known in English as *The Clay Bird)* was Bangladesh's first submission for the Best Foreign Language Film category at the 75th academy awards in 2002. It received the FIPRESCI award in Cannes, France and the best screenplay award at the Marrakesh Film Festival, Morocco in 2002, as well as the best film award at the Kara Film Festival, Pakistan, in 2003. Despite all these awards, the film faced release issues , and was banned by the Bangladesh Film Censor Board for being 'religiously sensitive.' The film was considered religiously sensitive because it represents Islam in the modern context where people are liberal and believe in Marxism The modern representation of Islam is not strict as the Islam religion that most of the people follow, such as following a path in the name of Islam by misinterpreting the Holy Quran. The followers of modern Islam or popular religion may not believe in either cultural or religious influence. In this context Haq & Balraj (2010) said:

> They may not believe in either Bengaliness or Muslimness, rather their syncretic position may resolve this 'stupid' debate. Though popular religion doesn't dominate in politics or state operation, but it always influenced the psyche of the people of Bangladesh. (p.3)

However, modern and secular Bengalis usually do not recognize the influence of popular religion as they like to believe it is merely folk culture. Thus, the core contrast between popular religion and Muslimness (see more detail below) is in the approach of believing in Islam. Popular religion is usually attacked by Muslimness. Here, Muslimness is a religious identity that was first evident

in 19th century Bengal where it had been promoted by an Islamic reformist movement. India, as well as Bengal, was divided during the conflict between Muslim and Hindu followers following the demise of the British raj. However, back in 1905 Bengal was united in its response to the demand of Bengal Muslims and Bengal Hindus to strengthen Bengali culture. Thus, in Independent Bangladesh state power has been shared by the followers of Bengaliness (see definition below) as well as the followers of Muslimness, though the country was liberated on the Bengaliness approach. Nevertheless, after liberation Muslimness has regained power and the question is still haunting the people of Bangladesh. Who am I first, Bengali or Muslim? Muslimness has often represented an extremist approach. The believers think Islam is a complete code of life and it needs protection from invasion by other religions. Extremist approaches often call for war and sacrifice life in the name of the protection of Islam. However, the modern representation of Islam is problematic to a big group of Muslims, as they believe this is an attack on Islam itself.

The banning of the film proves that cinema is closely related to the identity issues of Bangladesh. In this context, Haq & Balraj (2010) believe religion is always a determining factor in the formation of the national identity of Bangladesh – sometimes it is embraced and sometimes avoided or modified to a localized form. However, the historical context played a pivotal role in determining national identity in the film.

In *Matir Moina,* the director's childhood experience is revealed set against the backdrop of the 1969 mass uprising in East Pakistan on the eve of the Bangladesh Liberation war. A teenage character named Anu (Nurul Islam Bablu) lives with his orthodox Muslim father, Kazi (played by Jayanta Chattopadhyay), his mother (Rokey Prachy) and his younger sister Asma. Kazi sends Anu to a madrasa (religious education institute specializing in Islamic teachings only) because the boy often goes to watch Hindu festivals and to canoe with his uncle Milon against Kazi's wishes. Discipline in the madrassa is strict: Anu's long hair is forcibly cut short, he has to wear a madrasa uniform and his name is changed to Anwarul Islam. Among the various teachers of the Madrasa, Baro Hujur (the senior teacher) is strict, rude and thinks Islam is a complete code of life. Ibrahim Hujur (a junior teacher) is gentle and loving to the students. He does not confuse Islam with politics like Baro Hujur. Though Kazi's Islam is not political like Baro Hujur's, his belief falls into a broader Muslimness that is a part of Identity.

On the other hand, the Communist Milon believes more in Bengalis. While Anu tried to adjust to life in the madrasa, his younger sister Asma dies because of Kazi refusal to use modern medicines. Despite the conflicts and differences between Kazi and his wife, the brother Milon, Baro Hujur and Ibrahim Hujur, and others in the film, rural life seems calm and quiet until the wave of national political conflicts appear in newspaper headlines and processions in the marketplace. In the latter part of the film, we hear the results of the general election of 1970 through the radio, and the majority party of East Pakistan, the Awami League, wins. Yet the power was not given to the Awami League. Rather, at midnight on March 25, 1971, the West Pakistani military attack civilians in Dhaka. People flee from the capital of East Pakistan to the villages, and these villages too are then attacked by the military. As a result, Milon dies and Kazi's house is burnt despite the belief that the military is coming to their peripheral village to keep the peace and protect Islam (Haq & Balraj, 2010).

The *Clay Bird* has explores popular religion in traditional Bangladesh through the existence of Bengaliness (Bengaliness is an ethno-linguistic identity of the nation which had emerged in the middle ages in Bengal through Bengali literature and culture. Bengaliness had reached its peak in 1952 through the Bangla language movement which had resulted in the birth of Bangladesh in 1971). Muslimness (see definition above) is also evident in the film. Anu's father Kazi believes in a Muslim brotherhood, clearly believing that Muslims won't kill other Muslims. But Milon believes in Bengaliness and fights against the Pakistani military for the right of East Pakistani people. Both characters represent two opposite identities as their activities conflict in the broader political sphere. While Milon is modern, liberal and believes in Marxism, Kazi zealously pursues Islamic beliefs. By exploring the limitations of both identities, the director has endorsed popular religion, which has built up an image of uniqueness in the film. Popular religious culture is not dominant in Bangladesh, which encourages citizens to be relatively liberal compared to other Muslim countries . By endorsing the more syncretic and humanist approach of popular religion, the conflict between Bengaliness and Muslimness can be resolved, which *The Clay Bird* has portrayed successfully (Haq & Balraj, 2010). The film's success nationally and globally has changed the view of Bangladeshi filmmakers given that it demonstrated how a film covering critical and sensitive topics can also be commercially successful, critically praised and acquire national status based on their settings and storyline. Despite being made with French funding, *The Clay Bird* projected a strong religious influence in Bengali culture and the significance of the liberation war (Masud, 2004; Higson, 1989). To explain the issue of funding better, eminent Bangladeshi filmmaker Catherine Masud (2004) has suggested that national cinema does not need to be state sponsored or even that there is any requirement for a country's mainstream cinema to be produced through major studios. She argues that cinema should be distinguished by its quality as an authentic reflection of a country's tradition, society, history and culture, in all its diversity and richness. However, a national cinema can be complex and contentious, as this can be defined both in economic boundaries and the cultural conception of a nation (Street, 2009).

Inspired by the success of *The Clay Bird,* filmmakers like Toukir Ahmed made *Joyjatra* (2004) and *Fagun Haway* (2019) reflecting the Liberation War and the language movement in 1952. Morshedul Islam made *Aamar Bondhu Rashed* (2011) which is based on a fictional story based on Bangladesh's Liberation War. The film depicts the story of a boy named Iblu and his new friend Rashed who lives in a small town during the Liberation War. When other students are not conscious of the liberation movement, Rashed understood the country's emerging crisis point. Rashed begins to motivate others so that they understand it. One day the Pakistani army attacks the town, and Rashed observes the battle and helps the freedom fighters. This film carries enormous importance for the new generation in that they can learn about the significance of the Liberation War in 1971 (Yasmin, 2012). The film is a fine reminder for the newer generations that Bangladesh was not always an independent country, and thousands had to sacrifice their lives to free it.

These few films have enriched Bangladeshi film history and liberated the audience from watching the history and tradition of Bangladesh, the Liberation War and the language movement (Bokul, 2016). These films represent particular turning points in the historical and

cultural evolution of the industry. For example, *Jibon Theke Neya* proved to be an effective catalyst in uniting the people of East Pakistan to demand Independence, and inspired filmmakers to make a film using the Bengali language. Later, the film became one of the most critical reference points for future war films. Similarly, *The Clay Bird* projected the strong influence of religion in Bengali culture, and the significance of the Liberation war through the traditional rural life of Bengalis. The film has liberated filmmakers and audiences and encouraged them to accept and understand popular religion. In addition, the film had introduced the Bangladesh film industry internationally for the first time and opened a door for it in world cinema. On the other hand, Beder Meye Josna had a completely different storyline and plot, which also had a commercial set-up and content compared to *Jibon Theke Neya*, *The Clay Bird* and *Amar Bondhu Rashed.* However, they all projected the main theme of their films using traditional rural life, Bangladeshi people and their myths and beliefs. The films also narrated drama using Bangladeshi folk music and making it an integral part of the story, such as Bangladesh's national anthem "Amar sonar Bangla" in *Jibon Theke Neya*, the romantic folk song "Beder Meye Josna Amae Kotha Diese" in *Beder Meye Josna* and "Pakhi ta Bondi ase deher kachae" in *The Clay Bird.* The unique theme or Identity of the Liberation War, the language movement, traditional rural life and folk music establish these films as Bangladeshi national cinema. To define national cinema Andrew Higson suggested that the cultural identity projected in the film, such as national, political, economic and cultural identity, should be considered more strongly than where films are made (Higson, 1989; Li & Jennings, 2015). A concept of eliminating Hollywood as the centre of world cinema Higson claims that a national cinema is defined not so much in terms of its difference from Hollywood, but in terms of its relationship to an existing and established national, political, economic and cultural identity (Higson, 1989). A similar concept of eliminating Hollywood is suggested by Nagib (2006). Indeed, she considers world cinema to have no beginning, no end and no centre (Nagib, 2006), thus the concept of national cinema is ever-changing as we should celebrate pluralities and the blurring of boundaries instead of searching for a notion of national identity to term a film as a national cinema of a particular nation (Street, 2009). The above suggests that the ever-changing concept of national cinema does not require Hollywood to be the centrepiece or standard to compare other nations' national cinema. In many successful national cinemas such as those of France and Australia, considerable state support for films is provided, reflecting national cultural preservation concerns. The discussions around national cinema suggest that it allows a nation to assert itself through the medium of film, something which belongs uniquely to that people, culture and history (Vitali & Willemen, 2006). On a similar note, Ahasan (2009) suggests that film should not reflect different social values systems, affecting the conventional family customs and culture. In the case of Bangladesh, the Liberation War, the language movement, traditional rural life and folk music are unique themes or commonalities to define Bangladeshi national cinema.

2.2 Filmmaking practice and training in the Bangladeshi context (Part 2)

Transition into digital filmmaking

In 1958, during the colonial period, the Film Development Corporation (FDC) began operating as a government filmmaking studio. During this era 35 mm footage was mostly used to produce film (Ahsan & Dudrah, 2015). The use of this particular film stock ended in Bangladesh in 2003 with the digitalising of the post-production unit of the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC). Nevertheless, many new filmmakers like Tokon Thaakoor, as cited in Haq (2012), explained that making films in the BFDC is difficult. Tokon argues that if anyone is interested in making a movie through the BFDC, they need to work for years as an assistant of a lousy director before becoming a director in their own right.

On top of that, filmmaking equipment and the facilities at the BFDC are far from modern, suffering, for example, from low-quality recording studios, no laboratory or research institutes, and no film library (Bokul, 2016). Still, many new filmmakers go to BFDC because being a government institute it is comparatively less expensive to create a film there. The institution has also been accused of a lack of equal opportunities, as many filmmakers may need to wait for several years to get approval to make a film at the BFDC because of nepotism (Haq, 2012). This has been mitigated slightly due to the advent and growth of digital and independent filmmaking.

Filmmakers from third world countries could not think of reaching the technical standard of the films made in America or Europe just around ten years ago. The democratisation of digital technology has brought this closer. Therefore, digital filmmaking was compared with the invention of sound in film (OHANIAN & Phillips, 2013). In response, the government of Bangladesh approved digital cinema in 2009. Since then filmmaking practice has changed from analogue to digital, which allowed digital films to be shown in mainstream theatres (Haq, 2012). Though it was initially considered costly, this has now changed as filmmakers consider digital cinema as a means for low budget and accessible filmmaking. Therefore, digital filmmaking has opened the door for many new and independent filmmakers. Independent filmmakers can take their time to shoot and edit a film or video and be entirely independent in selecting content. Most importantly, an independent filmmaker is independent of Hollywood and the major motion picture studios (Block, 1983).

The director Tareque Masud considers the first digital film in Bangladesh to be *Ontorjatra* (2006). However, this is debatable as it was not an all-digital production having been shot with a DV camera, edited on a computer and transferred to 35 mm for mainstream release because of not having any digital-enabled projection system in Bangladesh. In this context, *Matir Moina* (2002) could be acknowledged as the first digital movie because it was edited on a computer and recorded using digital audio tape (DAT) (Haq, 2012).

Strength and weakness of digital cinema
Digital cinema offers less expense, easy management, greater possibilities and complete creative control over a recorded video (OHANIAN & Phillips, 2013). On a similar note, Broderick explains, as cited in Haq (2012), that the digital camera has brought all the comforts of making a film, such as cost-effective shooting, easy large video file transfer and comfortable editing. However, the transition into digital filmmaking was not smooth as it required massive upgrades in software and hardware, which was expensive. In this transition period many people lost their jobs as it

was hard for them to upskill and adapt to the new technologies. Economic restrictions prevented any endeavour to train up new and existing employees (Haq, 2012). However, the major problem of digital cinema in Bangladesh is its distribution and exhibition, as there are very few digitally enabled cinemas in Bangladesh for direct projection except the Star cineplex and multiplex in Jamuna Future Park in Dhaka. The Star cineplex owner opened some branches in 2019, but this was limited to Dhaka (Bokul, 2016). Though the government of Bangladesh approved digital cinema in 2009 and Haq (2012) suggested the cinema industry was at the primary stage in 2012, the above suggests minimal progress from then to 2021 ("Star Cineplex Bangladesh | The First Multiplex Cinema Theater in Bangladesh.", 2002).

Lack of media training

The Bangladesh Film Industry (BFI) acts as a central hub that links three Bangladesh government established sister organisations: the National Institute of Mass Communication (NIMC), the Bangladesh Film Censor Board (BFCB), the Bangladesh Film Archive (BFA) and privately-owned small independent production, distribution and exhibition firms. The diagram below shows the structure of the BFI and the organisations associated with it.
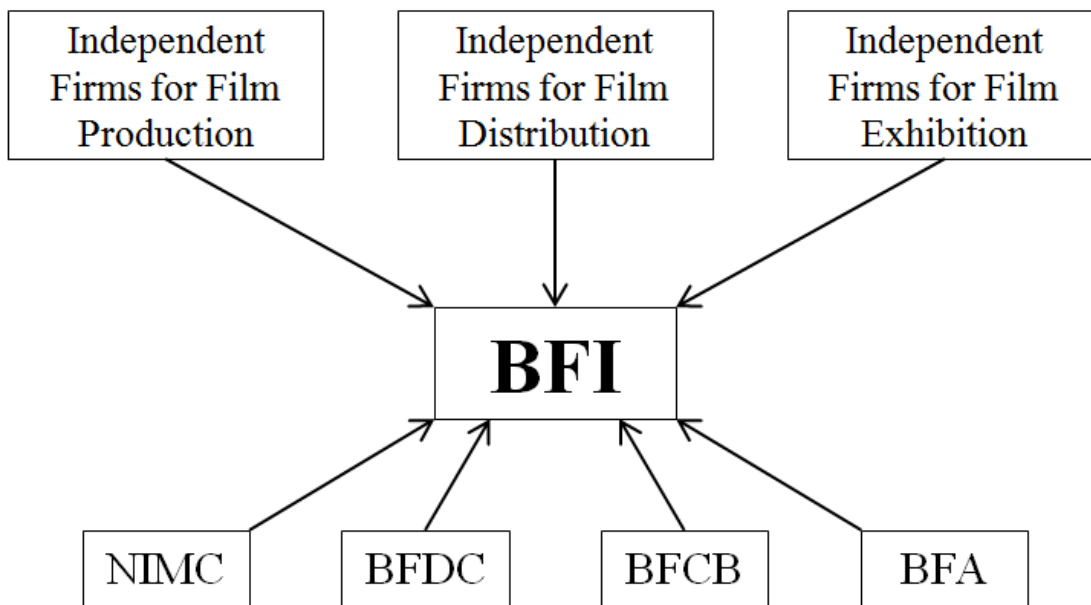
Fig 2.1 The Interlinked Network of the BFI in 2014

(Ahsan & Dudrah, 2015)

This pre-digital era investigation is crucial to understanding current filmmaking practice and the digital era. The digital era started with digitalising the post-production unit of the BFDC in 2003. However, no effort was made to identify the effects the digitalisation process would have on the film industry and to protect those whose livelihoods would be impacted (by for example upskilling them to the new digital technologies), nor to otherwise train new workers in the new technologies. A new skill shortage arose through the integration process that was unanticipated

(Ahsan & Dudrah, 2015). There were no training facilities for the vulnerable group of assistant cameramen, assistant directors, editors, sound and dubbing crews. As a result they lost jobs, as their roles were no longer required. For example, when 35mm celluloid-based sound negatives were no longer produced and manual editing jobs (e.g. cutting celluloid footage with scissors) were no longer needed, the sound or lab crews lost their jobs.

Projector operators, editors, camera operators and assistant camera operators have had little time to learn how to use digital machines. As the 35mm projectors were replaced by digital projectors, knowledge and skills related to digital projection, digital camera operation and performing non-linear editing was required. When distribution incorporated online delivery in a digital environment, intermediary booking agents were not required as cinema halls deal directly with producers. Though digitalisation is a relatively new and fast-developing concept globally, Bangladesh has not yet seen significant growth in its expertise compared to Hollywood and Bollywood. Ahsan and Dudrah (2015) blamed the Bangladeshi government for not providing training for the digital-film workforce. Although the NIMC is a national institute, the government has not yet formulated any guidelines to be followed. As a result, even though the NIMC has developed its training policy, this training policy has not been adopted at national level.

Regarding current working practices, regardless of digital technology initiation into the BFI, the industry's workforce pattern has not seen any radical changes. According to fieldwork data in 2009 cited by Ahsan and Dudrah (2015), the government employees of the BFDC, BFCB and the BFA numbers 360, 25 and 54, respectively. In addition to the BFDC's public employees, many private workers are also employed in various firms within the BFI. Furthermore, on top of the regular workforce, several self-employed personnel also work under temporary contracts. The most unstable strata are day-labour workers, who secure their jobs through ancillary relationships with the regular workforce. Most of the film workforce have formed associations to protect their working rights, such as the Artists' Association and the Producers' Association. The BFI workforce size can be better understood by studying the different workers' associations, which indicates a significant lack of media training. (See diagram below).
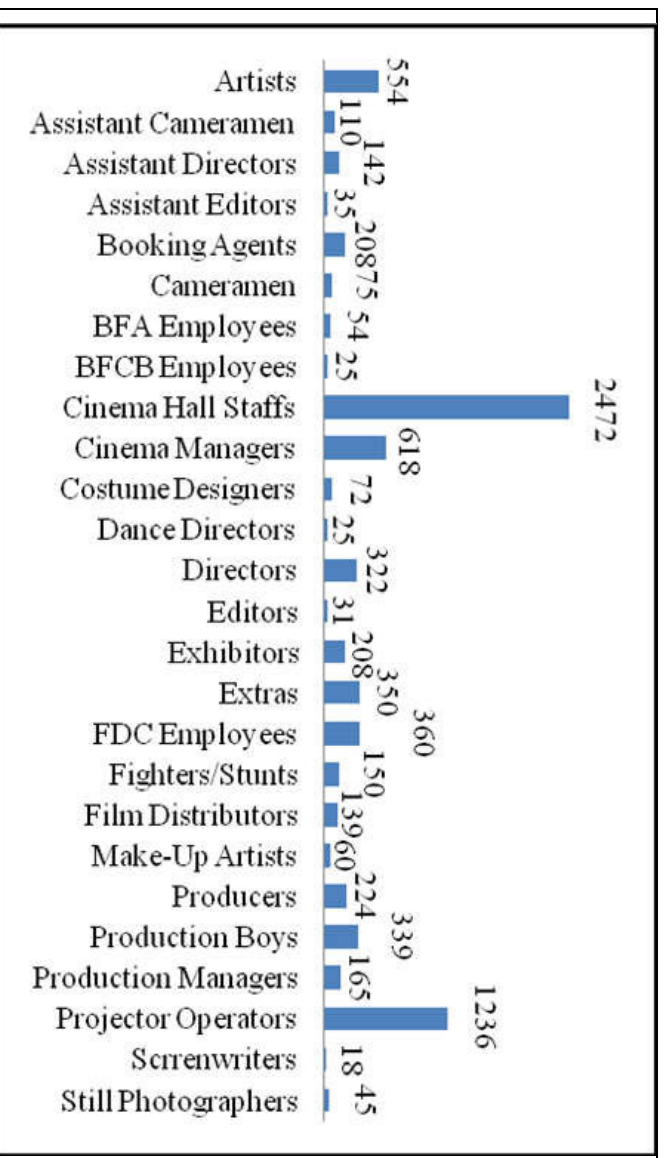
Figure 2.2: The total BFI workforce (2014). (Ahsan & Dudrah, 2015)

Workgroup	Value
Artists	554
Assistant Cameramen	142
Assistant Directors	110
Assistant Editors	35
Booking Agents	208
Cameramen	75
BFA Employees	54
BFCB Employees	25
Cinema Hall Staffs	2472
Cinema Managers	618
Costume Designers	72
Dance Directors	25
Directors	322
Editors	31
Exhibitors	208
Extras	350
FDC Employees	360
Fighters/Stunts	150
Film Distributors	139
Make-Up Artists	60
Producers	224
Production Boys	339
Production Managers	165
Projector Operators	1236
Screenwriters	18
Still Photographers	45

The diagram reveals that twenty-six different workgroups are directly associated with the BFI. According to the NIMC data, since its establishment (1980) and up to 2015, the NIMC has provided training for 12,550 people. These statistics indicate 358 people being trained in the year 2016. Unless the training capability of the NIMC increases at a dramatic rate, it will take the NIMC 5 years to teach the vulnerable BFI workforce outlined above (totalling 1946 people) to be skilled in digital technology (Ahsan & Dudrah, 2015). However, the film industry provides substantial revenue for the government, and it might be argued that film should be prioritised within the NIMC. In reality, the scenario is the reverse. In 34 years of training (1980-2014), the NIMC has offered eighty-nine training courses, but only five of them were on film (Ahsan & Dudrah, 2015). It is evident that the lack of a national policy for media training, which resulted from the absence of government efforts, has hampered the BFI and thus Bangladeshi film.

The Bangladeshi film education context

Filmmaking is a high-class technical profession, and it is considered a quintessential expression of culture (Mokammel, 2017). It requires film talent and scholars to make good films. Acquiring the basics of cognitive knowledge through media education is crucial, but since there is limited growth in improving and expanding film education in the country, film talent is hard to find (Ahsan & Dudrah, 2015). One of the first formal film education processes begin with an initiative from alternative filmmakers who taught filmmaking theoretically and practically as a short course after 1985 to promote film education. Teaching was limited to Dhaka (Bokul, 2016; Mokammel, 2017). Following this, a small number of private institutions began film education recently, such as Stamford University Bangladesh, the Independent University, the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, BAFTA (Bangladesh Film & Television Academy), the Bangladesh Film Institute and others. Apart from this, some organisations ("Graphic Design Training Course in

Bangladesh - Creative IT", 2021) such as Aptech, BITM, the Creative IT Institute, the Bangladesh Institute of Journalism and Electronic Media (BIJEM) offer digital video editing, graphic design, web design, 3D modelling, animation and computer-generated imaging (CGI) courses. However, the absence of a national media training policy is preventing the growth of film scholars in Bangladesh ("Bangladesh Institute of Journalism and Electronic Media, BIJEM", 2021). Ahsan and Dudrah (2015) suggest that the private sector needs to introduce more media training, as only 5.2% of the film industry are federal employees, whereas 94.8% make up the private workforce.

The Department of Television, Film and Photography in the University of Dhaka began its journey in 2012, affiliated with the Faculty of Social Science, the first leading public University to start film education. Later, another public university named Jahangirnagar began to offer media studies (Ahsan & Dudrah, 2015). Bokul (2016) explains that there are still no film institutions in the country like the Film and Television Institute of India. Internationally, film education is often woven into secondary school curricula, but is absent in Bangladesh's case (Ahsan & Dudrah, 2015). To date, there is no significant initiative to bridge the gap between university media education and secondary schools.

Public and private universities also have a completely different focus of interest in Bangladesh as private universities offer more practical courses, whereas the former is trying to combine their theoretical courses with practice. The balance between theoretical and practical aspects is unsatisfactory due to inadequate equipment facilities and restricted learning hours. For example, as Ahsan and Dudrah (2015) claim, digital cameras arrived in Bangladesh in around 2002, but people cannot use HDTV because of its costs. Ahsan and Dudrah (2015) also suggested strong demand for practical courses within media departments, but due to limited resources and curriculum design these cannot always be accommodated. Training in 35 mm filmmaking has always been costly, as the cameras and film are expensive, which has meant that training in film is minimal in the private sector. However, with the arrival of digital cameras it was hoped that the private sector would expand film training. Thus far, it has failed to become a reality.

2.3 Summary

After examining 'Exploring Bangladeshi Cinema (part 1)' and 'Filmmaking Practice and Training in the Bangladeshi Context (part 2),' the following key concepts emerged.

- Until after the war of liberation, the Pakistani government controlled East Bengal, which resulted in no progress toward the development of a distinctive Bengali filmmaking and film industry tradition.
- Creativity was compromised and replaced by a profit motive when the proposed National Film Policy did not come to fruition after 1971.
- There was a decrease in the number of cinema halls because of dwindling audiences due to the tactics of the profit motive that brought about vulgar cut-piece insertion in films, hostile environment in cinema halls, and satellite tv's growing dominance.
- The Impact of Importing overseas films provided competition for developing Bangladeshi films.

- Nationalising the Bangladeshi Film Industry to save the film industry. Including concentrating on national and cultural myths and narratives.
- The introduction of alternative film to develop the film industry to make low-cost, independent and interesting, high-quality films.
- A shortage of media training because of a lack of government funding initiatives.

The emerged key concepts, in summary, bring up the gap in knowledge and raise some questions. To fill the gap in the following areas, I have examined it further by video interviewing key people related to filmmaking and film education. I investigated:

- How filmmaking practice had developed after independence in Bangladesh.
- The reason national film policy did not come into action.
- The reason for the decrease in the number of cinema halls.
- The reason made the audience disinterested in going to the cinema.
- The current state of film education and training in Bangladesh.

Based on the emerging key concepts found in the literature review, I have set up some steps or objectives to take the research forward by analysing it. The steps are in the following:

- Examine the development of filmmaking practices in Bangladesh since the nation was founded in 1971 and explore if this constitutes a Bangladeshi national cinema.
- Record a series of video interviews with key people related to filmmaking in Bangladesh to explore current working practices and concerns.
- Analyse the interviews to ascertain current perceptions of filmmaking practice and film education in Bangladesh and identify possible new directions to develop future filmmaking in Bangladesh.

3. Research design and methods: why video as a method?

3.1 Introduction

The research was designed using film focused qualitative approach. The film focused qualitative practice-led research was influenced by my interest in filmmaking and professional background. That is why the study examines the development of filmmaking practices and explores current working practices and concerns by video interviewing. Video interviews enabled five diverse participants to participate in a conversation with me, which was later edited with key information.

Though the interview was a semi-formal and more conversational type, I set the questionnaire to have a clear direction for the conversation. Participants were invited from the Bangladesh film industry and the University of Dhaka, the Department of Television, Film and Photography and interviews were conducted between 8th of October 2017 and 12th of November 2017. The interviewees are Prof. A J M Shafiul Alam Bhuiyan (Founder and professor, Department of Television, Film and Photography, The University of Dhaka), S M Imran Hossain (Assistant

Professor at the University of Dhaka, Department of Television, Film and Photography), Sohanur Rahman Sohan (film director and scriptwriter), Giasuddin Selim (Film director and scriptwriter), and Iqbal Karim Nissan (Chief News Editor G TV).

The demographic data of each interview is presented in the section below. The table shows the interviewee number (No.), interviewee name, position, organization, years of experience, and the interview date. The first column (Interviewee number) is created for use in the analysis, and the chapters address a particular interviewee instead of inserting their name. Besides, to avoid the repetition of names, limit confusion and better organize the writing content, I hope to use both names and interviewee number to address a particular participant. I have placed interview transcripts in the appendix of the thesis.

Interviewee No.	Interviewee name	Position	Organization	Year of experience	Date of Interview
Interviewee 1	Professor A J M Shafiul Alam Bhuiyan	Chairman, Department of Television, Film and Photography, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh	University of Dhaka	36	17 October 2017
Interviewee 2	Assistant Professor S M Imran Hossain	Lecture, Department of Television, Film and Photography, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh	University of Dhaka	10	16 and 18 October 2017
Interviewee 3	Ikbal Karim Nissan	Chief News Editor Iqbal Karim Nissan	Gazi (G) TV	20	19 October 2017
Interviewee 4	Sohanur Rahman Sohan	Film Director and Producer	Bangladesh Film industry	40	23 October 2017
Interviewee 5	Giasuddin Selim	Film Director and Script Writer	Bangladesh Film industry	20	09 November 2017

Table 3.1

3.2 Why video as a method?

Researchers have used video for many years, particularly in workplace studies, the learning sciences, media practices and digital cultural production and to examine cultural aspects of everyday life (Jewitt, 2012). Notwithstanding this broad take up and extensive use of video in many investigations, it has, surprisingly, only recently become the subject of substantial

sociological reflection having been theoretically and methodologically neglected (Kissmann, 2009 as cited in Jewitt, 2012). In this chapter I will include the rationale for the video interview being best suited for the research objectives.

This study on the Bangladeshi film industry is creative and positioned in an interpretive paradigm using qualitative methods. Here, qualitative research is associated with research methodology, requires greater clarity of goals during design stages and cannot be analysed by running computer programs. It also does not attempt to quantify the results through statistical analysis. Some authors associate it only with observation or interviews (Henn, Weinstein & Foard, 2005). Others associate the qualitative research method with observation, historical analysis (historiography), document and textual analysis, sociometry, socio-drama and similar ethnomethodological experimentation, ethnographic research and many unobtrusive techniques (Berg & Berg, 2001; Lune & Berg, 2017). However, because they are qualitative interviews this has added dimension to the research question, which helped me approach interviewees informally and efficiently; It has brought out useful data from the participants in Bangladesh. The informal approach can be identified as a semi-structured interview that has allowed for flexibility in the outcomes and produces in-depth data (Howell, 2013).

The study is creative because it has explored the context of Bangladeshi filmmaking practices through video interviewing key people's experiences, knowledge and perceptions. After completing the fieldwork, I made a video with a summary of the video interviews (I have added the video link on the cover page) with vital information regarding the filmmaking practice in Bangladesh for further analysis. That is why it can be called a film-focused qualitative method. As Janesick (2001) suggests, "the qualitative researcher may benefit from exercising creativity by being awake to the intuitive inclinations ever-present in fieldwork" (p. 533). Video recording of interviews has provided a fine-grained, multimodal record of each meeting detailing gaze, expression, body posture and gesture (Al Mulla, 2012). Besides, video interviewing is a sharable, malleable digital record in which all modes are recorded sequentially. It enabled me to go through recorded information repeatedly. I was able to go deep into critical details that emerged in the video interviews and to re-analyse them . For this, I had to create a friendly environment so that after some time the participants felt comfortable discussing the topic so deeply that they almost did not realise that I was video recording. This allowed me to capture emotion and anger precisely. For example, film director Selim said there are not enough film institutions in the country with a strong voice (appendix- sample scripts or video: 21 mins and 07 secs). As he said it, I was able to see his full emotion while analytically reviewing the video interview later. I was able to see how strongly he agreed that Bangladesh needed more film institutes and better education when I asked him if there is enough film education in the country. Similarly, Professor Bhuiyan was explaining several issues (Video: 11 mins 40 secs) related to the Bangladeshi film industry effortlessly, such as not having academically trained editors, the use of sexual content in the film for a profit motive, the poor environment in the cinema halls and low-quality film. When I reviewed the video I found a person who is searching for solutions to overcome these ongoing issues in the Bangladeshi film industry. Thus, the process of video interviewing brought a new understanding of the history of Bangladeshi film to light and allowed me to explore the key concepts that emerged in the literature review. This also happened because of the core

differences between video and traditional workplace studies or observation video studies. That is why it gathered data rich nonverbal cues to stimulate critical reflection rather than as a way to collect observational data or describe phenomena. It is argued that large amounts of rich data can be overwhelming and, if not managed appropriately, can also lead to overly descriptive and weak analysis (Jewitt, 2012).

On the other hand, Lury and Wakeford, (2012) suggest it is not possible to apply a method as if it were indifferent or external to the problem it seeks to address, but that method must be made specific and relevant to the question. Keeping this thought in mind I have ensured the appropriate application of the film-focused qualitative method, while engaged in gathering knowledge about the past and the current perception of filmmaking practice in Bangladesh through interviews and everyday fieldwork. In terms of managing extensive data, I have followed several steps to keep track of the data and ensure the safety of stored data - field notes, camera recording transfer to a laptop and an external hard drive followed by a back-up in Dropbox. I updated the back-up whenever I found new knowledge. Finally, this data was stored on my personal desktop computer to use while writing this thesis.

The following data is an early entry in my research diary, indicating my understanding of using film-focused (video) qualitative research methods.

> 2nd Feb 2017
> […] The research method will need film focused interviewing where interviews can be recorded and can be used as some form of video analysis. What type of video am I thinking of? Is it a documentary or just a recording of the conversation? How will the video be recorded? How feasible the recording will be given that the interview is being undertaken overseas? How equipment can be resourced? I feel like I have many different ideas to work on. I need to find one idea to settle and carry on with it. It is either a documentary or a video.

3.3 Questionnaires

I have asked six particular questions to each interviewee and some supplementary link-up questions that emerged from textual research. Each question was generated to fill the knowledge gaps of Bangladeshi national cinema, filmmaking practice and development. Thus, these questions emerged with expectations in mind. Though measuring expectations eventually emerged through interviews with key personnel related to Bangladeshi filmmaking, journalism and education, questionnaires aimed to sample more detailed responses on the related topic. I used open-ended, qualitative questionnaires with respondents who were requested to provide their thoughts and feelings rather than pinpoint their answer on a rating scale. The choice enabled me to collect more interpretive data.

Below are concise discussions of how each question emerged from the textual research to fill the knowledge gaps.

The People's Republic of Bangladesh established "Bangladesh Film Archive." It is one of the oldest institutions in Bangladesh to collect and preserve classic films and film-related materials, research, publications and implement a film appreciation course and so on ("বাংলাদেশ ফিল্ম আর্কাইভ", 2020). According to this institution, there are no absolute criteria to call a film Bangladeshi national cinema. Besides, the type of film the Bangladesh film industry produces mainly commercial films, does not reflect any specific pattern or style that belongs to Bangladeshi culture because these films are mostly copying Bollywood films (Huq, 2020). It made me curious to know what makes a film part of Bangladeshi national cinema and the significance of using the Bangla language in these films? According to the current understanding of different authors, such as Ahsan (2009) and Paris (2016), and the present declining situation of Bangladeshi films in the world market compared to Bollywood, it is evident that Bangladeshi film is struggling economically. Prior to 2000 the turnover of the film industry was two billion takas (Taka is the name of Bangladeshi currency), which fell to thirty-five million takas by 2009. The current situation is going from bad to worse. It is evident from Rahman (2017) and the literature review (Bokul, 2016; Chowdhuri, 2016) that Bangladeshi filmmaking is struggling because of film piracy, a lack of talent, the poor environment in cinema halls, a decreasing number of cinema halls, and the insertion of the vulgar cut-pieces in films by some unscrupulous producers (Mokammel, 2017).

Nevertheless, no one offered any concrete solution. I found the knowledge gap. Therefore, I wanted to examine filmmaking practices since 1971 to identify possible new directions for future filmmaking practices in Bangladesh. To fulfil these objectives, I had to ask more questions related to filmmaking practice and film education in Bangladesh. Some of the questions that emerged are:

- How have film making practices changed in Bangladesh since 1971?
- What are the challenges in producing national cinema in Bangladesh?
- What are the distribution channels and exhibition outlets for Bangladeshi national cinema?
- To what extent does Hollywood influence the distribution of the films and screened in Bangladesh?
- Are there enough film education courses in Bangladesh universities? In what ways can film education make an impact on film making practices?

There are additional questions for interviewees to link with the above set of questionnaires as the conversation flowed.

- What are the reasons that Bangladeshi national cinema is struggling to produce world-class cinema compared to Bollywood?
- Has the Bangladeshi film industry ever succeeded in economic terms? If it did succeed, mention the period.
- Are Bangladeshi films exported or streamed?
- Are there any multiple viewing platforms?

3.4 Obtaining Interviews

The research questions and the philosophical stance demanded that people's knowledge, views, understanding, interpretations and experiences are meaningful properties of the social reality that can be explored through interviews only (Seidman, 1998). The interview utilises techniques from a semi-structured approach, with the interview being more like a conversation. The interviewee can talk freely regarding their views and perceptions concerning the history of the Bangladesh film industry, national cinema, filmmaking practice and development. Besides, I made use of a simple but most useful skill of balancing between talking and listening by picking up verbal and non-verbal cues from the interviewees' mood.

The research uses five detailed interviews that were obtained on different days but followed the same method of interviewing. The study followed the ethical guideline of the University of Gloucestershire. Interviewees were briefed about the process and the aim, nature and intentions of the research, and noted that their contribution would not be anonymous. I ensured that I secured informed consent from each participant, and the form signed by them made them aware in advance that their interview would be recorded. Their data would be stored in a personal database with optimum protection, and they would have the right to withdraw their involvement at any time up until the final editing of the film. Signed consent forms can be found in the appendices. The first interview was with Professor Bhuiyan of the Department of Television, Film and Photography at the University of Dhaka. The interview lasted more than 45 mins, was conducted face-to-face and recorded on a DSLR camera to use the footage to create a video and some guidance of the analysis.

Professor Shafiul Alam was selected for interview because of his South Asian film and media policy research knowledge. His involvement as a juror on the Jury Board for the National Film Award in Bangladesh made him the number one choice for my research. His expert advice and knowledge about Bangladeshi film and its development have been invaluable for this study ("AJM Shafiul Alam Bhuiyan | University of Dhaka, Bangladesh - Academia.edu", 2021). The second interview came from Assistant Professor Hossain at the University of Dhaka, which lasted almost as long as the first interview. His research interest and teaching in Bangladeshi cinema at the University of Dhaka and articles in the Bangladesh Cinema and Television Institute journal

motivated me to interview him ("University of Dhaka", 2021). I mostly wanted to understand his expert knowledge regarding film education's current perception, since he actively teaches at a public university.

I scheduled the third interview with film director and producer Sohanur Rahman Sohan. It did not go as planned. I had to postpone this for a day and interview Ikbal Karim Nissan first because of the sudden change in availability. Sohan is a famous film director who made many successful films like *Keyamot Theke Keyamot* (1993), *Ononto Bhalobasa* (1999), *The Speed* (2012) and many more. His knowledge about the Bangladesh film industry is incomparable as he is also a victim of film piracy and the practice of vulgar cut-piece insertions ("Sohanur Rahman Sohan - IMDb", 2021).

On the other hand Nissan, as a film journalist, experienced and covered the news. Hence, I selected them for the interview. The final interview came from the talented film director and scriptwriter Selim, who may not direct many films, but made some remarkably successful films such as *Monpura* (2009) and *Swapnajaal* (2018), winning two national film awards. I have selected him for the remarkable cinema that he created. I wanted to use his experience to explore Bangladeshi cinema and its development. (The Daily Star, 2020).

Unfortunately, the research context in Bangladesh did not allow me to interview female filmmakers. My attempt to interview a female filmmaker or academic was unsuccessful because of the limited time frame of my overseas research, the unavailability of female participants and a general lack of female engagement in filmmaking. Some notable female filmmakers in Bangladesh are Kohinoor Akhter Shuchanda, director of *Teen Kanya* (1985), *Prem Preeti* (1995), *Sabuj Coat Kalo Chashma* (1996) and *Haajar Bachar Dhorey* (2005), Nargis Akhter, director of *Meghla Akash* (2002), *Char Sotiner Ghar* (2005), *Abujh Bou* (2010), and *Poush Masher Piriti* (2017), Shameem Akhter, director of *Grohonkal* (1993), Kalpurobi (2010), *Rina Brown* (2017), Rubaiyat Hossain, director of *Made in Bangladesh* (2019), and *Meherjaan* (2011). Few other female filmmakers have shown the ability to craft authentic Bangladeshi film, such as Shahnewaz Kakoli, Samia Zaman, and Shabnam Ferdousi (Sayem, 2021). The number of female filmmakers and their active engagement in filmmaking is poor compared to male filmmakers in Bangladesh. The male-centric social system does not permit women to work in film as this is thought to be indecent. Perhaps that is why in the first experimental film *Shukumari* (Ombuj Gupto, 1927-28) made in Dhaka, the lead female character was played by a male (Abdus Sobhan). This prejudice is also evident during the making of the experimental film The *Last Kiss* (1928), where female characters were played by female sex workers (Ahmet, 2012). The fear that women can be raped and that this can lead to the destruction of a family's social status, meant that middle-class families in Bangladesh did not encourage or permit women to work in film (Ahmet, 2012). However, the current engagement of female filmmakers is far better than in the 1970s and 1980s, when working in a film was prohibited for women because of social and religious restrictions.

Perhaps this is related to how women were seen or portrayed in film as an object of beautification or viewed as excessively sexual. For example, in the first audio-visual film, *Mukh O Mukhosh* (Abdul Jabbar Khan, 1956), males played a key role (the story about a male Bandit) in every critical sequence of the film, whereas female characters were only limited to representing

beauty. The trend continues in *Santrash* (Shahidul Islam Khokon1991), *Trash* (Kazi Hayat, 1992) and *Ranga Bou* (Mohammad Mohsin, 1999). Female characters mostly feature these films as objects of beautification or are viewed as fulfilling the sexual need of a group of audiences (Ahmet, 2012). Female characters only appeared on-screen for romantic scenes, or dancing and singing with the lead male character. A similar concept of representing women as objects is also evident in Mulvey (1989). She suggested that women in film are represented as "objects, images with visual and erotic impact. Classical Hollywood films made between the 1910s -1960s, positioned the audience as male, providing an active role in viewing the female subject to gain pleasure. This look, from the audience to the actress, is termed "the gaze." According to Mulvey, the look could be 'voyeuristic' (women are viewed as virtuous and beautiful) or 'fetishistic' (women are viewed as excessively sexual beings). Laura Mulvey (1989) uses psychoanalysis in her theory of the "male gaze" which focuses on the sexualization of female actors. How the male characters see the female character, and how the audience is introduced to the female character, link up to sexually objectify the female character in the film. Observing how females were introduced in a film can influence people and their own behavior so that they imitate what they have seen in film. For example, a girl who views only images of women in skimpy clothes may think the most important thing for a woman is how sexy she can be. This is because film can reach a global audience unlike other forms of media, and therefore can have a more far-reaching influence. The study of how the media can affect human attitudes and behaviours is evident in Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory. Observing behaviour can influence people and their own behaviour, so they copy what they have seen by witnessing the positive and negative reinforcements they have watched in the film or television. (Bandura, 2001). In this context Bandura (2001) notes that:

> Heavy exposure to this symbolic world may eventually make the televised images appear to be the authentic state of human affairs (p. 137)

It is to be hoped that male domination of the film industry will slowly change as women are given prominent roles, or at least are not simply used as sexual or beautification objects in films, such as *Guerrilla* (2011) directed by Nasiruddin Yousuff and based on the events of the Bangladesh Liberation War. The lead character is Bilkis (actress: Joya Ahsan). Bilkis started a desperate search for her missing husband, and at the same time became engaged as a collaborator with guerilla operations which were gradually gaining momentum. Some of her collaborators were killed or went missing, but she did not stop fighting for the Liberation War. The army brutally slaughters Bilkis's brother. Even after knowing this, she wants to have a glimpse of her dead brother. She risks her life and enters the army camp but was captured. However, she did not surrender to be molested by the army, but rather she blew herself up with explosives, destroying the army camp as well. Thus, she became the central character of the film. Bilkis played the role of a hero in the film and dominated the story. This time the female character was not restricted to being an object of beautification or sidelined. Rather, the character played a key role in taking the story forward (*Guerrilla*, 2011). Similarly, *Joyjatra* (2004), Molla Barir Bou (2005), *Debi* (2018) and *Made in Bangladesh* (2019) are based around female characters, and these are given a prominent role in the film.

Although the interview is semi-structured in terms of questions, there are main objectives and questions to be answered. Therefore, a set of questions was provided in advance to interviewees to ensure responses to the answers. The semi-structured interviewing style had created some difficulties, such as self-disclosure and being over conscious of producing useful data while interviewing. At various times with different participants, I asked them to explain Bangladeshi national cinema means to them, how filmmaking practices have changed since 1971, how film education can impact the Bangladesh film industry and what makes a film Bangladeshi national cinema. To examine these issues thoroughly, I noted that the participants wanted to know more about me, my study and why I had chosen to do the work I was doing. They cannot be expected to share what they feel genuinely without self-disclosure. The qualitative interview and its connection to self-disclosure is an ongoing issue, though these narratives on self-disclosure are usually directed toward the participants' point first, then the researcher cited in Grist (2015). By revealing more about myself, I satisfied the participants' curiosity and redressed the power balance relationship between the participants and myself. Wengraf (2001) suggested that qualitative interviewers working in this way must pay 'double attention' to understand the participant's responses, while ensuring the depth and detail needed for the research project. By adding the idea of 'double attention', I discovered myself working hard to ensure that the interview was successful enough to yield useful data, while carefully walking the line between researcher, participant and interviewer.

 Semi-formal interviewing brought more advantages than disadvantages, and I was able to get open, honest and detailed replies. On the contrary, too formal a structure could have made participants uncomfortable and nervous, affecting the answers (Howell, 2013; Mason, 1996).

3.5 Reflection on making the video

The lack of initiative and inappropriate guidance in the Bangladesh film industry influenced me in making the video to be used as a guide for the development of future filmmaking. Related information about the development of the Bangladesh film industry can be found in Ahsan (2009), Imam (2016), Isam (2009) and Jhuma (2014), which is also evident in the literature review chapter.

 I could not find any video records that can be watched, understood and followed. Therefore, the video interview is a valuable source for exploring and examining the history of Bangladeshi cinema and the ongoing filmmaking issues that other researchers can re-use for future investigation of various filmmaking activities in Bangladesh. In support of the above Barron and Engle (2007) argue that many investigators have found it fruitful to combine video records with other forms of data, as this can enrich the data that has emerged from video records and other sources. This offers opportunities for triangulation across sources of evidence. The video is an artefact itself and a useful record to keep for further analysis and future reference. The richness of data obtained using a video is also evident in Gottidiener, Grimshaw, Albrecht, Heath and Luff, as cited in Lomax and Casey (1998). This led me to examine the history of Bangladeshi cinema so that the video record can help me as a researcher to maintain a perspective that prevents me

from getting lost in the details. Despite these apparent advantages and the undeniable value of having a video record, there is a relative shortage of sociological research in which video has been used to generate data, as cited in Lomax and Casey (1998). However, the restricted view of events that a camera lens provides is partial. Thus, it limits and excludes the context of the research, as cited in Jewitt (2012). While I would agree with the obvious disadvantage, there is a shortage of material that discusses the practical and theoretical difficulties associated with using video as a method to produce data (Lomax & Casey, 1998).

The desire to contribute to developing filmmaking practice in Bangladesh in order to overcome the unavailability of proper guidelines also guided my decision to form research questions and methods. The video achieved the desire by bringing new understandings of Bangladeshi film to light (see '3.2 Why video as a method?' chapter for more detail). However, I was able to craft a good research question critical for the research project's analysis phase. In this light, Barron and Engle (2007) note that developing questions can help a researcher concentrate on collecting and when. They further argued saying crafting good questions can help sampling interactions and make an appropriate budget.

Examining the past and present of Bangladeshi film undertaking video interviews is not popular because of the dominance of traditional text-based research using existing videos as data is increasingly common for research, as cited in Jewitt (2012). In support of the use of video research Roth suggested, as cited in Jewitt (2012), that video elicitation can be used alongside interviews to prompt discussion or provide a basis for reflection. Similarly, multiple viewings in different ways and with different people, for instance, participant involvement, at different stages in the research process can strengthen the findings by coordinating what has been learnt (Barron & Engle, 2007).

Because the video was made single-handedly and operated by me, I had to deal with an enormous amount of pressure to keep it manageable and positive (I have discussed the video-making process in more detail in the appendix- section 3). The decision regarding controlling and positioning the camera, the number of cameras and turning the camera on or off may seem like comparatively minor issues. Still, it is central to data collection with video and associated with the type of view of interactions to address the research questions and integrity of sequences as cited in Jewitt (2012). The use of a single camera recording and deciding when to turn on or off are especially complex. In this context Hall (2007) suggested that using more than one camera as a single camera recording will inevitably fail to capture much of the complexity. However, it all depends on participant structures and is mostly needed for group presentations or whole-class discussion.

Similarly, making the right decision to choose the critical information or clip from a larger whole to use in the video is challenging and complex. Jewitt (2012) suggested using video logs, event logs or visual diagrams to help see the interaction pattern and maintain video data complexity. My research diary was a great help in this matter as I could log information of a clip to become easier to find later. However, selecting a video clip from a larger corpus of information will

depend on the researcher's narrative in mind, as illustrated in Goldman, Erickson , Lemke and Derry (2007). This is where my decision was guided by the context of the research background and the research question.

Narrating voice-overs was my preferred part of video editing. To make a dotted connection among each video clip and introduce the video (Video: 14 secs), I have become the narrator of the video, common in the participatory investigation video as cited in Nichols (2017). Regarding use of the voice of a filmmaker, Nichols (2001) argues that "It is the voice of a filmmaker setting out to take a position regarding an aspect of the historical world and to convince us of its merits" (p. 49). The position addresses the aspects of the world that are subject to debate, Nicols (2001) further explained. The reason I chose to use my voice over in the video was to make it more authentic and believable to viewers. Besides, I am the only witness of the interview to explain what happened (Nichols, 2017). The dialogue for voice overs was scripted at the editing stage to make it relevant for the video, unlike film. However, the script required several recordings and further editing to make it suitable for the video. The actual situation inspired the script, as I did not want to bring up an entirely new set of data for the voice-over, which could have disconnected the link between textual and practical research. To support this, Nichol (2017) suggests that "documentary films speak about actual situations or events and honour known facts; they do not introduce new, unverifiable ones. They speak directly about the historical world rather than allegorically" (p. 5).

However, the video's first scene started with my voice over with a short background statement to give an overview of the video. Though I was not sure initially, it provided great convenience and flexibility later as I did not need to rely on someone else to re-record voice overs as part of the improvement process. I can now look back and apprehend that the experience has encouraged me both as a researcher and a professional filmmaker. I am now more confident in doing video-based research and presenting it in an academic setting. I feel the presentation aspect of the video has helped to develop the skill too.

3.6 The making-of the video

Making the video was a long process that involved three main stages: pre-production, production and post-production. Each phase involved extensive research and practical work. These stages are as follows:

Pre-production and production

Considering the research data collection conducted overseas, I had much more to prepare and plan than usual. Preparation started with arranging resources to shoot videos to another country. The first decision was the camera, however, the decision of what kind of camera to use depends on what the video data is going to be used for, such as what is the aim of the research, what are the research questions to be addressed as cited in Jewitt (2012). In this context Jewitt (2012) notes that:

There is a range of video cameras that can be used to collect data and selecting which one to use is a part of the design of video research. For example, small hand-held flip cameras are often chosen for studies that require mobility and detail, such as studies of close-up interaction between pairs and small groups. (p. 13)

The suitability of various digital cameras for different situations is also discussed in Nichols (2017). Therefore, I chose a small camera to record Interviews. Besides, since interviews I planned to record single-handedly, I required a camera that was light and small enough to carry, but that at the same time did not sacrifice video quality as the interview was to be edited into a video/documentary. Initially, I thought of using Canon DSLR models such as the 60D, 7D and 5D Mark 3 because of excellent their video quality and my own previous experience of using the same models both personally and professionally. However, I eventually dropped the idea of purchasing the 60D and 7D as the 60D (755g body only, without lenses) is better for still images according to personal experience and both being a heavily weighted camera to carry around such as Canon 60D is 755g without lenses and 7D is 910g without lenses (Canon UK, 2018).

Likewise, the Canon 5D Mark 3 is very large and way more expensive than my budget allowed. Looking at the quality of video, weight and budget, the Sony Alpha 7S was purchased. My main concern was not to compromise on video quality, and I needed a camera that was easily transportable. The Sony Alpha 7S can produce 4K video with a full-frame sensor, and it weighs only 489g, half the weight of Canon 7d and 5d ("Sony α7S E-mount Camera with Full-Frame Sensor", 2018). Before shooting videos and interviews, I explored and familiarised myself with the various functions of the camera to avoid delay and complication.

It is useful to understand where is best to position a video camera. The pre-planned settings enable a researcher to achieve a sense of what needs to be captured. Observation of the context and practices before video recording, along with participant interviews can help to determine where best to set up a camera. Although it was not possible for my research due to time constraints. However, a professional travel Tripod was purchased to ease the process of setting a camera (Jewitt, 2012). I chose an aluminium tripod which was light weight and flexible to carry with the camera. The tripod was particularly beneficial in terms of avoiding hand held recording which could have recorded shaky video. That is why a tripod is useful to reduce camera movement and improve picture quality. For example, when close-up shots are recorded a minor movement could lead to an imbalance in video quality. To help capture the ideal shot in different circumstances, the benefit of a tripod is incomparable. By using a tripod it is easy to achieve higher or lower angles that would not be feasible to reach as smoothly or as comfortably if working hand-held. Because a tripod only takes seconds to unfold and adjust, it can support a camera in the perfect position for however long it takes without spending too much time to set up. Finally, a tripod can help by making the video maker slow down and think about the shot taking place and getting the framing right. It freed me from the camera and allowed him to concentrate on the lighting of the subject and the interview questions. With a tripod, a camera can be placed in positions that are difficult to reach. For example, many tripods can set the

camera anywhere from just inches off the ground to way above eye level. However, there is no substitute for testing the stability of a tripod with the actual gear that needs to be used. That is why I tested the camera body and lenses in sore first before purchasing online to avoid disappointment.

In terms of lighting the shoot was dependent mostly on natural lights, no artificial lights were arranged. Fluorescent lights which were set up previously on the ceiling helped to reduce some sort of the darkness in the room. There were several reasons why artificial lightings were not used. First, because interviews were shot single-handedly by me, it was not possible to carry light in different locations. Second, I had a limited budget, and three aimed to keep it natural and straightforward. The interviews were conducted in the workplace environment and relied on natural lighting to make it more comfortable and friendly for the participants. Colour corrections were applied minimally where the lighting was inadequate. Most colour corrections are required for poorly lit videos. For instance, the interview location of Bhuiyan and Selim was poorly lit, and the source of natural light was also limited. I needed to balance the white colour temperature throughout the video because each interview location was lit differently. As suggested above , no artificial light was carried and used while interviewing abroad. The primary source of lighting was room light or natural light through a window or a combination of both. Some screen captures from the edited video can be seen below.

Before (left image) and after (right) colour correction

Before (left image) and after (right) colour correction

Before (left image) and after (right) colour correction

I quickly realised that choosing an appropriate interview setting affected the participant's responses in myriad ways. As Elwood & Martin (2000) suggest: The interview site itself produces 'micro-geographies' of spatial relations and meaning, where multiple scales of social relations intersect in the research interview. [...] These micro-geographies can offer new insights concerning research questions, help researchers understand and interpret interview materials, and highlight ethical considerations in the research process. Shooting at the workplace involves some disadvantages as well. Interviews can be disrupted or paused because of regular work duty and unexpected visitors. For example, almost all the recorded interviews were disrupted because of unforeseen visitors and urgent phone calls of the interviewees. It disrupted the momentum and flow of conversation. The first two interviews were severely affected because of disruption. As a result, it took longer to complete interviews, and these had more cuts than later interviews. Since this was voluntary participation, it was not ethical to request them to leave their paid duties. However, for the following interviews, a quieter time slot was requested to avoid disruption while interviewing.

Dhaka is one of the most crowded and overpopulated cities in the world. Its road traffic problems are among the worst. I had to make a journey using overcrowded public transport for over four hours each day as privately rented cars or taxis were way more expensive than even London or New York. On top of this, the extremely hot weather in Dhaka made the research journey even more challenging. To shoot five interviews in different locations in a hostile and crowded environment was another challenge itself. I was fortunate enough to have an initial contact person at the early stage of research named Ferdous Arefin, who is a TV reporter and a journalist. He made the necessary communication a lot easier.

Post-production

Editing and post-production were the most time-consuming parts of video making. I acted as a video editor who also wrote the script for video designing. The inception of the script and its design were inspired by documentaries *I* had watched on television, Netflix, Disney Plus, the National Geographic channel and YouTube. For example, *Secrets of Underground London* by Vicky Matthews and Gareth Sacala, *Our Planet,* presented by David Attenborough*, 20 Feet from Stardom* by Morgan Neville and *The Lost Tomb of Alexander the Great* by Archaeologist Pepi

Papakosta. I embraced the idea of using a voice over after being influenced by these documentaries and videos. The video was designed through recorded interviews. The vision was to summarise vital information from interviewees in the video and explore the development of filmmaking practices through their discussion and experience.

Post-production started with watching raw interviews and short-listing video clips, given that the idea of video making was to summarise vital information from interviews. There were many unwanted, poor quality raw video clips that were recorded which were needed organising. Although each scene of the conversation consists of valuable information regarding the Bangladeshi national film industry, most scenes were compromised or not being used because of creative decisions and only vital information was edited in the video. Research questions were used as a tool of selection to design and summarise the video. Cut transition has been used throughout the entire video to keep it simple. Cut transition is also used to serve transition between camera angles, such as a long establishing shots, close up shots, medium shots, pan shots, over the shoulder shots, and eye-level angle shots. Various camera angles were used to show different expressions of the scene. Instead of organizing cuts within a scene or applying continuity editing to present a sense of a single, I have edited applying logic. Nicohols (2017) argues that:

> Instead of organising cuts within a scene to present a sense of a single, unified time and space in which we follow the actions of central characters, evidentiary editing organizes cuts within a scene to present the impression of a single, convincing proposal supported by logic. (p. 18).

Scenes are edited to convince the supported logic rather than to make it cinematically beautiful and dramatic (Nichols, 2017). For example, the key information from an interview is cut based on the questions asked to the participants and then this was edited with other participatory videos where the same question was asked. Logical editing enabled me to organise key information from the interviews for further analysis, for example, it allowed me to compare key information from five different participants.

I have used a close-up shot to provide a more intimate look as below. Besides, the close-up shot was also taken during a particular scene to give greater importance to the subject. The close-up shot size is near enough to register little emotion, but not so close that we lose visibility. Thus, the close-up shot helped analyse the facial expression and gaze that enabled me to analyse critically. This was discussed in detail in the chapter above (3.2 Why video as a method?)

Close -up shot (S M Imran Hossain)

Close-up shot

Likewise, a long shot was used to allow the viewer to take in a significant amount of information in just moments. That's because, with this shot, the camera is capturing a wide swathe of scenery. The two scenes that followed were intended to give a the audience a glimpse at the interview environment. The particular camera angle enabled me to decide on the level of data I would need to address a question. This was also an opportunity for participants to allow the researcher access to their professional activity. The long shot on the right with Sohanur Rahman Sohan allowed me to understand the business environment and its type. The participant is no longer involved in the filmmaking business because of film piracy, even after directing and producing many successful films over the past 25 years. However, as a researcher, I was able to see the spark and interest in filmmaking even he is currently away from it. While I was reviewing the particular long shot at the Interview, this allowed me to ask him about his current involvement in filmmaking, though this was self-explanatory by looking at his current work environment (Jewitt, 2012).

Long shot

Sometimes it is vital to show establishing a connection between an interviewee and interviewer during a conversation. Rather than shooting singles back and forth during a scene, an over-the-shoulder shot can help to create intimacy between the characters. An over-the-shoulder shot is positioned behind one subject's shoulder, usually during a conversation. Over the shoulder shot allowed me to understand things better that was not noticed at the time of being present, such as my involvement as a researcher with the participant. I was able to see if I had influenced the participants with my body language and facial expression though I intended to be neutral.

Over the shoulder shot (Giasuddin Selim)

In the following camera angle, the audience is put on an equal footing with the subject, and it demonstrates a relationship of neutrality between the viewers and the subjects. It can be termed an eye-level angle. This angle offers a comfortable feeling of neutrality and naturalness . This particular angle again helped me to understand the level of emotion and engagement about the

topic. Agreement or disagreement with a question or statement was more easily understood by using an eye-level angle.

Eye-level angle (Giasuddin Selim)

Some pan shots were also added to the video to give the audience the impression of it being of a single shot video. Besides, it reduces the number of shots and adds dynamics to the scene. A pan shot is where the camera moves continuously from left to the right.

Pan Shot

Each one of the camera angles mentioned above serves a unique purpose to better express the mode. Sometimes, a simple change to the camera angle can add a piece of extra information to the scene. So, every time a shot was recorded, a pre-planned camera angle was used. Having said that, pre-planned camera angles were given maximum thought before they were finalized. These camera angles were backed up by the documentaries mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The various camera angles and cuts created the video interview with the help of digital technology, which enabled time to be both preserved and interfered with, slowing down and speeding up the video recording. The technique of slowing down and speeding up enabled me to see naturally occurring interviews and interactions in new ways. In this context Jewitt (2012) points out that:

Video data is time-intensive to collect, review and analyse and as a consequence analysis can tend to focus on short segments of video data at a micro-analytical level (p. 5).

The focus on temporal-sequential interaction, and the extensive description during the Interview made the video possible and, in turn, made the data collection method choice possible for me. From the perspective of focusing on the short segments of video data by slowing down and speeding up, a particular segment can magnify small details and minor events. For example, I was able to identify gaze, expression, body posture and gesture by slowing down video Interviews. This was discussed in detail in the chapter above (3.2 Why video as a method?)

Though the camera had a built-in audio recorder, a professional audio recorder and pocket microphone were used in the video and transcription to provide greater clarity. This required synchroning with the video. The synchronization took a considerable amount of time as it was hard to find sections of sentences from audio recorded some time previously. To make it easier, I used transcription to determine the sentences from long audio. I cut and pasted the specific section into the video. Because the interviews were semi-structured in the form of a conversational, various un-related conversations were recorded, which was almost impossible to avoid. Interviews were conducted in-office hours, and interviewees frequently had to take phone calls or receive external visitors while interviewing was taking place. I paused the camera and audio recorder where possible, but there were many unavoidable moments. That is why primary audio editing was also required along with video editing before post-production. This is just as important as the video in creating a practical video viewing experience. Audio clarity helped me to understand voice expression and I analysed this closely to understand what was meant. The audio recorder was also used to record a voice-over for the edited video. The reason I used voice overs for the video was to make it more authentic and believable for the viewer. Interview voice recordings allowed me to critique the participants' statements and emotions for analysis. For example, Sohanur Rahman's statement about film piracy was an emotional statement about the potential damage being done to the film industry.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

Kvale (1996) suggested that "Data collection, data analysis and the development and verification of proposition are very much an interrelated and interactive set of process, analysis occurs during the collection of data as well as after it", as cited in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009, p. 488). This process helped shape the direction of data collection, especially during and after each interview. I tested the data collected from the second interview and compared it against the first interview, although there was no significant gap between one interview and another. Checking included looking for similarities and differences between both interviews. I implemented a data cleaning process to ensure that the transcription was accurate by correcting any transcription errors. As a result, an inductive approach was applied to analyse film-focused qualitative data so as to condense raw textual data into a summary format. To

establish a clear link between the research objectives and the raw data's summary findings, I applied a general inductive approach. As Thomas (2006) suggests , although the general inductive method is not as reliable as some other analytic strategies for theory or model development, it provides a simple, straightforward approach for deriving findings in the context of focused evaluation questions that are less complicated. The inductive approach has also provided an easy to use and systematic set of procedures for analysing qualitative data from the video that has produced reliable and valid findings. The inductive process was used to transcript and code manually by highlighting the key and exciting points using different colours from the interview (appendix, section 2 for detail). These codes were then arranged and analysed to condense data and to create focused coding. It was then analysed again to make a final category and later extract a theme from these categories at the last stage of coding. As Glaser and Strauss (2017) claim, this process is based on the constant comparison model. Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009) suggest that constant comparison can be fruitfully employed to analyse different data types, including semi-structured interview and field note transcripts. Therefore, the comparison method was employed across several different formats, including interview transcripts and field notes. Once the first round of coding was complete, the findings were compared continuously and contrasted between later and current transcripts. The comparison and analysis enabled consistency and ensured that a full picture of the data was being obtained. The stories that emerged from the data were more or less supported across each transcript or format.

4.2 Categories to Theme

I experimented with computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) and rejected software such as Nvivo to complete data analysis and transcription. I realised that Nvivo or any other online software tended to miss specific themes or codes that had already been preliminarily identified and was not suitable for mixed data sets. I felt more comfortable analysing transcripts and qualitative data sets by hand, using a colour coding system. Kelle, Prein and Bird (1998) argue that CAQDAS might be more useful for analysing more substantial data sets. As this study is relatively small in scale, the central analytical task in qualitative research—understanding the meaning of texts—cannot be computerised, supporting my choice (Kelle, Prein & Bird, 1998). However, the final themes that have emerged from the categories are

- Bangladeshi National Cinema
- Significance of Bangla language in the film
- Significance of film Education
- Present and past filmmaking practice
- Past and present filmmakers of Bangladesh
- Reason and outcome of film industry crisis
- Economically successful and unsuccessful period
- A solution to develop film filmmaking practice
- Development of the film industry

- Film distribution in Bangladesh.

The summary of coding to categories to theme table is in the following. Found Category from each interview transcript after initial and focused coding:

Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5
Bangladeshi National Cinema	Bangladeshi National Cinema	Bangladeshi national cinema	Bangladeshi national cinema	Bangladeshi national cinema
Piracy	Film language	National recognition	Language	Originality in Film style
History of Bangladeshi cinema	History of Bangladeshi cinema	Bangla Language	Digitalization	Storytelling
Bangladeshi Filmmaking style	Alternative films in Bangladesh	Dull period of the film industry	Film education	Filmmakers
Influence of foreign films	Distribution system	Filmmaking	Piracy	Bangla Language
Rules in film projection in Bangladesh	Film projection	Lack of Investment in film	Lack of Initiative	Importance of cinema in wartime
Film education	Digital filmmaking	Lack of Audience interest	Film watching environment	Number of cinema Halls
Practical knowledge	budget	Cinema hall environment	Distribution	Distribution
Bangladeshi filmmakers	Integrity of filmmakers	Number of cinema Halls	Influence of foreign films	Influence of foreign films
Reason for film crisis	Number of cinema Halls	Vulgar films	Comparison	Film education
Lack of talent	Film Education	Distribution	Cinema Halls	Hope
Lack of Investment in film	Lack of Audience interest	Influence of foreign films	Investment	Skilled technician
Vulgar film	Filmmaking	Import films	Audience split	Golden era
Cinema hall environment	Commercial films	Censor Board	Film Exporting	Film Exporting
Solution	Filmmaking policy	Film Education	Hope	Filmmaking style
Language		Film Exporting	Satellite TV channels	
Distribution		Golden Era		

Table 4.1

Category to Theme from the above table:

Category Extraction from all interviews	Theme
1. Bangladeshi National Cinema	Film History and its development
2. Use of Bangla Language	Film History and its development
3. Filmmaking style	Filmmaking practice
4. Film Education	How to develop filmmaking practice
5. Lack of Investment	Result of film crisis
6. Influence of foreign films	Reason for film industry crisis
7. Importance of cinema in wartime	Filmmaking practice
8. Number of cinema Halls	Result of film crisis
9. Distribution	Film development
10. Film Exporting	Perception of the current film industry
11. Vulgar films	Reason for film industry crisis
12. Piracy	Reason for film industry crisis
13. Digitalization	Current filmmaking practice
14. Cinema hall environment	Reason for film industry crisis
15. Censor Board	Quality of cinema
16. Golden Era	Economically successful period
17. Hope and solution	A solution to develop film filmmaking practice
18. Filmmaking	Filmmaking practice
19. Lack of Audience interest	Result of film crisis
20. Satellite	Reason for film industry crisis
21. National recognition	Motivating filmmakers
22. Lack of Initiative	Reason for film industry crisis
23. Lack of skilled technician	Reason for film industry crisis
24. Dull period of the film industry	Economically unsuccessful period
25. Online streaming	Development of the film industry

Table 4.2

Extracted theme from the table (4.2) above is listed below

1. Reason and outcome of film industry crisis
2. Present and past filmmaking practice
3. Economically successful and unsuccessful period
4. The development of the film industry
5. A solution to develop film filmmaking practice
6. Quality of cinema

I condensed or lengthy statements into briefer versions in which the primary sense was rephrased in a few words. Nevertheless, the data's primary meaning had to be ensured. Therefore, I frequently checked the main statement. I handled the summary data carefully, so

the research did not lose the participants' original terms, thoughts and views. The coding process assisted me in becoming more conversant with the principle theme that emerged from the interview. Furthermore, it helped to simplify the data collected and allowed me to focus on the most pertinent data.

Data collected from the interviews were grouped per interviewee. I placed categories from each interview in a table to merge categories or eliminate duplicates. I scanned the extracted categories and placed them within a relevant theme. I then scanned again to eliminate duplicate or consolidate similar themes. Merging and eliminating data allowed me to obtain final themes and build a relationship with the research objectives, examining the development of filmmaking practices in Bangladesh since the nation was founded in 1971, exploring current working practices and concerns and exploring current perceptions of filmmaking practice and film education in Bangladesh. This helped me to gain an understanding of what constitutes a national cinema in Bangladesh.

As mentioned above, I kept a diary to keep a record of research ideas during data collection and analysis. Throughout the interviews the importance was not only in what the participants stated, but also on registering field notes. It was also crucial to move directly from raw data to more abstract or analytical accounts to make the task more manageable. Spencer and O' Connor (2003) explained the analytical structure as a form of conceptual scaffolding. They referred to it as the analytic hierarchy, which has been described as follows, "It is made up of series of viewing platforms, each of which involves different analytical tasks, enabling the researcher to gain an overview and make sense of the data" (Spencer, Ritchie & O'Connor, 2003, p. 213). However, it is essential to point out that I did not choose this approach literally but considered it during the analysis process.

4.3 Interview response based on the research objective

The interviews with the related people in Bangladesh provided an in-depth understanding of Bangladeshi national cinema and its' history since 1971, current filmmaking practice and issues, current perception and filmmaking education. In the following chapter, interview response and textual findings have been presented based on the research objectives as follows:

- To examine the development of filmmaking practices in Bangladesh since the nation was founded in 1971 and explore if this constitutes a Bangladeshi national cinema.

- To make a series of video interviews with key people related to filmmaking in Bangladesh to explore current working practices and concerns.

- To analyse the interviews to ascertain current perceptions of filmmaking practice and film education in Bangladesh and identify possible new directions to develop future filmmaking in Bangladesh.

4.3.1 Examine the development of filmmaking practices since 1971 and explore Bangladeshi national cinema:

Question one:
What is Bangladeshi national cinema, what makes a film part of Bangladeshi national cinema-and what criteria can be applied to place films in this bracket?

The objective of the question is to examine the development of filmmaking practices in Bangladesh since the nation was founded in 1971, and to explore if this constitutes a Bangladeshi national cinema.

Response:
Most interviewees responded with several different personal statements regarding the meaning of Bangladeshi national cinema (see Table 4.3). However, an identical concept of representing country and culture was suggested by interviewees 2, 3 and 5 regarding Bangladeshi national cinema. Interviewees 1 and 4 argued that claiming Bangladeshi national cinema only exists through its origin of production, suggests that national cinema can be defined based on the film's production location. The verbatim respond of all interviewees for question one is in the table below.

Interviewee 1	I am afraid to say that you know there is nothing called Bangladeshi National Cinema. Depends on how do you define? If you define in terms of you know the location of the production where the films are produced, then I would say yes there is a Bangladeshi National Cinema.
Interviewee 2	National cinema is a cinema which cinema represents national characteristics.
Interviewee 3	If a film represents the country, we call it a national cinema.
Interviewee 4	There is nothing called Bangladeshi national cinema. We make two types of film. There are some called art film, and some are called commercial. Because films are reflecting independent Bangladeshi war does not make a film national. What about the filmmakers making commercial films reflecting our culture, will not these films be called national cinema? Our country got freedom by the independence war. There were films like O*ra Egaro Jon, Ogni Shakkhi and so on* which were based on the Independence war. However, these are not only national films. We can say the films were given nation award can be announced as a national cinema. Otherwise, all the films are we making, called national cinema
Interviewee 5	The best described national films are made by Shottojit Roy or Writhik Ghatak and later on Johir Raihan in the 1960s and 70s. The way they portray Bangla culture in the films, we can say it national film.

Table 4.3

There is no official definition of Bangladeshi national cinema, but some authors such as Ahsan (2009) and Masud (2004) suggested a definition for Bangladeshi national cinema (see the end of the paragraph as I have explained national cinema further). However, the definition is mostly known theoretically among Bangladeshi filmmakers and hardly followed practically by Bangladeshi filmmakers, which is evident from the type of films made over time. For example, *Trash* (Kazi Hayat, 1992) and *Ammanjan* (Kazi Hayat, 1999) are among the first few movies to make use of slang to attract an audience (Ahmed,2012; Jhuma, 2014) which is quite the opposite of the country's tradition, society, history and culture (Masud, 2004). Several reasons emerged from the interviews as to why national filmmaking was neglected. Some reasons include a lack of film education and government initiatives, the influence of Bollywood films and Indian satellite television and the production of vulgar cut-pieces to insert in films by some dishonest producers to make a quick return on investment. 'Vulgar cut-pieces' (see 2.1 Exploring Bangladeshi Cinema Part 1 for more detail) are sexual content or pornographic shots with a different cast and crew inserted into a film with little concern for the narrative (Islam, 2013). The term national cinema is confusing to many filmmakers and film scholars, yet to those who think that there is nothing called Bangladeshi national cinema, it merely constitutes commercial and good or bad films (Interviewee 1 and 4). In reply to what is Bangladeshi national cinema, most came up with personal projection regarding national cinema such as national characteristics, cultural reflection and government funding. I discovered that my personal experience inspired answers to this question after comparing it with the literature review. Interviewees like Sohan did not want to categorise films made in Bangladesh because he is a director and is actively involved in commercial filmmaking. He thinks any movies made in the Bangladeshi film industry should be classified as Bangladeshi national cinema. On the other hand, Professor Bhuiyan (Video: 2 mins 41 secs) stated, "I am afraid to say that there is nothing called Bangladeshi national cinema". Bangladeshi national cinema exists if we consider film production location; otherwise, it does not exist, he further argued.

Though most of the interviewees could not agree on this term, they all suggested saying Bangladeshi national cinema should reflect national culture, heritage, history, its people, and it should not be a copy of Bollywood or Hollywood cinema . An identical concept of national cinema found in the literature review suggests that initially, national cinema represented a distinctive, non-Hollywood cinema or resistance to Hollywood products (Hansen, 2000a, as cited in Nagib, 2006; Crofts, 1998 as cited in Li & Jennings, 2015). It was not until 1989 that Andrew Higson defined national cinema in a broader sense; the suggestion was that the cultural identity projected in the film should be considered more strongly than where films are made (Higson, 1989; Li & Jennings, 2015). To explain this, Higson argues that national cinema is defined not so much in terms of its difference from Hollywood cinema, but rather its relationship to an existing and established national, political, economic and cultural identity (Higson, 1989). Paul Willemen (as cited in Petrie, 1992). Masud (2004) argued that cultural rather than economic factors are the most important for a national cinema's foundation. For example, *Debi* (Anam Biswas, 2018) is a government-funded film that received funding in the 2015-16 fiscal year ("12 films receive government grants | *The Asian Age Online*, Bangladesh", 2016). Its story follows the life of Ranu and her paranormal powers. In short, it is a supernatural thriller based on Humayun Ahmed's novel. Though the film promoted elegance and artistic values as the requirement for

government funding, it does not reflect or portray any important Bangladeshi event in contrast to *Fagun Haway* (Tauquir Ahmed, 2019), an historical drama on the Bengali language movement during 1952. *Fagun Haway* (2019) portrays one of the most critical events in Bangladesh's history, an inseparable part of Bangladeshi culture. Though *Fagun Haway* (Tauquir Ahmed, 2019) was not government funded and was created by Jazz Multimedia (the major film production company in Bangladesh), it is more national than *Debi* (2018), as Masud (2004) suggests cultural factors are more important than state funding. Both films are based in Bangladesh, but the storyline of *Debi* (2018) is superficial and hard to relate to the typical life of a Bangladeshi. Thus, *Debi* (2018) is less national than *Fagun Haway* (2019) even though it was funded by the government ("In Spring Breeze", 2019).

In terms of national film policy, there are no stated criteria for determining whether a film produced in Bangladesh should be classified as part of the national cinema (Interviewee 1, 2, 3,4 and, 5). An examination of the films in the Bangladeshi Film Archive includes a focus on Bangladesh traditions, history and culture, which is consistent with the definition by Masud (2004). In this light, *Jibon Theke Neya* (Zahir Raihan, 1970), the Oscar nominated *Matir Moina* (Tareque Masud, 2003) and *Joyjatra* (Tauquir Ahmed, 2004) are examples of Bangladeshi national cinema, since they portray the most important wars of the Bengali nation - the Bengali Language movement in 1952 and the civil war of 1971 (Arman, 2014), (Russell 2003). Interviewee 4 argued that Bangladeshi national cinema does not need to showcase the civil war of 1971 as a national cinema. He has suggested reflecting Bangladeshi culture in a commercial film, whereas a national cinema can also be commercially successful. Besides, interviewee 4 thought that any films made and distributed in Bangladesh should be considered as national cinema. As cited in Sarji (2006), it is also evident that four elements need to be examined to be considered national cinema. These four elements are: who finances the film, who is responsible for distributing it, who is doing exhibition, and the last who are the people behind the production?

Question two:

What is the significance of using the Bangla language in these films?

The objective of the question is to examine the significance of the Bangla language in films and to explore if this constitutes a Bangladeshi national cinema.

Response:

Interviewee 1	If you don't make a film in Bengali, then it cannot claim it is a national film. Because language is part of your culture, your heritage
Interviewee 2	Language is not a barrier to understand a film. If there is no language in a Bangladeshi film, it is still could be considered as a Bangladeshi national cinema.

Interviewee 3	Using the Bengali language in its way in films is the best practice to make successful and accepted films to the audience.
Interviewee 4	When we want to reflect a particular story based on a specific area of Bangladesh, then we use the zonal language. Otherwise, we mostly use simple Bengali language which we use for regular talking. All the importance goes to the Bengali language. We fought for it in 1952 and then we got this language as our mother tongue.
Interviewee 5	It carries enormous significance. Every country and nation want to be entertained by the native language. Language gives complete freedom when it comes to representing a culture, but a foreign language does not. I will not make a film in Chinese or English language when it comes to entertaining people of our country. Because of the story plot we sometime might need to use the English language or a character that represents English, but this is also called Bangladeshi national cinema. So, in this case, language does not make a film national but what it represents as a whole that makes a film national.

Table 4.4

Of course, the Bangla language carries vast importance in Bangladeshi culture and to its people. Films made before and after 1971 were influenced by the Bengali language movement of 1952 and the civil war of 1971. For example, *Jibon Theke Neya* (1970), *Ora Egaro Jon* (1972), *Abar Tora Manush Ho* (1974), *Alor Michhil* (1974) and *Joyjatra* (2004) are films made based on the language movement of 1952 and civil war of 1971. The data suggest two different concepts among interviewees. Interviewees 1, 3 and 4 suggested that the Bangla language is the core reason to consider a film to be Bangladeshi national cinema. If any film does not use the Bengali language, it cannot claim to be national cinema. To support this statement Professor Alam claimed that (Video: 4 mins 5 secs), "language has to be Bengali if it has to be Bangladeshi national cinema" It is also evident in the writing of Cameron (1999) that one of the significant factors in the configuration of our own identity is the language we speak.

Lecturer Hossain (Interviewee 2) and Director Selim (Interviewee 5) think language is just another filmmaking tool. Hossain added that (Video: 4 mins 37 secs), "in my observation, language is very important. Language is not the barrier to understand the film". He further argued that each frame should tell a story. This is also evident in Reyes (2013) who stresses the importance of visual literacy, such as continuity editing, shot sizes, such as close-ups, the use of colour, parallel editing and camera movement. These visual techniques are the most powerful language in a film by which hours, days and years can be established. Individual shot compositions can speak to the audience in different ways, giving the frame itself life and a

language of its own (Reyes, 2013). Understanding the concept of visual literacy is not only a skill for filmmakers but also viewers. It is also evident in Scorsese (2013) who explained how his family lived through the emotional truths on the screen, often in the coded form such as gestures, glances, reactions between the characters, light and shade. Nevertheless, the rest of the interviewees think differently.

Sarji (2006) argued that there are three aspects of cultural elements in which the third element is the language of a film that can be used to identify a national cinema. The author suggested speech and accents from regional dialects, or a working middle or upper-class intonation can be used as the signifier of Malaysian-ness or British-ness. In India, for example, movies are produced in all fifteen major local languages. The same goes for Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Hong Kong. She strongly suggested that language is an accurate indicator or a country's cultural identity. Nevertheless, the participants who took part in the research interview accepted the importance of using the Bangla language in films, especially when entertaining the Bangladeshi audience.

4.3.2 Explore current working practices and concerns in filmmaking:

Question three:

In what ways do you think film making practices have changed in Bangladesh since 1971?

Response:

Interviewee 1	There is a significant change in the 70s, we did not have any film school, we did not have people who are educated in filmmaking make films. What we had you know people learnt it by doing. So, learning by doing you know there were those people who made films in this country in the 70s and before the 70s they learnt filmmaking by working with film directors in Calcutta.
Interviewee 2	So, one time I mean the commercial film was very popular. That time that was the extreme level commercial. So, as a I mean to survive their aesthesis, art and other thing the another part started their journey, that is the counter cinema or the avant-garde film was produced made by the independent filmmakers. So, that's only for the I mean the international film festival, not for the mass distribution to the audience because of that time the society was not ready to watch, observe this kind of film

After 2000, there were very good I mean counter film, independent film that time. *Matir Moyna* was ummm I mean released 2001 I guess. So, that was the and it was a critique selection [CT] and from the..yah yah.. Oscar-nominated and the critical selection from the Juris. So, that was the biggest achievement for a film such a festival like Cannes, you know. So, It was, i mean it influenced the rest of the filmmakers. So, [CT] yes, yes..yes that time, there were many more filmmakers. They were trying to make our umm i mean identical film which film identi ah.. identify the Bangladeshi nationalism |

	or Bangladesh or Bangladeshi people. Right? So, umm it continues still now it's going on, right? So, digital filmmaking. You know there were FDC I mean Film Development Corporation. So, that was very much and that time 35 mm film. So, the annual system was there right? Not the I mean digital system, analogue system, right? So, after 2006 or 2007, there the whole world's filmmaking was changing regarding to the techniques, the digital filmmaking. So, as a part of the effect that affected that style came to here. Industry was not ready to I mean change or reshape. Because of, it is difficult, you know for the older people or ummm [CT] to accept the changes, right? So, most of the people they were jobless at that time. So, few of them accept the challenge and adopt with the new style or new techniques. So, these days ah..digital filmmaking were very popular here. There were many more directors who worked in Television. So, they transferred themselves to filmmakers to the television filmmakers from television [CT]
Interviewee 3	We are making digital films. We used to make films using a film camera, but currently, we are using a Digital camera for shooting and editing on a computer which is a significant change in the Bangladeshi film industry. the main change I will say is digitalisation in filmmaking
Interviewee 4	The way we made films before 1971, there were many films made after 1971 in the same way, such as 35 mm and 70 mm film stock. We have made many films using 70mm film stock and 35mm. Now, we have a considerable change in terms of filmmaking as we are converting most of it into Digital format. That is why we are not making any films using 35mm and 70 mm film stock. We are doing everything using digital cameras. All the works we are doing it digitally. In that sense we have a significant change compared to 1971 and like we used not to have colour films before 1971, but colour films started from 19178 roughly. Several films were made in colour by1971, but later on, all films were made coloured.
Interviewee 5	For the last eight to nine years, our industry is more digitalised than before, like the rest of the world. However, the transformation of digitalisation took a long time since most of our filmmakers and technicians were used to with analogue 35 mm shooting style. The audience started to reject the old style of storytelling because of easy access to the internet and a new generation of film Globally.

Table 4.5

Since Bangladesh did not have any opportunity for film education after 1971, enthusiastic filmmakers started learning by working with senior filmmakers who are, again, not educated and trained in filmmaking (Interviewee 1). Professor Bhuiyan (Interviewee 1) said, "we don't have academically trained editors, and production has not yet become professionalised" (Video: 11 mins 40 secs). In this context, both generations are guerrilla filmmakers. Rahmel (2013) said guerrilla filmmakers are a special breed of dreamers and idealists who overcome seemingly insurmountable odds almost every day. A lack of experience and training could not stop guerrilla filmmakers after independence. They have survived without professional training because of their clear focus on and conviction for the script or production, which lack that big-budget Hollywood production feel because of schedule issues by actors and directors, as claimed by Rahmel (2013). Guerrilla filmmaking might have helped the film industry survive for a certain period, but it has become one of the significant issues in the Bangladeshi film industry, as suggested by both interviewee 1 and Imam (2016).

Filmmaking was limited to shoots conducted only with film cameras, and not everyone could afford filmmaking. Regarding this, interviewee 2, 3, 4, and 5 responded with a similar concept of how analogue filmmaking and the film stock used, especially 35mm, have changed and transformed into digital filmmaking. They also suggested that the transformation took a long time, and it was hard for senior filmmakers to adapt and accept. However, the beginning of digital cinema in Bangladesh, in around 2006, and the release of the first digital film *Ontorjatra* (2006), does not seem too long ago (Haq, 2012). Though the director himself did not call his film fully digital, he suggested *Ontojatra* as halfway digital as he had to transfer digitally shot and edited film to 35 mm to be compatible with the Bangladeshi projection system, almost the similar scenario as *Toy Story* (1995). *Priotomeshu* (2008), directed by Morshedul Islam, can be called the first digital film   to come from Bangladesh and released in mainstream theatres (Haq, 2012). It is also evident that 80% of 35 mm film editing jobs are done digitally in Bangladesh by 2010 (Masud, 2010 as cited in Haq, 2012), which suggests Bangladeshi filmmakers adopted to this change quite quickly. Many talented independent filmmakers are making films digitally, such as Touquir Ahmed, Tareque Masud, Morshedul Islam, Tanvir Mokammel, Mostafa Sarwar Farooqui and Abi Sayeed. Still, the primary issue is digital distribution and exhibition, as there are only a few cinema halls that are digitally enabled for direct projection. Star Cineplex and Jamuna Future Park multiplexes are the two main and only cineplexes in Bangladesh (Bokul, 2016). To advance digitisation in Bangladesh, some online streaming platforms such as Bongo, Bioscope and Iflix have been developed. These streaming platforms ensure the online distribution of feature films and video content without piracy and create a source for online purchases and viewing. These online platforms have also created an opportunity for alternative films to be screened online, since these are not particularly supported by traditional distribution networks and cinema hall owners because of alternative content (I have discussed the Alternative film in more detail in the literature review) (The Daily Star, 2021). Sadly, among these online streaming platforms, Iflix shut down its office in Dhaka in June 2020 because of low subscriptions. Bangladeshi users can continue to access the platform for viewing (Kader, 2020). Online streaming platforms could be a great way to reduce the cost of film distribution as there will be no intermediaries such as booking agents. However, the popularity of online streaming could place cinema halls at further risk.

In response to changes in filmmaking practice, interviewee 2 suggests how alternative film (film by independent filmmakers) takes over the traditional commercial films in Bangladesh. However, interviewee 1 argued from a different perspective. He argued that it is about film a lack of education about filmmaking after 1971 in the Bangladesh film industry, which improved over time.

In a nutshell, filmmaking practice started changing slowly after 2006, when the film industry was in the transition period of digital filmmaking. Many talented filmmakers started receiving film education from India and abroad and started understanding film education's importance. With the arrival of the digital camera, filmmaking became easier. The film started to change its style from commercial content-based cinema to alternative films that still contain some dancing and singing but tell the story of the culture and its people. It is also evident from question three, where interviewees 2 and 5 responded on a similar note, saying that films are best made naturally.

Question four:
What are the challenges in producing national cinema in Bangladesh?

Most of the interviewees explained not having any obstacle or restriction from the government of Bangladesh. This statement may be accurate, but it is also evident that Bangladeshi filmmakers are facing many unavoidable challenges regularly. For example, interviewees 1, 3, 4 and 5 argued that investors are not interested in investing in films as there is no security of getting the investment back. As a reason, they suggested film piracy, a lack of talent, the poor environment in cinema halls, a decreasing number of cinema halls and the insertion of vulgar cut-pieces in a film by some dishonest producers.

Response:

Interviewee 1	We don't have any restriction from making films but there are some censorship codes which you have to follow if you make films in Bangladesh. Because every film you make or public screening it has to go through the censor board. So, the censor board has a set of codes to censor a cinema. So, Censorship codes are related to nudity, violence all these kinds of things and certainly and about religious sensitivity as well. So, if you are making your film which are religiously insensitive or if it involves people to be violent or if it involves people to violent line order then I would say that you will face censorship in this country. Now you see that a lot of experiments are going on in terms of filmmaking, but you know our film industry has been facing a crisis. This crisis has been caused by Satellite Television in the 90s mid-1990s because through satellite Television films from all over the world became available. Especially Indian films became so available to our people that it has become a....to the growth of the national film industry Bangladesh. So then, ah.. another thing happened before Satellite television the video camera. So, video cassette recorder actually. When video cassette recorder came in you

	know people started watching Indian films you know buy renting Indian video cassettes. You know we hardly have any original stories. But we had a lot of writers and novelist. Filmmakers could easily adapt their stories into filmmaking, but they don't have the talent to adapt literature to film. So that's that's a ah.. big question. Then another problem in Bangladeshi film industry is problem of acting. We don't have good quality actors. Then you know, we don't have academically trained editors and Production has not become professionalized. So, many of the producers are just coming to the film industry to make money somehow. Everyone has to make money if they want to survive in the industry but it's not it should not be at the cost of the art form. So, you make a good film then automatically money will come. People will watch you. But in our context, you know producers are not concerned about art form. They are concerned about money. So out of that concern, sometimes they encourage violence, that they have an idea that if there is a pertain certain group of audiences. or viewers who will like violence. Then some people would imply you know sexuality. So, use of you know sexual content. There is a notion that if there is a sexual content there is a particular group of audience who will come to the cinema theatre and watch it. But all these things failed in the past. And there are other problems as well. There are some some infrastructural issues related to the cinema theatres. Because ah.. traffic congestion, physical environment in the cinema theatres all these things are very discouraging. So, these are added problems with low-quality films. So since these days, we have some trained filmmakers we are getting you know few unique films. They may might not be successful commercially but there are you know ah.. good word to good films every year. So, we need to increase these numbers. We need more good films that people will watch. People go to the theatre to watch it. So, I think academically trained people will come out of the plagiarism thing. they will not copy another people's cinema. They will make their own cinema. May be will all of them not make good cinema.
Interviewee 2	Well, there is not that much challenge that is the integrity of the filmmaker. So, if a filmmaker here or any country wish to make a film which film will represent his country or her country that is very possible. The government actually want to make a national film you know. If you look through the rules of grand, government grand then, they will say that the slogan is "National value, culture and thought of liberation war". They actually encourage us to make national films. So, that indicates the points to make national films. So, failure is the collective failure of the individuals, right? to make the national films Their main obstacle is the lack of preparation, not the government.
Interviewee 3	There are two parts of filmmaking. One is the creative side, and the other is funding. Between these two sides of filmmaking, funding is more challenging in Bangladesh because of not having returns of investment. Budget is the biggest problem. Because of being a low budget film, many essential

	elements usage is avoided, such as location. Locations are always compromised just to save money, but location plays a vital role to make a story believable. One of the most important reasons for not having an investment back from a film in Bangladesh is the decreasing number of cinema halls. If we go back and talk about the 1990s, we used to have more than one film released in the cinema theatre on every Friday at least at 70 to 80 theatres but, presently it is difficult to find out 70 to 80 theatres in the whole country. Because of this situation, the audience is not interested in coming to the cinema hall instead they prefer to enjoy cinema at home on a big Television screen. Audiences are not interested in watching cinema in Cinema Hall because they get to watch Bollywood and Hollywood films, Indian TV serial on a big Television screen within their comfortable environment. Besides, there are not many good films in Bangladesh that can attract them to go and watch in the theatre. Even there are good films sometimes, but the majority of the audience cannot go to the cinema hall because the environment at the cinema hall is unsuitable for a family or kids. Even after all this problematic situation, there are some films which are doing comparably right such as, recently released film *Dhaka Attack* is a hit movie because most of the cinema halls were packed with the audience. However, the real scenario is: there are only a couple of cinema halls which have a pleasant environment in Dhaka city, this film was shown. Thousands of audiences are unable to watch this film in different small cities and villages because of inadequate numbers and environment of cinema halls. As a result, producer losing investment, and since this is like a circle, other investors will lose their hope and interest to invest in films which have eventually led us to the present situation. [CT]. We used to have more than 800 cinema halls, but now it is below 300 in the country. Most of the cinema hall owners are unable to pay for their staffs and the associated cost to operate a cinema hall. They never get their investment back, and this is the reason most the cinema halls are converted to a big supermarket or rice mill.
Interviewee 4	No. We do not have to face any challenge or difficulties from the government, but presently the main problem is Piracy. The biggest problem in the Bangladeshi film industry is Piracy. The Bangladeshi film industry is about to close down because of Piracy. It is the biggest challenge we face. Because of Piracy producer are not interested in making films anymore. They do not want to lose their investment. Bangladeshi government is unsuccessful in controlling this as there is no particular rules or regulation in Bangladesh. That is why the number of films is decreasing every year along with not having enough availability of interested producers to invest their capital in films.

Interviewee 5	We had 1200 cinema theatres then. Our cinema industry started to destroy from 1990 because of import and making of vulgar cinemas and black money. This situation started to improve again after 2005. However, because of this black period, we lost almost 600 to 700 cinema halls, and our industry fell apart. The film industry is more digitalised in the last eight to nine years than before, like the rest of the world. However, the transformation of digitalisation took a long time since most of our filmmakers and technicians were used to with analogue 35 mm shooting style. The audience started to reject the old style of storytelling because of easy access to the internet and a new generation of the film globally.

<div align="center">Table 4.6</div>

A current and past example of a Bangladeshi film indicates that singing and dancing are consistent in every film in Bangladesh. Even serious storytelling has a song to make it dramatic and emotional for example, *Dhaka Attack* (2017) is an action genre with a serious story plot, but it also has songs and dancing. That is why interviewee 5 suggests (appendix - sample scripts) there are distinct characteristics in Bangladeshi films compared to the rest of the world; Bangladeshi films are over melodramatic with many songs and dancing. However, interviewee 1 argued that there is no particular style in Bangladeshi film as the film industry struggles to find a consistent pattern and film language. Nevertheless, there is a style in Bangladeshi films which is evident from *Matir Moyna* (2002), *Joy Jatra* (2004), *Shamol Chhaya* (2005), *Monpura* (2009), *Amar Bondhu Rashed* (2011), *Television* (2012), and *Dhaka attack* (2017). The films suggested above have a similar pattern of the story plot, for example, it portrays Bangladesh's simple story, the independence of 1971, and its people. However, there is no doubt that the number of quality films made over the period is unsatisfactory.

Despite possessing a similar storytelling tradition with many songs and music, colourful dance, melodrama, an emphasis on film stars, over acting, emotion (Ganti, 2013), (Interviewee 5- appendix- sample script), suggests that there is significant influence of the language movement of 1952 and the civil war of 1971, which benefitted Dhallywood. Even with these advantages , Bangladeshi film has struggled to produce world-class films compared to those made by Bollywood, and for various reasons (Ahsan, 2009; Paris, 2016). For example, many young talented filmmakers were unable to get into filmmaking because of a lack of film education, guidance and religious barriers, as filmmaking was considered a great sin in the early 1970s. Regarding this concept, Ahsan (2009) suggests that the conservative mentality of Muslim people has held back the film industry by not permitting talented Bangladeshi people to make movies. Islamic leaders considered a great sin to work in film during the early period of independence (Imam, 2016). Interviewee 2 argued that if filmmakers are honest and want to make a film, there is no challenge or restriction from doing so. He also argued that a lack of research and preparation is the main obstacle for a filmmaker in Bangladesh, not the government or any other agency.

There was not any definite list of issues that can be identified as the actual reason for struggling Bangladeshi filmmaking. However, some essential points emerged from the interviews, such as film piracy, a lack of talent, a poor environment in cinema halls, the decreasing number of cinema halls and vulgar cut-piece insertion in the film by some ill producers. Cinema researcher Dr Ahmed Aminul Islam argued, as cited in Bokul (2016), that the Film Development Corporation's (FDC) unfortunate situation (low-quality recording studio, no film library or research facilities and outdated camera equipment) is the main reason for struggling Bangladeshi filmmaking. This indicates a pattern of issues where each issue is connected and affecting filmmaking practice and business. According to Sohan (Video: 14 mins 38 secs), producers are not interested in investing in a film because of film piracy and the decreasing number of cinema halls. As indicated above there are many reasons for this, but what created this situation in the first place? Interviewees 3 and 5 indicated that the Bangladeshi industry had not always struggled as there was a golden era between 1980 and 1990 when investors used to get their investment back, and films were watched and loved by the audience. It is also evident in Jhuma (2014) who suggested that Bangladeshi film was part of everyday life, and there was a time when people used to go to cinema halls even after finishing work. Interviewee 4 blamed dishonest producers who created this situation by inserting vulgar cut-piece in films in the first place (appendix - sample scripts).

The Bangladesh Film Censor Board (BFCB) is primarily responsible for the censoring of locally produced movies and imported movies meant for public showing (Interviewee 1; Bangladesh Film Censor Board). The Censorship of Films Rules (1977) contain the definition and detail of the Film Censor Board's composition and its tenure and responsibilities. They also set out the constitution of the Appeal Committee, principles for the examination of films, the setting of fees for 35 millimetre and 16-millimetre films, an examination of trailers and films brought by foreign missions and the determining factors governing the cutting of sections of film. In light of the rules, the Bangladeshi Ministry of iInformation issued eight instructions for examining films on 16 November 1985. The instructions categorically started the pre-conditions to be fulfilled by a film for obtaining a censor certificate for public show. According to the Code for Censorship of Films in Bangladesh (1985), films should not:

(1) contain anything contrary to the spiritual independence of Bangladesh and its integrity, sovereignty, law and order, values, social customs and traditions and the country's defence and security forces.
(2) instigate enmity between Bangladesh and friendly foreign countries or incite hatred among the nations.
(3) hurt the religious beliefs and sentiments of the people or cause communal enmity.
(4) incite unethical sinful acts and debauchery, defile the traditional sense of morality and sanctity or have scenes of nudity, rape, sexual acts, obscene movements of limbs and cheap dresses, kisses and acts of embracing.
(5) have scenes of cruelty, serious oppression, repulsiveness and brutality.
(6) show criminal severe activities that incite enthusiasm in the minds of the people draw sympathy for the criminals and create an impression that such acts are recognised in society.

The seventh instruction stipulates that no copycat film, indigenous or foreign, shall be given a release certificate. Finally, the eighth instruction notes that films that encourage the practice of dowry shall not be given a certificate of release.

How did dishonest producers get away with breaking these rules and release their films? After analysing all these points and the censor board issue, the main reason is corruption. This means there are criteria or regulations to control film projection in Bangladesh, but filmmakers have not strictly followed them. As a result, anyone could make a film with whatever content they wished to display. It benefitted some unscrupulous investors and business people who secured quick returns of investment by adding vulgar uncensored cut-pieces and pulling out a particular audience category.

It has effectively spoiled the middle-class audience's interest in going to a cinema hall and enjoying with films their families (Bokul, 2016). Though there is considerable debate about the Censor Board's fairness in the Bangladeshi film industry, the report also suggests that uncensored obscene "cut pieces" were inserted after the approved release certificate was obtained from the BFCB. It is also evident in Bokul (2016) that ill-intentioned producers inserted vulgar cut-pieces without the censor board's consent. The use of "cut-pieces" is also evident in Hoek (2014), where he explained his personal experience of watching a cut-piece inserted movie in one of the cinema halls at Sylhet in Bangladesh. Such films were confiscated from cinema houses by the BFCB, but the suspension was withdrawn because of the extraordinary power of money. I want to share a particular day of my research briefly in Dhaka. Keeping the fieldwork and study in mind, I attended a cinema hall in the centre of the Capital, Farmgate. Once I entered the cinema hall, I discovered that the cinema hall owner plays two films with one ticket. Half of the time, what was published outside on the board was the legal bit and the second half - vulgar cut-piece pornography. The audiences were mostly day labourers (worker is hired for a day and paid only for the day), wearing Lungi (a man's skirt wrapped around the lower waist, usually below the belly button). Interestingly, a similar audience knowingly goes to this type of cinema hall to watch such obscene films.

Question five:

What are the distribution channels and Exhibition outlets for Bangladeshi national cinema? To what extent does Hollywood influence the film's distribution and screened in Bangladesh?

Response:

Interviewee 1	We have the booking agent and you have to talk to the FDC people that primarily our distribution is based on. You know you have to contact the Hall

	owners or theatre owners. Two companies are controlling the distribution, one is the Jazz multimedia another one is Impress telefilms. There is hardly any influence of Hollywood. Hollywood films has little influence in this country because the language is English. So primarily even the context is different as well. So, Bollywood films are more popular in this country. That is why govt does not allow theatres to play Bollywood films.
Interviewee 2	Cinemas are mostly distributed to Cinema Halls and some auditoriums. Auditoriums are just an alternative to cinema halls especially when there is not many cinema hall owners are interested in a particular film, it is projected in Auditorium using a projector organized by film society and university students. It can't be considered as commercial as it is mostly used for promotion purpose. There are some cinemas released on Television platform as well. Cinema Hall owners first watch a film trailer before buying the film for their cinema hall to project. Capital earned from the projection spread among cinema hall owner, producer, government and booking agent. However, I think there are some problems in this distribution process as new filmmakers always struggle to get to the cinema hall to project their film. Maximum cinema hall they get is three to four. Cinema hall owners mostly decide what film to project based on how commercial the film is! In this way, many new filmmakers who make counter cinema are always neglected. Again, there is another misconception or debate regarding the digital film as these are e-film or electronic film because it does not follow the concept of Digital filmmaking. There is no influence from Hollywood
Interviewee 3	The distribution channel has broken down now. We have a co-operative for distributing films in the country. Cinema Hall owners were members of this co-operative, and we used to have a decent competition to book a film. They used to book a film with mutual understanding, but this system has not been used actively lately. [CT]. Currently, there are many cinema halls are showing films using a digital projector which compromises film quality hugely. We need to sort the issue of a Distribution channel to improve the business of film. There is no influence of Hollywood in our film distribution at all. Our film industry is too poor to be noticed by Hollywood or Bollywood.
Interviewee 4	We don't call it the Distribution channel. We call it instead of the Distribution office. There are more than 100 offices in the country. There are many companies we used to have. We still have many in the present. Such as S S Production, Jupiter Films, Anondo Mela, and United films. No. There is no influence of Hollywood at all in Bangladesh to distribute films in a cinema hall.

Interviewee 5	These are called the booking agent or distribution house. It is quite structured. We have associations for producers and distributors. The producer hires distributors to distribute cinema. They get some percentage for this. Booking agent comes to distributors to book a cinema and pay a minimum guaranteed rate. Booking agent also takes some percentage from here. Once the cinema is in the cinema theatre capital goes to a distribution house, and then after deducting some percentage, money goes to the producer. I do not know how Hollywood distributes their films, but I do not see any reason to have an influence on them in Bangladesh.

Table 4.7

All the interviewees that there was no Hollywood influence in film distribution and screening in Bangladesh. They suggested that there was considerable Bollywood influence instead. Bangladeshi film has to face massive competition from Bollywood as the audience is more interested in watching Bollywood films on television than watching a Bangladeshi film in a cinema hall. Bollywood is not only the first choice for the Bangladeshi audience, but it also enjoys massive success showcasing its films in different markets around the world. Bangladeshi films are barely capturing any of the global film market (The Financial Express, 2017). Interviewees 2 and 4 explained that Bollywood established itself as a film industry at least fifty years before than us, and they also started educating their people in filmmaking long before we did.

All interviewees (appendix-sample scripts) responded to a similar film distribution process through booking agent to cinema hall owners also suggested by Jhuma (2014) and Film Producer & Distribution of Bangladesh (2017). They also suggested that national films be distributed, screened and released in cinema halls, mostly within the country, by different distribution networks such as Ananda Mela Cinema Ltd, Impress Telefilm Ltd and United films. However, Interviewee 3 (Nissan) argued, citing (Video: 17 mins 38 secs), "distribution channels are also broken". Interviewee 1 mentioned that Jazz Multimedia and Impress Telefilm are the leading distribution companies, whereas Interviewee 4 argued, S S Production, Jupiter Films, Anondo Mela and United films are the successful distribution channels in the country. On the other hand, the rest of the interviewees did not suggest any names. Interviewee 3 suggested using a weak quality projector to project the film in a cinema hall and auditorium to minimise film projection cost, although he considered this type of projection unacceptable as it compromises film quality. Interviewee 2 suggested projecting films in an auditorium using a projector just for promotional purposes by a group of students or film society group. It is nothing commercial (appendix-sample scripts).

4.3.3 Current perceptions of filmmaking practice and film education in Bangladesh and to identify possible new directions to develop future filmmaking in Bangladesh

Question six:

Are there enough film education courses in Bangladesh universities? In what ways can film education make an impact on film making practices?

Response:

Interviewee 1	Now these days, we have our own departments. Departments of Television films and Photography. Then we have a government institute BCIT and then we have Private university. In this country a private university started film education, formal film education in this country. They started offering graduate and undergraduate degrees. So, we are among the public universities, Dhaka University is the first and the number one. So, but in case of private university probably the Stamford they started the Stamford university started a film education degree. So, now have some young filmmakers educated in filmmaking either got a diploma from Pune or diploma from South Korea or diploma from Australia. So, we have some academically educated filmmakers.
Interviewee 2	Well, I can give you one example. Ah.. can you imagine the Toyota company is doing good with good engineers or good workforce? We can't. eh..if we considered as an industry as an industry then we must have to have some good resource people [CT] right? So, there many.. Skilled people I mean. There are many departments like the technical departments we are i mean the beside the camera behind the camera, or behind the editing, right? Or the script or the production many things. So, it's required that every unit or every team will get qualified people. So, that's it. Is there opportunist or proper logistics to get the chain already established or not. So, five years back, ten years back it was not. But now, it ah.. this Dhaka university has their own Television film and Photography departments. Its five and half years old and we have film institute ahh..three or four years old and we have another two public university, they have launched their Film and Television department . So, after ten year or fifteen years student will be graduated from their departments and they will what they will do? They will go to the industry and before that that the production group I mean production boy and after working with the Director, twenty years later, he or she will became a Director. So, there were no educational back up or educational background. So, you can ask quality work from them from them because they are not bound. But, when you will get educated people especially not educated I mean film educated people then you will get different quality work I guess.
Interviewee 3	There was not much before, but we have some now. Previously, we did not know even if a film could be something to study. We knew only about Pune

	Film Institute in India where the film could be studied. It was out of our thinking and reached that film ever could be studied in Bangladeshi universities. There are now several private universities in Bangladesh where films are studied. Recently, the University of Dhaka also started film education which is the first public university to start film courses. Most of our filmmakers are not educated in the film, but they have practical experiences. They learnt from their seniors. However, Changes are must now because people know now the benefit of film education. We may not be able to see the change now, but we will surely see it in the next couple of years.
Interviewee 4	There were not much, but at present, there are many universities who started film education or degrees. We need education for everything. We cannot do anything without proper education. Practical education is very important. I did not have the blessings of having this sort of education from universities. I learnt from my fellow filmmakers. Currently, many students are getting an education in filmmaking and working as an assistant in many films to build up their career. Education cannot be neglected. As much educate as an individual can achieve, he or she will go a long way.
Interviewee 5	We are unlucky that we did not have any film institutions. Recently, some universities have taken initiative to teach courses in film and media Filmmaking is a structural job. It does not just happen. It needs great concern about every detail. To do that we need technicians otherwise, we will not be able to make the finest film. That is why enough film education very important.

Table 4.8

All interviewees claimed there was not enough film education and especially between 1971 and 2010, but, currently, some public and private universities have started teaching film courses. Film education will create and showcase the talent that will benefit Bangladeshi filmmaking practice. They blamed an unknown authority, saying that film education should have been introduced long before in Bangladesh like it had been in India. Interviewees 1, 3 and 5 suggested the Film and Television Institute of India, which had contributed to the Indian film industry's development. The lack of any initiative from the Bangladeshi government is evident. As interviewee 1 stated in Video (19 mins 24 secs): "In this country, a private university started formal film education. They started offering graduate and undergraduate degrees". It had been private institutions that first started film education in Bangladesh, whereas the first public university to start film education courses was the University of Dhaka in 2012. Interviewee 2

claimed that " the government's patronage of film was limited ", which offers further evidence of the Bangladeshi government's lack of initiative (appendix- sample scripts).

The Bangladeshi people finally gained the opportunity of learning film and media studies recently. This began less than ten years ago and has done little to reverse the lack of talent and skilled people (Interviewee 2). Supporting this, interviewee 5 claimed that Bollywood may be far better than us now, but it was not the case long ago when Bangladesh and Indian films were almost at the same stage. It was the Indian government's initiative in establishing the Film and Television Institute of India, which changed the face of Bollywood. Interviewee 5 indirectly indicated that the government of Bangladesh was simply not being supportive enough. None of the interviewees blamed the government directly for inadequate educational institutions or the late development of film education in the country. But it is evident from the current situation that the government has failed to establish film education in the country even after 50 years of independence. The establishment of film education and its resources is still at the primary stage. It is evident from my visit to the University of Dhaka in 2017. I was invited to present film studies and greenscreen video making to MSc students from the Department of Television, Film and Photography. I was surprised to see the enthusiasm and engagement of the students and the teaching staff. Many students excel with theoretical knowledge when asked.

Nevertheless, the available study materials and access to resources was too limited , and students hardly had any practical sessions in greenscreen filmmaking. I felt disappointed at the unfortunate situation of the number one public university in the country. As part of the initial stage of film education, the University of Dhaka started its film and media courses in 2012, in the Department of Television, Film and Photography. According to the literature review and video interviews, some private universities, such as the University of Stamford, started this journey before the public sectors.

4.3.4 Conclusion

There is still hope that the ongoing issues of the Bangladeshi film industry can be resolved. Chowdhury (2015) notes that it is a good sign that films are being studied in universities now, although it is quite late. Despite this, it is the right decision to take. Interviewee 2 said we need to wait fifteen to twenty years to see any positive outcome, as Bangladesh has just recently started its film education in the country. He also suggested that having a low number of cinema halls in the country is the underlying problem as the numbers are going down daily. The country's current number of cinema halls stands at around three to four hundred, whereas in the past there were almost fifteen hundred. On a similar note, Bokul (2016) argued that only ten years ago there were twelve hundred cinema halls, but now we have below three hundred cinema halls.

4.4   Results

However, after analysing the above two chapters and the video, I have discovered a match in key concepts and themes as follows.

- Reason and outcome of film industry crisis.
- Present and past filmmaking practice.
- The development of the film industry.
- A solution to develop filmmaking practice.
- Quality of cinema.

There are six Themes found (The reason and the outcome of film industry crisis, Past and present filmmaking practice, economically successful and unsuccessful period, the development of film industry, A solution to develop film filmmaking practice, and the quality of cinema) from many categories as shown in the previous chapter in table 4.1 and 4.2. The following chapter will describe the obtained Categories and Themes and how these are connected.

The reason and the outcome of the film industry crisis
The grounds for the film industry crisis originated from issues faced by filmmakers in the Bangladesh film industry. It includes film piracy, vulgar cut-pieces in films, a poor environment in cinema halls, amateur technicians, the influence of foreign films and a lack of government initiative. These issues are also called extracted categories from focused coding, which participants suggested as the basis for the film industry disaster. As cited in Imam (2016), this is also evident that vulgar cut-pieces in films destroyed the Bangladesh film industry and the audience's interest to come to the cinema hall, which resulted in long term damage. This prompted the total number of cinema halls to fall by half (Ahsan, 2009; Jhuma, 2014). Director Sohan and Journalist Nissan argued that the main reason for the destruction of the Bangladesh film industry is film piracy. On the other hand, Dr Ahmed Aminul Islam argued and blamed, as cited in Bokul (2016) the Film Development Corporation (FDC) for destroying the Bangladesh film industry and filmmaking.

Interestingly, all of them are interconnected with the film industry crisis, including a lack of film investment, decreasing cinema halls and the decreasing number of audiences in film theatres. All participants think it is like a circle, for instance, film piracy makes film producers not interested in investing money in filmmaking. Here, film piracy relates to the poor environment in cinema halls that unscrupulous business people create. This prompted such producers to bring vulgar cut-pieces in films for a quick return of the investment, which destroyed the audience's interest to come to cinema halls with the family and friends. This resulted in limited opportunities for getting any investment back for an average movie, and the closure of many cinemas (Interviewees 1-5; Jhuma, 2014). Therefore, according to Bokul (2016), cinema hall owners have now resorted to converting their buildings into supermarkets or shopping malls, significantly reducing the number of cinema halls nationwide.

Past and present filmmaking practice
Filmmaking style, digitalisation and the importance of cinema in wartime created the theme past and present filmmaking practice. The theme covers the ways in which filmmaking practices changed after 1971 from analogue to digital. Interviewees discussed how digitalisation changed the way filmmakers filmed movies, edit a shot or add and remove effects in a video. It also depicts how the traditional way of storytelling needed to change because of audience demand.

Rapid digitalisation had contributed to a significant film industry crisis, as cited in Ahsan and Dudrah (2015). On a similar note, digitalisation may have improved filmmaking practice in Bangladesh, but it brought major chaos in educating a vast number of untrained technicians.. The fact that many senior technicians were unable to cope with this change is also evident in the interviews. Hossain and Giasuddin argued that the Bangladeshi film industry was not ready to accept this change, and many people became unemployed because of new skill requirements.

Successful and unsuccessful period
The theme successful and unsuccessful period covers a certain period when the Bangladeshi film industry was at its peak - the number of cinema halls numbered more than 1500, and the audience was able to enjoy films with friends and family (Jhuma,2014). There is a dispute about the original numbers. with 1200 suggested by Giasuddin Selim and eight hundred by Ikbal Karim Nissan. Nevertheless, the golden period between 1980 and1990 ended and the sector began to struggle, which resulted in a crisis. On the one hand, the film industry fell into crisis because of vulgar cut-piece in films as argued in the literature, and this was supported by Selim. On the other hand, Bhuiyan and Nissan argue that satellite television availability after 1990 brought about the film industry crisis. That is how an economically successful period is linked to good filmmaking practice, and an unsuccessful period is related to the film industry crisis.

The development of the film industry, the proposed solution to develop filmmaking practice and the quality of cinema itself are themes which are are interlinked. For instance, introducing more film education in the country is key to developing filmmaking practice, as the participants argued in the interviews except for Nissan, who suggests that there was enough film education in the country. On the other hand, Ahsan and Dudrah (2015) argue that very few universities offer film and media courses, which is not enough. Private organisations need to introduce more media training, he further argued. Besides, film education can bring new talent and skilled technicians, eventually developing the film industry. The Bangladesh Film Institute (BFI) claims to have around six hundred students who passed various courses, and are now active in the film, television and media sectors in Bangladesh since 2005 ("About US – BANGLADESH FILM INSTITUTE", 2020). Similarly, if the quality of film ensured a certain level of standard by the talented, educated filmmakers and technicians, this will enrich the film industry. There is no doubt that quality film has the power to end most of the ongoing crisis in the Bangladeshi film industry, as cited in Imam (2016).

The most surprising theme I noticed in speaking to the various interviewees is that corruption is the most common and fundamental problem in Bangladesh. Though there is hardly any evidence found, the ongoing film industry crisis is strongly linked to
 corruption, limiting the Bangladesh film industry's development. As discussed above (4.3.2 Explore current working practices and concerns in filmmaking), it is debatable whether the Bangladeshi censor board promotes fairness in the industry. Piracy is also linked to corruption (Bokul, 2016). Films are copied from a cinema hall on the first day of their release and sold almost as DVDs in the street and local DVD shops (Bindloss, 2018). This also reduces cinema audience numbers as they can watch films at home or at a tea stall using a DVD player.

Sometimes, illegally recorded copies of films are uploaded online for free viewing (Bindloss, 2018). It suggests that either cinema hall owners or the hall staff allow the film to be recorded illegally by receiving one-off payments, which puts the producer in a difficult position as regard recouping production costs. Consequently,, film producers are not interested in investing money to make films (Interviewee 4).

5 Findings and analysis: Data produced in Video

My findings suggest several important issues shape the context of Bangladeshi film. These are:
- Vulgar cut-pieces insertion in films - Literature Review- (Awwal, 2018) and Interview data.
- Film piracy - (Interviews data).
- The poor environment in cinema halls - Literature Review- (Imam, 2016) and interview data.
- low-quality film (Interviews).
- Lack of relevant contemporary film policy due to lack of commitment and initiatives from successive Bangladeshi government - Literature Review- (Islam, 2009) and Interview data.
- Corruption in the film industry (Interview data).
- Poor supportive infrastructure for film training and education (e.g. there is no equivalent of a proper film university in the country) - Literature Review- (Ahsan & Dudrah, 2015), (Bokul, 2016) and (Interview data).

Each of these concepts or issues led me to the gap in knowledge because none of the authors I consulted, such as Ahsan (2009), Haq (2012), Jhuma (2014), Imam (2016), Paris (2016) and Awwal (2018) provided any clear direction on how to overcome these issues. The emerging research questions explore the origin of the issues to identify possible new directions and develop future filmmaking practices in Bangladesh.

According to my investigations, there is a Bangladesh Ministry of Information website   that houses the National Film Policy, Rules for Film Joint Ventures, Short Film Rules, a Committee (BFTI) and an Appeals Committee ("Welcome to Ministry of Information", 2020). The website may not be updated with the recent changes and modifications in policy, but it does have guidelines to assist making films. Most filmmakers and people associated with the film business are not following government policy. Therefore, issues such as film piracy, vulgar cut-pieces, the poor environment in cinema halls, the decreasing number of cinema halls and low quality of movies continue to prevail. In reality, most filmmakers and people related to the film business are not following National Film Policy guidelines, according to both the interviewees and the related literature itself Rahman (2017). Therefore, some common questions emerged, and I endeavoured to answer:

How are these filmmakers routinely getting permission to make, distribute and exhibit films?
How are films copied or pirated the very next day after their release?
Why are these films being sold openly in shops or supermarkets?
Why is the environment of cinema halls not maintained for the general audience?
Is there any government agency that is working to prevent piracy and take legal action?

These questions lead me to the bigger problem of corruption. It seems that most sectors related to filmmaking are in some way corrupt, and there has been little action taken against it by the government (Hoek, 2008). If they had acted, these issues could have been comprehensively dealt with long ago. Maybe the entire machinery of government is not corrupt. However, the persistence of this long-term problem does not reflect that. As a researcher, I am aiming to find a resolution to this and develop better filmmaking practice.

6. Discussions

The research questions resulted in multiple codes, extracted to a much narrower section of the themes. Each theme, such as the reason and outcome of film industry crisis or past and present filmmaking practice, constitute significant findings. My findings suggest a substantial similarity between the literature review and focused coding. Nevertheless, the participants chose not to mention some aspects such as the national film policy proposed by Zahir Raihan. As I have argued in the literature review, the lack of enforcement of national film policy helped initiate the film industry crisis in the first place. Because of political unevenness and this lack of enforcement filmmaking's basic structure fell apart, leading to obscene films, poor cinema environments, piracy and copycatting of Bollywood films (Huq, 2020).

Dr Fahmidul Haq's study of digital cinema in Bangladesh, and my own research aimed at developing better filmmaking practices faced similar problems. For instance, the problems with distribution and exhibition. My research examines the widespread problem associated with Bangladeshi national cinema. This also includes examining the current distribution and exhibition system, through qualitative video interviews, whereas the study by Haq (2012) solely explores the problem of Bangladeshi digital cinema and its exhibition system by employing qualitative in-depth interviews and case studies as a methodology. There is a minor similarity in our recommendations too, namely our recommendation that film education be improved and a national film policy be developed in Bangladesh. Haq focuses extensively on digital cinema, and investigates the potential, trends and challenges of digital cinema in Bangladesh.

On the other hand, *Cinema Hall of Bangladesh Past, Present and Future* by Jhuma (2014) examines the context of Bangladeshi cinema halls, their impact on the cine business and the audience. The study seeks to decrease the number of cinema halls and find a way to improve the structure of the cinema hall and its impact on the Bangladeshi cine business. This partially matches my own research findings, especially in finding the reason for decreasing the number of cinema halls in the country. In contrast, this study is too detailed in its investigation of the context of cinema halls, for which the researcher investigates cinema halls in seven major districts in Bangladesh. In terms of the research method, the study employs interviews, surveys, and observation, whereas my research employs a series of video interview to investigate past and current perceptions of filmmaking practice in Bangladesh.
Much importance is attached to film education. Most interviewees suggested that there was insufficient film education or related training opportunities, except Nissan, who stated (see video, 20 mins 32 secs) that educational opportunities in Bangladesh are sufficient enough.

Looking at the evidence from the literature review, other participants and my visit to Bangladesh, this statement does not reflect the current state in Bangladesh. There are only a few universities that recently began film-education. Interestingly, film education has an enormous role in changing the Bangladeshi film industry's fate as it is linked to almost every issue presented in the research. Though film education may sound like an utterly unique code, it is interlinked with quality film and skilled filmmakers. Assistant Professor Hossain suggests (Video: 20 mins) that the Bangladeshi film industry can expect quality film in10 to 25 years' time when we will have many film graduates. This will also change the way movies are made and bring in new ideas (Interviewee 4). Therefore, my findings suggest that establishing film education in the country is one of the most reliable solutions.

7. **Conclusion and Recommendations for future filmmakers**

The research has explored various areas of the Bangladeshi film industry through literature review and interviews. After extensive research and analysis, I was able to identify issues that are causing a great hamper to the filmmaking practice of Bangladesh. Hence, I propose the following recommendations to develop the film industry and its' filmmaking practices.

1.   To Introduce film education from Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exam and fund related courses in all public universities along with encouraging private educational institutions to introduce more courses and training in film education. To support the recommendation, I want to refer to video interviews where participants strongly recommended introducing more course and training in film education. On a similar note, Ahsan and Dudrah (2015) urge to introduce media training from the SSC level so that film education becomes part of secondary schools.

2.   To modify the current National Film Policy by doing a complete survey among directors, producers, actors and technicians recommended in Ahsan (2009) and Jhuma (2014).

3.   Re-structure the film censor board with related skilled people, and it must not control or powered by politics or a team of politicians. The Censor board will ensure that films are made in the country following the government of Bangladesh's filmmaking guidance. About the recommendation, Bokul (2016) doubted the current structure and the inability to control vulgar cut pieces insertion in Bangladeshi films even after non-approval from the Censor board.

4.   To build at least 500 more cinema halls with all modern technology and necessary comfort. The government should fund or issue business loans with low interest to build the cinema halls. Bangladesh's GDP (Gross domestic product) is growing more than 5% annually ("Bangladesh: Economy", 2021), at least for the last three years, indicates the economic capacity to support building cinema halls in the country (Rooney, 2019). The cinema halls owners should ensure the environment of cinema halls is kept clean and respectful at all time for the family audience. Though the cinema hall owners can manage this under the terms suggested above, all cinema houses shall become public property. I want to reference the video interview, interview transcript and Jhuma (2014), where participants and the author strongly recommended improving the cinema hall.

5.   Current film distribution needs to be monitored by a separate company just to run it impartially.

6.   To allow international films to screen in the country. It will introduce healthy competition to better filmmaking quality, as cited in Bokul (2016).

7. The Video created for the research could be used as a teaching tool, especially in university-level education.

I set out to explore the past and present perception of filmmaking practices in the Bangladesh but as the process moved on, this took me to a different issue in the film industry which is not quite related to filmmaking but possibly a common issue in the country. It is called corruption. Most of the country is corrupt, which also affects various parts of filmmaking, such as production, film quality, cinema hall environment and distribution, according to my personal experience while visiting the country.

Based on my main findings (vulgar cut-pieces insertion in films, the poor environment in cinema halls, low-quality film, lack of relevant contemporary film policy due to lack of commitment, corruption in the film industry, few initiatives from successive Bangladeshi government and poor infrastructure for film training and education) the best possible way forward will be to apply the recommendations that I have suggested above. Implementing the recommendations might not be easy since it depends on the country's political and economic situation. Though the Bangladesh film industry provides substantial revenue for the government, it may not prioritise or have enough interest in or economic capacity to develop filmmaking practice. Similarly, digital streaming is not currently possible in many rural areas of Bangladesh because they do not have access to electricity, the Internet and technology. Any implementation of digital streaming will require changing or even creating the entire infrastructure of the country to accommodate digital platform viewing. Digital streaming is fine for some Western countries but not for Bangladesh. This is also because of the poor literacy rate in Bangladesh. Though the government is building many schools mostly in remote rural areas, around 42 per cent of girls leave school before completing grade 10, due to poverty and child marriage (Trines, 2021); ("Bangladesh | UNESCO UIS", 2021).

One interesting finding of the research is that the people of Bangladesh tend to blame an unknown authority. Sometimes the unidentified body can be called the government or 'the system'. This maybe just feel-good blame, but what I have realised is that this is dangerous for personal and national development—the feel-good blaming restricting people from taking any initiative to change the country. I want to include one of my favourites quotes here from Mahatma Gandhi – "You must be the change you wish to see in the world" ("Mahatma Gandhi Quotes (Author of Three Translations of The Bhagavad Gita)", 2020), ("The Story Behind: You Must Be The Change You Wish To See In The World", 2020). The Bangladeshi film industry needs people who will make the change rather than wait for someone to do it for them. Consequently, my research findings, the video, and my recommendations are my contributions and research-

informed attempts to develop Bangladeshi filmmaking practice. That is why, as a researcher, I see the opportunities for new beginnings, and much more work to be done to take the research forward.

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