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Original Paper

ACCEPTANCE AND IMPACT OF NIRIKSHA ON JOURNALISM TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND JOURNALISTS: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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Abstract

This research was conducted to find out the acceptance and the impact of Niriksha, a bi-monthly publication of Press Institute Bangladesh (PIB), on journalism teachers, students and journalists. This research, in addition, tried to seek out the buying and reading habit of the audience, their perception about the magazine etc. The study has been conducted based on the primary data and some secondary data have also been used from related sources. The data have been collected through questionnaire survey. A total 109 participants (65 students and 19 teachers from different public and private universities of journalism background, 25 journalists from different media houses) joined the survey. The result shows that only 9% (10 out of 109) participants read the magazine regularly, 46% read sometimes and 45% respondents read it very few times. Among 65 students, 8% buy the magazine regularly, 51% buy it sometimes and the rest of the student never buy it. The result also shows that 47% respondents told that Niriksha significantly covers journalism issues in its contents, 41% said that it partially covers and the rest of the participants told it does not cover at all. 57% participants from teachers and journalists told the content of the magazine reflects the media. On the contrary, 7 participants (16%) said that its content does not reflect the media. Another 27% said that the content partially reflects the media. The survey indicates that it is helpful to 68% participants from teacher and journalist and partially helpful to 30% participants. It also illustrates that 53% teachers told Niriksha contributes to the media research in Bangladesh and the rest of the respondents said that it partially contributes. Finally, 83% participants from 109 told PIB should develop a system to ensure the availability of the magazine throughout country to its audience.

Keywords: PIB, Niriksha, magazine, access, acceptance, stakeholders

1. Introduction

The first issue of mass media magazine 'Niriksha' was published in September in 1980 from Press Institute Bangladesh (PIB). The PIB was founded formally in August in1976. The 'Niriksha' was brought out within the four years of launching the institute. The magazine is still being published and 239 issues have been come into light so far (PIB 2022, June 20). It was said in the very beginning of its editorial of the first issue', 'The first issue of Niriksha, a magazine of mass media journalists, readers,

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audience and viewers, has been published.' 'What will the magazine do?'- Five specific goals were mentioned in its editorial on the questions of 'do' which are as following:

a) It will closely observe the mass communication activities of the country
b) Help in adopting and executing communication policy appropriate for Bangladesh
c) Ensure free and balanced information flow
d) Ensure the dissemination of information in country and inter-country level
e) Play proactive instigation in mass media training and in research (Niriksha 1980)

It also expressed its ambition, 'The magazine will not only put its efforts to free flourishing of mass media but also keep continuing its endeavor to develop the fortune of the huge amount of people.' Rather it was pledged,

a) To prepare the journalists to face the challenge of time, we will accept different discussions gladly in to the pages of Niriksha.
b) One of the goals of this magazine is to overall assessment of journalists.
c) Where the flaws of journalism are occurring, in which areas the rules of journalism are being violated and
d) Where are the limitations of journalism … we will express all of them in to the pages of Niriksha (Niriksha 1980).

It was also mentioned in the editorial about the objectives of publishing Niriksha, 'To help the mass media in determining their defects and limitations so that they can develop the standard of journalism more overcoming their shortcomings (Hannan 2014).

From 1980 to 2019 is a period of about four decades. It is high time to evaluate the role of Niriksha to what extent it has played for the development of journalists, media students and teachers. But such assessment should be carried out by a person, who is not involved with the publication of Niriksha. Then, the review will be more impersonal and objective (Mizanur 2014).

Though the magazine could not maintain its continuity, it has been able to maintain diversity in its write-ups. It is also mentionable that the newspaper has been able to maintain varieties on topics about journalism and communication. Without studying Niriksha it is beyond understanding that journalism has so many varieties in subjects. Finally, it is expected that the Niriksha will turn into research-oriented newspaper in true sense overcoming its shortcomings in future (Shahela 2014)

2. Objectives

Mass communication magazine the Niriksha is published chiefly for three major stakeholders. They include journalists, students and teachers of journalism and communication. The objectives of the research have been determined taking these three stakeholders into consideration. These are as following:

1. To identify the buying and reading habit of teachers, journalists and students
2. To verify the effectiveness of the magazine to its stakeholders
3. To determine role of Niriksha in media research and
4. To find out the perception of audience about the magazine

3. Rationale

The magazine is being published for more than 40 years long. The authority initiated the magazine in an effort to closely observe the mass communication activities of the country, help in adopting and executing communication policy appropriate for Bangladesh, ensure free and balanced information flow, disseminate information in country and inter-country level, provide mass media training and research. It was pledged in the first issue that the magazine will prepare the journalists to face the challenge of time, assess the journalists, find out the flaws and limitations of journalism etc.

Besides, the magazine is being published aiming at its three major stakeholders including media teachers, journalists and media students.

It is a matter of research how much the magazine put its effort and how much it was succeeded for the development of the standard of journalists and journalism in the long 33 years of its journey.

But it is to be notified that the Niriksha was a bimonthly magazine at the beginning. From then it was published sometimes quarterly, sometimes bimonthly and sometimes monthly even. It has also been seen that the Niriksha was not published in three or even in six months period (Shahela 2014).

It is high time to assess the magazine from different perspectives. In addition, no research, no evaluation has been carried out so far with Niriksha.

4. Content Niriksha (201-224) at a Glance

The Niriksha includes a wide range of issues on journalism, social media, folk culture, election, media personalities, liberation war, sports, culture, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman etc. in its separate issues. There lies a wide range of writings such as general article, research article, essay, feature, interview and so on. At the very end of the magazine, it publishes some event-based news on media and PIB regularly.

The Niriksha covered a total of 411 articles in the issues between 201-224 (23rd number missing) except the event-based news between May-August 2015 to August 2019. It published a significant number of issues (11 out of 24) over the founder of Bangladesh Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and the liberation war and the amount of news about that is 137 in total. Alongside, it published three articles about the language movement and journalism in the 208th issue also.

During this period, it published 15 articles about development journalism in the 213th issue, 22 articles about the Right to Information Act in the 212th issue, 14 articles about media management in the 211th issue, 18 articles about entertainment journalism in the 216th issue, 14 articles about the journalism in electronic media in the 203rd issue, 10 articles about television talk show in the 206th issue, 26 articles about sports journalism in the 218th issue, 15 articles about women journalism, journalists in Bangladesh in the 209th issue, 13 articles about election and journalism in the 220th issue, 26 articles about fake news, TV & Technology, satellite tv, journalism and its challenges, legendary journalists, public relations, autism, and third gender etc. in the 223rd issue.

Besides, it published four articles about legendary female journalist Noorjahan Begum and 15 articles about women journalism, journalists in Bangladesh in the 209th issue, nine articles about media literacy in the 221st issue, eight articles about the security of journalists in the 222rd issue, five articles about the renowned journalist and the former Chairman of PIB Management Board Golam Sorwar in the 220th issue, nine articles about citizen journalism in the 207th issue, seven articles about Public Relations in the 208th issue, and 16 articles about media and ad, objectivity in journalism, television and our life, public relations, news presenter, news treatment, social media and newspaper, world news agency, share bazar and media, Digital Bangladesh and citizen journalism etc. in the 204th issue, three articles about online journalism in the 217th issue.

It is worthwhile to be mentioned that most of the issues of Niriksha were specialized in nature. But some of its issues were published mixing miscellaneous writings. A total of 34 writings were found published in different issues haphazardly. Among the 411 write-ups published in this period, only seven writings were research articles. The 202nd issue of Niriksha on media and communalism has been missing. So, the discussion about the issue was not included.

5. Literature Review

The publication Department of PIB started its journey through publishing mass media journal Niriksha in September in 1980. The Niriksha is basically a research-based mass media journal engaged in developing the standard of journalist and mass media in Bangladesh. A total of 239 issue of Niriksha has been published so far. Though the initial declaration of Nirkiksha is monthly, it is being published quarterly to develop the standard of paper. Besides this, the publication department publishes books, feature collection and manual. The number of books and manuals published so far is 191 (PIB 2022, June 20).

There are press institutes in our neighboring countries including India and Pakistan. They are performing comprehensive activities in different area of journalism. Vidura, the oldest publication of the Press Institute of India (in publication since 1963), is a substantive quarterly journal that focuses primarily on pertinent issues relating to the media. Many of the articles are from established writers,

senior editors and journalists. Being a platform for exchange of news and views on a wide spectrum of developments in the media industry, it is a must-read for both the aspiring journalist as well as those well ensconced in the profession (Press Institute of India, n.d.).

RIND Survey, in its 40th year, continues to focus on the technical aspects relating to newspaper production. In recent years, this has expanded to include developments in television, the Internet and social or new media. It has a wide canvas reporting as it does on technical developments around the world, since all of it impacts publishers and editors in India as well (Press Institute of India, n.d.).

Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF) is an independent media documentation and training centre, non-governmental organisation committed to promoting and defending freedom of expression. PPF is involved in assisting the development of independent media in Pakistan by conducting training programs for journalists, carrying out projects in research and documentation and campaigning to defend and promote freedom of the press (PPF, Strengthening the Media).

Press Institute Bangladesh is also carrying out a publication since 1980. But the publication is afflicted with lots of problems. It's irregular, politically biased and no comprehensive research has been conducted yet to assess the magazine. These scenarios have been reflected in the 200th issues of the magazine.

We have somewhat shortcomings to reach Niriksha to journalists. We could not manage any system till now to distribute our books and magazines throughout the country. Therefore, if someone wants to buy our books and Niriksha, he/she cannot do this in most cases. We have taken initiatives to overcome these limitations (Md. Shah 2014).

Development journalism is the indicator of advanced journalism in a country. But this kind of journalism is neglected in Niriksha mostly. Only eight articles were published in 119 issues of the magazine in this regard. On the contrary, nine articles about investigative reporting and 16 articles about interpretative reporting (investigative and interpretative reporting are two trends of depth news) were published, which were too short according to the principles and goals of Niriksha (Shahela 2014).

That means the Niriksha has failed to maintain its continuity. The failure is not only in publishing but also in maintaining the standard of writing. It has been seen in some cases that standard articles were not published while making hurry in publishing or faults were identified after publication. The amount of research-oriented report on journalism was supposed to be published in 33 years of duration was not. Due to this reason, the development of journalism or the reflection of modern journalism is not seen in the Niriksha. As a result, it could not be evaluated as a research-oriented newspaper to the teachers of journalism. On the other hand, one of the goals of publishing Niriksha was to observe and research about mass communication. It is understood studying the articles of the publication that the Niriksha could not be able to observe and review the condition of the country's mass communication. For these reasons, it is a matter of consideration that the Niriksha could not be able to provide expected results to its audience as expected in the beginning of its publication (Shahela 2014).

The article titled 'The Acceptance and the Impact of Niriksha on Journalism Teachers, Students and Journalists: A Critical Review' is the first ever comprehensive research in Bangladesh.

6. Research Methodology

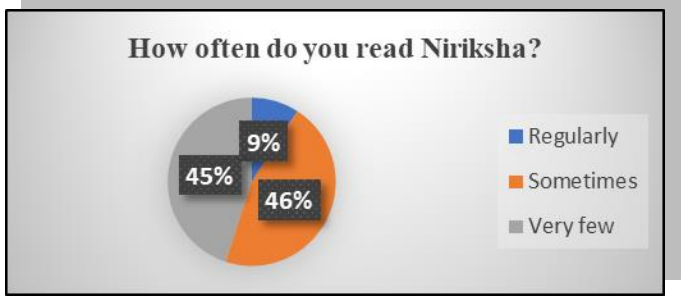
Considering the size, expansion and variety of the population, and for the convenience of data collection and analyses questionnaire, the heart of a survey operation, method has been used in the current research. In research, emphasis is given on two types of strategies generally. One is qualitative and the other is quantitative. Qualitative and quantitative data have been gathered and analyzed in the research. To collect both types of data, close-ended and open-ended questions have been offered. The survey was accomplished through google form (online questionnaire). A total of 109 participants joined in the survey where 65 students and 19 teachers from the communication and journalism department in different public and private universities and 25 journalists participated in survey from different prominent media houses. The sample of the survey was purposive. The students and the teachers of different public and private universities studying and teaching journalism and

communication, and the journalists, who are employed in prominent media houses and read Niriksha, have been used as sample. From 109 participants, 95 were male and 24 were female.

7. Data Presentation

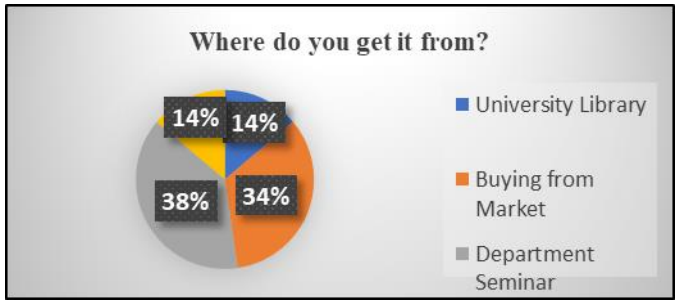
Question 1: How often do you read *Niriksha* (teacher, journalist, student)?

The pie chart shows that 9% (10 out of 109) participants read the Niriksha regularly, 46% (50 out of 109) read it sometimes and the rest of the participants read the magazine very few times.



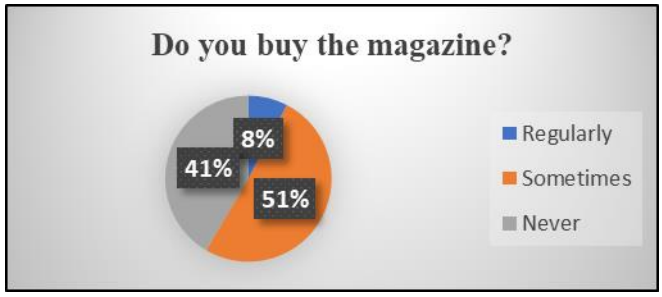
Question 2: Where do you get it from (student)?

The pie-diagram indicates 38% (25 out of 65) students collect the magazine from the department seminar, 34% (22 out of 65) buy it from market. The rest of the students collect it from university library and other sources and their percentage reach 4 and 14 respectively.



Question 3: Do you buy the magazine (student)?

The chart illustrates that 8% (5 out of 65) participants buy the magazine regularly, 51% (33 out of 65) buy it sometimes and the rest of the students never bought it.

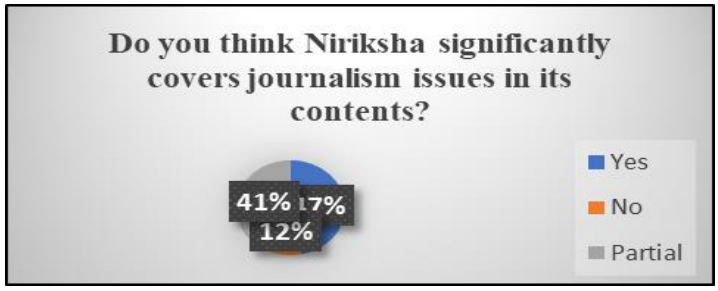


Question 4: Have you ever bought Niriksha in your professional life (journalist)? If yes, how many?

Out of 25 journalists, 10 said that they never bought it in their professional life and five participants told they bought it 1 to 5 times in their service tenure. Besides, four journalists said that they bought it more than 10 times and two said that they bought it 6 to 10 times in their professional life. Four journalists bought it but did not mention the number.

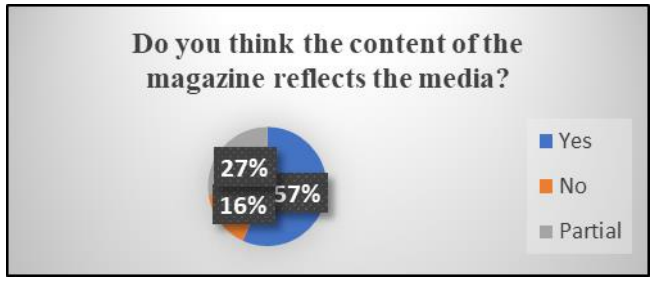
Question 5: Do you think *Niriksha* significantly covers journalism issues in its contents (teacher, journalist and student)?

47% (51 out of 109 participants) told that *Niriksha* significantly covers journalism issues in its contents. 41% (45 out 109) participants said that it partially covers and the rest of the participants told it does not cover at all.



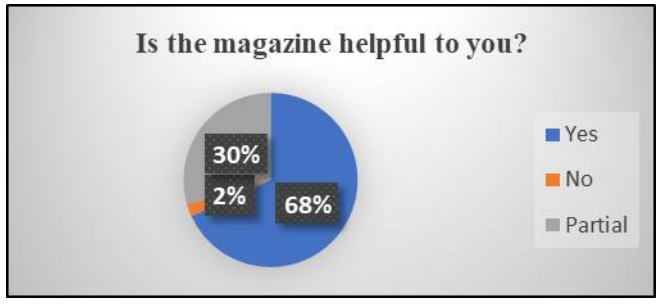
Question 6: Do you think the content of the magazine reflects the media (teacher, journalist)?

57% (25 out of 44) participants from teachers and journalists told the content of the magazine reflects the media. On the contrary, 7 participants (16%) said that its contents do not reflect the media. Another 27% said that the contents partially reflect the media.



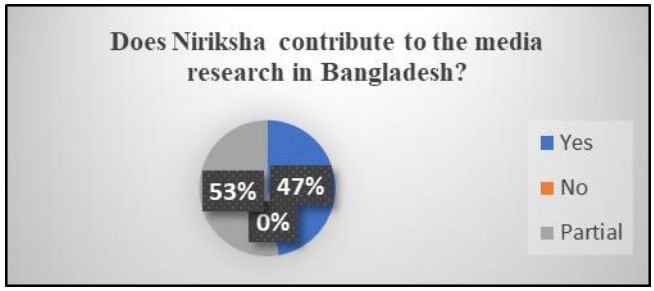
Question 7: Is the magazine helpful to you (teacher, journalist)?

68% (30 out of 44) participants from teacher and journalist told it is helpful to them and 13 (30%) said that it is partially helpful, but 2% told it is not helpful.



Question 8: Does Niriksha contribute to the media research in Bangladesh (teacher)?

53% (10 out of 19) teachers told Niriksha contribute to the media research in Bangladesh and the rest of the respondents said that it partially contributes.



Question 9: Your comment on the content of Niriksha (student):

19 students commented that it is a nice magazine, but one of them told it has bindings since it works under strong government monitoring and another student told its contents are written partially. Six students commented that Niriksha is helpful to them for their academic purpose. 10 students said that the Niriksha is highly informative and it enriches their academic knowledge. A total of 11 students refrained themselves from passing comments. Two students opined that the magazine is not so good in content. Six students commented that the content of the magazine is quite significant, educative and they are getting academic knowledge from it. Four students said the Niriksha is not available outside Dhaka and it is very tough for them to manage. Four students said that the content of the magazine should be people-oriented, elaborate, objective, impartial and should be published regularly. The rest of the students opined that the Niriksha covers diverge issues of journalism, media, communication.

Question 10: Your comment on the content of Niriksha (journalist).

Six journalists commented that the standard of the articles of Niriksha is good. Four journalists said that Niriksha is useful to them. Three journalists opined that it is informative and enriches their knowledge. Five journalists strongly opined that it should cover contemporary affairs like new media, peace journalism and should keep up to date the audience with the fast-changing media world. Two journalists told it is not available. Two other journalists said that it covers significantly media and communication issues and journalist should read them. The rest of the journalists opined that the content of Niriksha is narrow, not satisfactory and politically biased. They also opined expertise articles should be collected not only from academician but also from industry expert.

Question 11: Your comment on the content of Niriksha (teacher).

Four teachers opined that the contents of Niriksha is too much politically biased. Eight teachers said that its articles lack sufficient research, critical thinking and most of the contents are surface and not necessary though they are useful in some cases. Three teachers opined that Niriksha should publish more divergent issues including new media, investigation, development, feature etc. The rest of the teachers said that its contents are helpful for the media related people.

Question 12: What are your suggestions to improve the quality of the content of Niriksha (journalists)?

Six journalists suggested that the contents of Niriksha should be up to date, contemporary and informative. Five journalists suggested that the articles of Niriksha be analytical, investigative be based on research. Four journalists advised that Niriksha should publish relevant and real contents. Two journalists suggested that qualified writers need to be ensured. The rest of the journalist advised that renowned writers from the industry and the academy should be engaged with it.

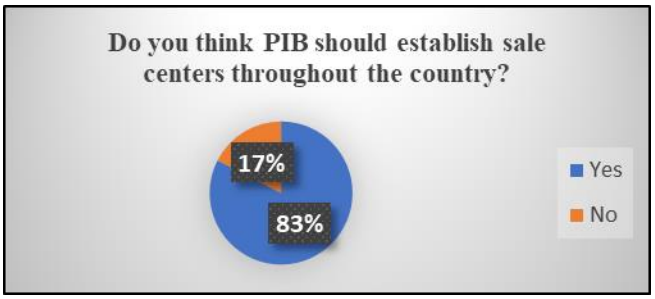
Question 13: What are your suggestions to improve the quality of the content of Niriksha (teachers)?

Three teachers suggested that Niriksha should publish more journalism-oriented articles with critical thinking and insight. Four teachers suggested that the articles of Niriksha should be based on research. Three teachers suggested that it should be out of political influence. Four teachers said there should be an independent editorial board for Niriksha. Two teachers also said academics and media professionals should be involved with the magazine. The rest of the teachers suggested that there

should be more write-ups about new journalism, media literacy, media studies and digital divide and the write-ups need to be relevant and realistic.

Question 14: Do you think PIB should establish sale centers throughout the country (Teacher, journalist, student)?

90 (83%) participants from 109 told PIB should establish sale centers throughout the country and the other said not.



8. Data Analysis and Findings

It has been seen that very few respondents read the Niriksha regularly. Among them, only 9% participants read it regularly. The data show that only 8% participants (5 out of 65 students) buy it regularly. On the other hand, 41% never bought it. From 25 journalists, 10 never bought it in their professional life and the rest of the respondents bought it irregularly in different numbers. A total of 51 participants from 109 told the magazine Niriksha significantly covers journalism issues in its contents and 45 said that it covers partially.

The research show that 57% participants from teachers and journalists told the content of the magazine reflects the media. On the opposite, 16% told its content does not reflect the media but the rest of the respondents opined that it partially reflects. The magazine is helpful to 30 out of 44 participants from teachers and journalists and it is partially helpful to 13 respondents. 53% teachers told Niriksha contributes to the media research in Bangladesh and the others said that it partially contributes. A large portion (83%) of the participants from all stakeholders opined that the PIB should develop a system throughout the country to make the magazine available.

Most of the students commented positively about the magazine except few. The Niriksha is very informative, educative and it covers a wide range of issues which are enriching their academic knowledge. Some students commented it is written partially, not good in content, not people oriented, not objective and not published regularly. More than half of the journalists commented that the Niriksha is good, informative and useful to them. Some journalists also commented it is narrow, not satisfactory and politically biased, not available and they commented that the magazine should cover contemporary affairs like new media, peace journalism and should keep up to date the readers with the fast-changing media world. Besides, it should gather expertise articles not only from academician but also from industry expert.

Most of the teacher opined that the magazine is too much politically biased, it lacks sufficient research, critical thinking and most of the contents are surface and not necessary though it is helpful in some cases. Some teachers commented that it should publish more divergent issues including new media, investigation, development, feature etc.

Most of the journalists suggested the contents of Niriksha should be up to date, contemporary and informative, relevant, real and it should be analytical, investigative and be based on research. They also suggested expert writers from industry and academy should be engaged with it.

Teachers provided some significant suggestions regarding its improvement. Some teachers suggested it should publish more media-oriented articles with critical thinking and insight. A few teachers suggested that the articles of Niriksha should be based on research and must be out of political influence. Some teachers also proposed that there should be an independent editorial board for Niriksha. Alike the journalists, they also proposed academics and media professionals should be

involved with Niriksha. A portion of teachers suggested that write-ups about new journalism, media literacy, media studies and digital divide should be published and they be relevant and realistic.

9. Recommendations

Some recommendations are as follow to improve the quality, acceptability and access of the magazine to its stakeholders having a throughout analysis:

a) The PIB should develop a system to ensure the availability of the magazine across the country so the teachers, journalists, students and interested readers can collect it easily.
b) Articles of the magazine should be elaborate, comprehensive and complete.
c) The articles of Niriksha should be objective and impartial.
d) Though the magazine is a bi-monthly publication, it is not published regularly. So, PIB should publish it on a regular basis.
e) Niriksha should publish write-ups on more divergent issues including new media, media literacy, media studies, digital divide, development, peace journalism, feature on contemporary affairs etc.
f) The magazine should be politically neutral to increase the accessibility for which it is being published.
g) Expertise write-ups should be collected from academia and industry.
h) The articles of the magazine should be analytical, investigative and based on research.
i) There should be an independent editorial board for Niriksha.

10. Conclusion

Niriksha is the only publication in media, journalism and communication landscape for teachers, students and journalists publishing since 1980 by Bangladesh Press Institute (PIB). Though the regular publication has been hindered time to time, it is still being published with some major shortcomings. The PIB should take the concerns, suggestions, comments, advice of its stakeholders for the wide access, acceptability of Niriksha.

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The author declares the originality of the paper.
The journal authority is not accountable for any estimations of the author presented in the article.