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Asian Journal of Communication Studies (AJC) is an open-access online academic refereed publication that is hosted by Dr. Anamika Ray Memorial Trust and Sri Lanka Development Journalist Forum and dedicated to research in the field of media and communication studies. AJC welcomes high-quality, original submissions on a wide range of related topics of media and communication studies that develops communication and media theories, reports empirical and analytical research, presents critical discourses, applies theories to case studies, and sets out innovative research methodologies. It aims to advance research and understanding of media and communication in the Asian region and beyond.

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Articles

C4D TRAINING IN INDIA EXPLORING THE MISSING LINKBETWEEN ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Communication education in India is under constant scrutiny given the concerns being raised about the ethical and professional standards of media operations in a business-driven environment. It is argued that journalism and communication pedagogy need to become responsive to and accommodative of the changing paradigms of the profession if the prospective recruits are to meet the industry standards. Unlike the conventional knowledge driven approach, a shift is being proposed towards a competency-based training that will focus on putting knowledge into action by providing skills that students will need to use in profession.

One such area that has gained prominence in recent discussions is the need for trained C4D (Communication for Development) professionals in both the government and NGO sector in India. Coupled with the fact that development reporting constitutes a minimal section of media coverage, it becomes more pertinent that communication students should be equipped with the necessary C4D skills. Various UN agencies including UNICEF are in the process of drafting a model C4D curriculum in consultation with communication faculty.

The current paper, through an exploration of the C4D curriculum in different institutions in India, and through consultation with faculty, attempts to understand the scope and potential of revising the existing curriculum structure to incorporate the C4D component. Inputs from C4D professionals are also sought to understand the competencies that need to be included in such pedagogy.

Keywords: Communication for Development (C4D), curriculum revision, pedagogy, C4D competencies

C4D TRAINING IN INDIA: EXPLORING THE MISSING LINKBETWEEN ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION

Communication for Development (C4D) is a broad cognitive field of enormous international, national and regional interest attracting attention as a special field of study by students and researchers across disciplines. It has gained a lot of prominence in the discourse of communication studies as an emerging area of inquiry. In a developing country like India where a significant portion of public policy and budget is allocated to development initiatives, the concurrent dynamics of development project planning and execution by multiple agencies as well as the evaluation of the same gains co-relational prominence.

Since India's independence, the philosophy of development that got manifested in national policy has undergone various shifts and appropriations both on the basis of international development discourse as well as the socio-political situation within the nation. During this time the role of communication as catalyst for social change has also emerged from the paradigmatic top-down model to the participatory receiver-centric approach. The doctrine of liberalization-privatization-globalization in India has been marked by a systematic disinvestment by the government in welfare business.

Though the government with its multiple ancillary institutions still continues to have the major stake in the welfare of its billion strong citizenry, multiple national and international agencies have made a foray into the Indian domain. This colossal development enterprise is no doubt in need of able human resource equipped with the tenets and skills required to streamline the communication input towards social change.

The pedagogical inputs for these communication facilitators for development largely remains within the domain of the journalism and mass communication institutions in India. Thus it is only pertinent that the quality of training imparted at such institutions will reflect upon the professional expertise and credibility acquired by the trainees as they enter the development workforce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarly explorations into the status and scope of journalism and mass communications education in India are a relatively recent phenomenon – the first such exercise undertaken only 50 years after journalism training started in the country in 1941-42. The pioneering study by Eapen, Thakur & Sanjay (1991) called attention to the need for textbooks contextualized to the Indian scenario against a backdrop of the genesis and growth of journalism education in the country. Many studies that deliberated on the issue of media education in the context of evolving developments in the media industry and the concurrent expansion of media training that followed. Karan (2001) pointed to the overemphasis on theory and the resultant inadequacy of practical components that could provide aspiring journalists grounding in the skills necessary for practicing journalism professionally. She also expresses concern regarding the need to sensitize media trainees to the social and political issues facing the country.

Mira Kapil Desai argues, "There are no linkages between the State's mandates for media education in the country, private initiatives by media schools, requirements of civil societies and expectations of the various stakeholders from the process of media education." She regrets that the emergence of the "market-oriented, product-centric era of media education" has resulted in a moving away from the focus on "national development" through media.

Similar concerns are expressed by others (Guru and Madhura, 2005; Muppidi, 2008; Tere, 2012) who agree on the need of a curriculum which is better equipped to serve the needs of the industry and at the same time is contextualized to the cultural, social and political settings of the country. Like Desai, Keval J. Kumar too is critical of the fact that there is no attempt to connect media education to 'national development'. He feels that the whole approach to the teaching of media education in India needs a new radical rethinking. He stresses on the 'need to go beyond media education, to mobilize forces to build up a 'media users' movement at the local, national and international levels to re-appropriate the media so that they serve the public interest'. Murthy (2011) also contemplates on the need for a "common core curriculum" to deal with this "lack of standardization of content".

Tere calls for an innovative role on part of media educators and improved training techniques in media education. Aram and Paul (2009) also point to the failure of media education to keep pace with the boom in the media industry in the country and regrets that media education does not find priority in educational institutions and communication centres.

Many like Belavadi (2002) feel that most media courses lack the focus that the market demands. "In their anxiety to illuminate their students as much as possible, many institutes continue to offer a little bit of print journalism, a sprinkling of radio and television. All this in addition to other subjects like communication research, corporate communications, advertising etc. all taught in just one/two/three years!" he says. His concern stems from the fact that the demands of the industry are quite different and media organisations that employ such students strongly believe that "generalisation is out, specialisation is in".

Others like Das (2009) and Sanjay (2002) choose to differ. Critiquing the fact that media and communication education is viewed in terms of imparting media training that emphasizes on skill efficiency required to meet market expectations, Sanjay asserts that media education is more than just that. According to him media education must focus on the goals of advancing society and must explain the nature of the media industry and organization.

Usha Raman (2009) dwells on the changing needs, clientele and context of media education in the country. She notes, "The academics want to do their job: that is, to produce candidates who are reflective practitioners', with the ability to express themselves well, assimilate a wide range of information, and follow up on relevant and significant stories with the public interest in mind. Students want to as quickly as possible gain the skills and acquire the technical tools to get a 'good' job as soon as they graduate. And the media wants people who can 'fit in' and meet the demands of their markets as efficiently as possible."

She insists that only a good synergy between theory and practice can cater to the demands of the changing needs, clientele and context. And this must be topped-up with the creation of space for dialogue between the three stakeholders. "Students end up being caught between the ideals of academia and the interests of the industry, and then end up being unprepared to deal with both. Communication programs must become spaces for this renegotiation of identity and the fostering of the skills needed to efficiently and effectively recreate media", she reflects. Murthy reiterates this when he says that "nurturing the industry-academic link has become the crux of how to reform journalism education."

While much has been said about the status of media and journalism education in the country, there seems to be rarely any deliberation on the status of C4D education. Given the growing relevance of the role of media and communication in the development sector, even as many point out to the failure of media educators to connect media education to 'national development', a comprehensive study to understand the status of C4D education in India was deemed necessary. This paper is an attempt to help fill this gap in existing literature.

METHODOLOGY
This paper is a descriptive qualitative exploration into the status of C4D education in Indian Universities based on primary and secondary data collected through personal observations and interviews. Respondents for the study comprise communication educators in Indian universities, communication students and alumni who have undergone training in C4D as part of curriculum, and C4D professionals engaged in government and non-government sector. Questionnaires with both close and open-ended questions were distributed among the different categories of respondents with an attempt to know multiple viewpoints on the issue. Websites of different universities were consulted to gain an understanding into the curricular aspects of communication education offered there.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
(a) Relevance of C4D as a component in communication curriculum
Communication for Development is offered in many universities of the country today as part of communication curriculum. In most cases it is offered as a course within the master's or bachelor's degree programme and variously termed as C4D, development communication, communication for social change, development and international communication etc. There are only two universities in the county which run a full Master's

programme in C4D. One is offered by the Centre for Development Communication, Gujarat University. It was started in 1982 as a one and half year Post Graduate Diploma course, which was later converted into two years full time master's in development communication course in the year 1988.

The other one is offered by the AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia dating to Autumn, 2013. This too was started as a diploma programme in 2002. Table 1 enlists some of the universities offering C4D as a component in communication curriculum.

TABLE 01: C4D COURSES OFFERED BY DIFFERENT UNIVERSITIES IN INDIA	
Type of course	**University**
M.A in Development Communication	AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.
	Centre for Development Communication, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad.
Course within Master's/ Bachelor's programme	Department of Media Sciences, Anna University, Chennai.
	Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Berhampur University, Odisa.
	Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh.
	IMCMT, Kurukshetra University, Haryana.
	Department of Mass Communication & Journalism, Tezpur University, Tezpur.
	Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Sikkim University, Gangtok.
	Department of Mass Communication & Journalism, English and Foreign Languages University, Shillong.
	Department of Communication and Journalism, Gauhati University.
	Department of Mass Communication, Assam University, Silchar.
	Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Tripura University, Tripura.
	Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Dibrugarh University, Assam.
	Department of Mass Communication, Manipur University, Imphal.
	SIMC, Symbiosis International University, Pune.
	Department of Mass Communication, Pondicherry University, Puducherry.
	Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.

Most of the students who had C4D as part of their master's or bachelor's in communication curriculum acknowledge that, irrespective of whether they are employed in the development sector or not, exposure to C4D has definitely enabled them to become media professionals who are more responsive to the needs of the society. As Sunayan Bhattacharjee, an alumni of Symbiosis Institute of Media and communication, Pune and currently working as a research fellow for an ICSSR project on media and corruption, puts it, -

"In an era marked by whirlwind communicational needs and subsequent instant gratification, it has become a sine-qua-non to bridge all possible communication gaps amongst various sections of the society for the sustenance of democracy. As consumerism and widening stratification between the haves and have-nots are challenging the overrated claims of justice and equality, both economic and political, the course partly provided me with a window to comprehend communication as a basic human need, something that constitutes a quintessential craving. It sensitized me against the thumping of unilateral information on people in the name of providing news without thinking about what impact it might have on the targeted section. Additionally, it made me aware about the very visible division between north and south in the existing international information order".

Sushmita Dutta, a Tezpur University MCJ alumni presently employed with the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) in the capacity of Project Officer (Awareness Generation) admits that the course helped her to gain the "professional competencies" required for the job apart from an understanding of the dynamics of the process of development, the gaps in implementation that lead to the failure of development schemes and the inevitability of communication in supporting development.

Speaking in the context of the work that her organization is engaged in, she adds that "C4D training is important for designing and executing the media plan for the year. C4D training is important for various target audience centric initiatives or programmes like apartment society sensitization programme, school shake out programme etc. undertaken by our organization"

Upasana Das, the PRO of Tezpur University and herself a communication post-graduate, agrees that the course helped her to appreciate the challenges of reaching out to the community and the importance of proper media planning as every target audience must be reached out through appropriate media. She highlights that her exposure to street play as an alternative media, gained as part of C4D curriculum has imprinted a strong sense of connection with the audience.

Others like Bidisha Singha and Swikrita Dowerah who are associated with the print media agree that a foundation in C4D has certainly given them an edge as journalists. "As a media person, it helped in understanding the various development policies undertaken by the government, its positive and negative aspects. I think a foundation in C4D helps in understanding some of the development indexes, development terms and policies and it becomes an added tool for a journalist in presenting her reports or say, digging up news", says Swikrita.

There seems to be a consensus among C4D professionals regarding the need for formal C4D training in the country. As Stephen Ekka of 'Pajhra' rightly points out "There is a need to advocate for issues which need appropriate publicity. There is need to make the changes taking place in the community be seen by concerned government agencies, departments, donors etc. There is also the need to make the community see the positive changes through appropriate media. And there is need to document in appropriate manner the positive changes and techniques used for other change agents".

Similar concerns are echoed by Sheetal Sharma of North East Network. "C4D training is very much pertinent in Indian context given the situation that there are plethora of myths and prejudices concerning the social fabric of the country. Although gross human rights violations are occurring, but there is glass ceiling to this issue because challenging the same involves upsetting the patriarchal structures of the society. So, I feel C4D training is very much required so that articulation of these issues can be done in a strategic manner".

(b) Present status of C4D training in India

There are a number of institutes across India today which offer training in C4D. Apart from universities and other training institutions in the government sector, there are many such institutes in the non-government sector imparting training in C4D. Table 2 depicts a spread of such institutes across geographic regions in the country. It is seen that the number of institutes in the non-government sector offering C4D training is almost three times as that of the government sector.

TABLE 02: SPREAD OF C4D TRAINING INSTITUTES ACROSS GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS IN INDIA			
Geography	Government Institutes	Non-Government Institutes	Total
North	12	46	58
South	08	25	33
East	10	20	30
West	08	18	26
Total	38	109	147

Source: UNICEF, New Delhi

The nature of courses/ programmes offered by these institutes range from Communications for Development (C4D) courses/ programmes which includes both pure C4D courses as well as broader courses of which C4D is a component/module, Communications and Development (C and D) courses, purely communications (C) courses, purely development (D) courses, and business management courses.

The C4D course is taught in varied structures in Indian universities. In the absence of any model curriculum or regulation of the same, the C4D courses are drafted by the university departments with advice from subject experts mostly based on faculty competency and availability of teaching-learning resources.

Table 3 indicates some of the common modules taught as part of C4D course under a Master's or Bachelor's programme in communication.

TABLE 03: SAMPLE STRUCTURE WHEN C4D IS INTRODUCED AS A COURSE WITHIN A MASTER'S PROGRAMME
Theoretical paradigms of development: World views on development, Centre-periphery debate and third world perspectives Approaches to development communication: Participatory approach, Information, education and communication (IEC) and Social marketing, Behaviour Change Communication (BCC), Extension approach, Development Support Communication (DSC), Role of different actors and agencies engaged in development: Panchayats, UN agencies, NGOs, government Developing messages for development communication in multiple media: Print, radio, television, folk media, community media.

It is observed that in most departments the courses are heavily oriented towards theoretical inputs with very little weightage on practical components. Mostly practical components are limited to development journalism or training on developing media messages for development communication. However, this too is subject to availability of infrastructural resources for imparting such training. In departments where access to audio-visual equipment is scarce, the message designing exercises remain limited to print media. However, it is also encouraging to see that some departments are trying to address issues like gender, ICT, environment etc. within the ambit of C4D course. Anna University for instance offers a course on ICT for development as part of its 5-year integrated M.Sc. in Electronic Media programme.

As mentioned earlier, only two universities offer a full Master's programme in C4D – Gujarat University and Jamia Milia Islamia. Of these, only Jamia Milia Islamia is seen to have drawn a distinct, comprehensive structure as indicated in Table 4.

TABLE 04: SAMPLE STRUCTURE FOR MASTER'S PROGRAMME IN C4D			
Semester I	**Semester II**	**Semester III**	**Semester IV**
Communication concept and process Dynamics of development Economics of development Development journalism.	Development communication Development issues and concerns Development planning Traditional media.	Programme design and management Social development Research methodology Community radio.	Advocacy and social marketing Training and development Video production Dissertation Internship.

Unlike the M.A. programme in Jamia Milia Islamia which is based on semester system, Gujarat University has a two year programme where the curriculum covers minor and major lectures in 4 modules – Indian society and development, communication perspectives, communication research and media skills. This type of a structure restricts the scope for innovation and incorporation of emerging areas as included in the Jamia Milia Islamia curriculum.

However, notwithstanding of the structure or level of the courses on offer, professionals in international agencies like UNICEF recognize C4D as an evolving area that has to be included in the curriculum of some

institutes of repute in India. Suchorita Bardhan, Communication officer, UNICEF, Assam, stresses on the importance of C4D being addressed as a separate course in Mass Communication or Development Studies programmes. "Gradually we will also be expecting universities to have a separate and full-fledged course in C4D based on the importance and use of this area in communication for knowledge building", she says.

However, it is seen that many NGOs do not have much understanding of the status of C4D training in the country. This is particularly true for smaller local level NGOs as for them employing personnel with formal training in C4D is not a priority. It is only national NGOs, international agencies and government agencies engaged in development that perceive the need for employing trained C4D professionals. However, most of them too lack awareness and understanding regarding the status and scope of C4D training.

"I do not know if there is any such training. Professionals are prepared for media and not for communication in development sector. If there is any it is poor", says Stephen Ekka, Director of Pajhra, a local NGO working with the Adivasi community. Some of the other development sector professionals are aware about the Master's degree in Development Communication programme offered by Gujarat University, Delhi University and Tezpur University, but are unable to comment much on the merit or adequacy of the courses.

Most of them, however, feel that there is a need to strengthen C4D education so that better equipped employable manpower can be produced. As Sultan Ahmed of Drishti puts it, "there are institutions which teach mass media and journalism but very few institutions which run courses that look at communication design keeping in mind the beneficiary needs and ensuring their participation".

(c) Student's enthusiasm and motivation towards C4D training

Departments offering C4D courses as part of their communication curriculum have been receiving a mixed bag of responses from students. At the Department of Media Sciences, Anna University, for instance, where Dr. S. Arulchelvan teaches, it is seen that although initially students are not attracted towards the course, interest usually grows as the course progresses. Interestingly, for the Mass Communication and Journalism department in EFLU, Shillong, where C4D is offered both at PG and UG level, the response has been rather encouraging. "The department has conducted a workshop a participatory media workshop with UNICEF involving interaction and documentation with rural children in the outskirts of Shillong. The response from students was good", says AbirSuchiang, Assistant Professor in the MCJ department at EFLU.

Similar notes echo form Assam University too. "Generally the response has been enthusiastic particularly in those years when the students carried out rural awareness programmes in the adjoining areas of the campus, staged puppet shows in the community centres of the nearby villages and carried out community meets with village elders, women and children" says Syed M. Alfarid Hussain who teaches in the department of Mass Communication, Assam University.

Again, at the AJK Mass Communication Research Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia, the response has been overwhelming. "Students have been enthusiastic and have contributed towards the enrichment of the course and course module" says Pragati Bhalla, Assistant Professor and coordinator of the M.A. Development Communication programme there.

However, it is observed that when offered as a course within a master's programme in communication, there is a general lack of interest among students towards C4D. As Manoj Das, communication faculty at Sikkim University points out, "Though it depends a lot on the teacher who anchors the course, in relation to other skill and theory based courses, development communication is not so attractive. This is particularly true for those who had done their UG in Mass Communication, wherein also the paper is taught".

Prof. S.K. Behera also echoes this feeling when he says, "Most of the students want to join television, may be for glamour". Dr. Dev Vrat Singh assumes it is so because at Kurukshetra University where he teaches, "C4D is not a core subject, students, therefore, don't take much interest". He, however, feels that a lot depends upon the effort of the teacher concerned and how the subject is delivered. He suggests that there has to be an attempt to move beyond mere theory.

Syed M. Alfarid Hussain also agrees that the teacher has a critical role to play in the way a student responds to a particular course. "The level of involvement of the teacher in enthusing the students, the degree of innovation put into the curriculum and frequent participation in the affairs of the neighbouring underserved community contributes to the course being positively received by the students", he says.

Vasuki Belavadi, Associate Professor, University of Hyderabad offers some interesting suggestions for livening up the otherwise drab theoretical components. He feels that the best way to study different models is through case studies. He emphasizes on field exposure by way of involving students in live research projects in association with local NGOs.

(d) Employability and industry response

It is generally felt that the scope of development communication to offer employment opportunities is comparatively limited. Manoj Das of Sikkim University attributes this to the fact that "communication component has not yet emerged as a specialized or distinct component in development sector, though ironically, communication has been traditionally recognized as a critical area in the third sector initiatives. This is also because wherever communication component is the thrust in development initiatives, the preference is normally given to social anthropologists and sociologists". He points out that while the department has run the C4D course for three successive years, no student has professionally entered the field of development communication.

Although the development sector may not offer employment opportunities to the extent that the mainstream media does, one cannot completely put it aside as well. Prof. S.K. Behera attests to this. "Students have been getting placements, particularly in the NGO sector as well as the government because of their specialized skills in communication for development. NGOs like PRADAN, GRAMVIKAS, etc. have organized campus placements for our students", he says.

Pragati Bhalla, of Jamia Millia Islamia, makes a similar point. "The development communication course was started in 2002 as a diploma course. Since then the course has gained substantial demand in the development sector. Considering the demand of the course by the development professionals, it is being converted into a master's degree programme from 2013 onwards. Our students are placed in development organizations, research companies, NGOs, media houses and many have also received development fellowships".

"I feel the course has been successful towards enhancing the employability of our students particularly in the government social sectors like health, education, social welfare as well as in the third sector. A number of students are currently working as communication experts in the centrally sponsored National Rural Health Mission project in the state of Assam. We can attribute this success of the students to the department's commitment to instill in them a strong understanding of the fundamentals of communication for development, the larger role that communication can play in developing societies like ours", says Syed M. Alfarid Hussain of Assam University.

Dr. Arulchelvan observes that C4D can provide new avenues for employment, particularly in "interdisciplinary areas apart from the core communication sector". He draws attention to the fact that in case of his university, the response of international employers has been higher than the local employers. "The local employers treat C4D trained students at par with general communication students. According to them, they can hire and mould the students based on their requirement. Therefore, for them, specialization in C4D is not an essential criterion".

"C4D is used extensively by various national and international NGOs throughout the country and also in Assam. Many projects are designed and implemented keeping the development communication techniques in mind especially those which are participatory in nature. Even in government sector C4D specialist helps in planning various activities and programmes. Hence, with the knowledge in C4D, a person can work in national and international NGOs and also in government sector. Besides one can also be a consultant, researcher, development worker, social activist etc. Not only as communication specialist, but for any development worker or officer working under projects, missions or departments that deal with social development, knowledge on C4D is important", emphasizes Sushmita Dutta of ASDMA.

(e) Meeting the industry expectations in C4D curriculum

Each organization has its own set of required expertise based on their respective areas of operation. The strategies adopted by each organization, depends on the target section of the society and the context within which the C4D initiative is being undertaken. Hence, it is expected that the C4D professional is well equipped to adapt to the diversified needs of the communication experience.

Sheetal Sharma of North East Network draws attention to the fact that as a women's rights organization they use different strategies at different levels to articulate human rights of women. She adds, "specialized communication for development activists is mostly required while we are doing advocacy at international level because we are facing an audience which does not have knowledge about our local context and we have to articulate in such a way that it is well understood by all."

Christina Mochahari, Baptist Christian Hospital says, "the organisation where I have been working is based on a hospital set up, and each of our projects is children focused. The whole process of implementation of planning and executing the project needs C4D understanding or else the set goals will not imply to the target area and population".

According to SuchoritaBardhan, Communication officer, UNICEF, Assam, "C4D has evolved as an important component for effective implementation and for achieving programmes results in the National Flagship programmes in India. It has been playing a pivotal role in contributing to affect and impact on improving results and thereby the human development indices."

Sultan Ahmad, programme co-ordinator at Drishti, an NGO engaged in promoting rights through media and arts, makes a very pertinent point as he says, "there are more than 50,000 NGOs in India which generally lack expertise in communication. They lack the skills needed for developing communication materials, media products or document and conducting research. If such organizations are able to recruit fresh pass outs who are trained in C4D program, the organization would have the internal human resource who work on a long term and it would be more sustainable for the organization".

Jayita Naha of Drishti and GitikaSarmah, District Programme co-ordinator, Assam MahilaSamata Society, Sonitpur, agrees with Sushmita that the art of communicating effectively is very important for achieving desired goals relevant to development. She feels that formal training in C4D becomes pertinent when one is expected to handle roles in "strategic communication planning for various units, campaign designing, communication material development, and media product design. Carrying out communication research keeping in minds the beneficiary needs and demand for appropriate planning and execution of programmes also requires adequate training. Another need is training of development professionals to use participatory communication which would have better projects impact".

HimaBaishya, Consultant, Advocacy and Communication Programme, UNICEF, Assam who was exposed to C4D as part of her Masters in Mass Communication course at Guwahati University acknowledges that the course enabled her to gain insight into the concept of C4D and taught how communication tools could be used for development purpose and towards building community linkages. It included lectures on the use of alternative tools of communication for social change and how community people could themselves become the agents for such change".

However, there seems to be a gap between the expectations of the industry and the academia's understanding of the skills or competencies that are looked-for in a C4D professional.

TABLE 05: SKILLS EXPECTED OF C4D PROFESSIONALS	
What educators think	**What employers expect**
• Communication Skills: listening, questioning, observing, participatory message making, designing media, and production. • Training Skills: constructing learning experiences, generating new ideas, enabling critical reflection. • Counseling Skills: Helping others pose and solve problems and make meaningful choices. • Interpersonal Skills: trust-building, team-building, consensus-building, sharing.	• Communication planning. • Media handling. • Developing communication material. • Media production skills. • Proposal writing/ preparing multimedia presentations. • Report writing/ process documentation. • Networking and PR skills. • Advocacy and social mobilization. • Conducting events, programmes (awareness and sensitization) • Execution of projects on behaviour change communication. • Knowledge of alternate media like street plays, puppetry or other unique communication tools.

The role of the academia assumes great significance in terms of offering C4D training relevant to industry requirements. C4D professionals express that the academia could make C4D training more industry relevant by offering courses that help in producing strong development communication specialists who can design, device and implement activities which brings real and concrete change in society and state. "C4D courses should cover the approach and practices of strategic communication, behaviour change communication, communication research and media production skills", says Drishti's Sultan Ahmed in this context. "Expectations from the academia involve understanding the needs of different segments of society and preparing the training module based on local socio-economic context", says Sheetal Sharma from NEN.

Communication graduates who have undertaken C4D as part of their master's curriculum feel that there is room for much improvement. The alumni were almost unanimous in articulating that any course in C4D needs to be more practical oriented rather than being overly concentrated on theory.

"More industry specific training is needed, rather than providing a student with only a base on development histories and theories. I think, the theoretical base that is provided with this course should be strengthened with practical workshops and training", says Swikrita Dowerah. Sushmita Dutta agrees with Swikrita and says, "this course should include more practical lessons so that the students can apply the models e.g. Behaviour Change Communication in the field.

International agencies like UNICEF, needs professionals with this kind of expertise. Only theoretical exposure will not help and make this otherwise interesting subject a drab one". "Students need to be motivated to do at least one internship in the social media sector", adds Upasana Das.

According to Bidisha Singha the courses are mainly aimed at giving the basic knowledge about development communication and its significance. "We were also told about the various communication tools but I remember us focussing mainly on using traditional media tools for development communication. And when we say industry I believe we mean news media – print, TV, radio and PR. So for better use of C4D course in the industry I think students should also be made aware of how to use other tools of communication like TV, print or radio for disseminating development messages. They should know how to make a radio message, a TV advertisement or jingle or documentary or how to write development messages for newspapers or magazines. Now-a-days comics or artworks are used to spread development messages and even the general public is encouraged to do this. They need not be exceptional artists to do this. Maybe workshops by cartoonists would help students realize how C4D can be fun and useful at the same time. .

Sushmita further points out that "documentation of the work/project done should also be taught in the C4D Course. This course should have some sort of integration with PR subjects as well because most of the time communication experts in development sector are asked to make media plan and also liaison with various agencies".

Vasuki Belavadi of Hyderabad University offers practical solutions for making C4D training more relevant. "Train students in tools for implementing and handling C4D activities like report writing/ AV documentation, developing case studies including best practices using print & electronic media, using social media to spread the word. They should also learn to develop & write project proposals with budgeting etc", he says.

"Focus on existing journalistic and information practices across India and devise courses based on an effort to eliminate class divisions in selection of news. Select specific target groups and devise communication studies for each group based on the uniqueness of the group", adds Sunayan.

He also feels that a section on varying demographics should be a part of the curriculum. He also points out that apart from imparting skills, the course should "essentially enable communication students to appreciate his/her responsibility for the greater good of the society and hence an ethics section would go a long way in improving the course".

Table 6 articulates UNICEF's understanding of an ideal C4D curriculum against the backdrop of its expectations of competencies in C4D professionals.

As an articulation of all these differences between what is being offered as part of the curriculum and expectations of the industry, some academic institutions under the aegis of UNICEF joined hands to develop a model curriculum for C4D education in India. In doing this, the emphasis was clearly in chalking out a mechanism by which the skill expectations of the industry can be accommodated within the diverse structures of academic programmes being offered by different institutions.

In India, communication education is itself marked by widely distinctive structures, with universities providing both science and arts degrees in communication and journalism at both graduation and master's level and that too with valuable durations ranging between 1-3 years. Under such circumstances, it is only natural that C4D training within the ambit of communication discipline will also be subject to such stratifications.

TABLE 06	
Draft of UNICEF Model Curriculum	**Competencies expected of C4D professionals**
• Early and contemporary theories and models, human rights-based approaches to development. • Current developmental priorities and policies; gender, environment, health, water and sanitation. • Media and C4D, development journalism, community media. • C4D and research, research approaches and methods, analysis and reporting of data. • Designing communication strategy; models, processes and levels of intervention, communication approaches. • Designing communication messages; framework and formats, message testing, material production. • Monitoring and evaluation, data gathering, analysis and reporting. • Programme management, proposal writing, resource mobilization.	• Technical knowledge including background in communication theories, models and concepts. • Core competencies embracing ability for analysis and planning of communication design. • Aptitude in management, networking, and advocacy include additional competencies. • Empathy, inclination towards collaboration and humility.

The model curriculum outlined in table 6 attempts to provide a basic framework which can be adopted and adapted by interested institutions according to their own convenience and availability of resources.

A shift is also being proposed towards a competency-based approach wherein the candidates will be able to apply the skills acquired to the optimum level under specific conditions. A competency-based approach, unlike the educational approach will promote student-centric learning, encourage task oriented demonstrative teaching through promotion of critical thinking. As Prof. Vinod Pavarala, University of Hyderabad highlights, "Apart from having training, counseling and interpersonal skills, an effective C4D person must also be socially committed, culturally sensitive and empathetic to promote democratic communication among participating communities."

CONCLUSION

In the preceding section an attempt has been made to highlight the various issues related to the scope and status of C4D education being imparted in Indian universities. From the above discussions it is seen that there certainly is a growing demand for proficient and well-trained C4D specialists in professionally functioning organizations in both the government as well as NGO sector, particularly those operating at the national or international level. It is in recognition of this fact that academic and non-academic institutions offering training in C4D is also gradually increasing. However, there appears to be a gap in the expectations of the industry and the C4D curriculum on offer in various institutes. It is also evident that there had been a lack of coherent efforts on part of the academia to apprehend the requirements of the industry and accordingly align their curriculum towards addressing those needs.

Thus, the status of C4D education in India is a reflection of the overall status of communication education that is marked by lack of regulation and oversight. C4D training has not yet received adequate focus and attention from educators given the demand for audio-video media related skills among students. It is mostly offered as a stand-alone course as part of the Communication curriculum and taught in lecture mode without a practical component.

Evaluation of the course content for C4D being offered by various universities indicates that very few of them have incorporated discourses in emerging areas of gender, environment, poverty, ICT and the like in their curriculum and dwells primarily on the premises of dominant paradigm. This handicaps the students from gaining an insight into the recent debates and emerging theoretical paradigms of C4D. Also a purely theoretical course, with no opportunity to translate learnings into practice and evaluate the effectiveness of field strategies through demonstrated actions, falls short of cultivating enthusiasm and empathy among the learners.

However, creation of a model curriculum may not be the solution to all problems as it needs to fit into the human and infrastructural resources available with the universities. A model curriculum may no doubt serve as a benchmark or standard that all institutes will aspire to achieve but it may not be possible to convert all C4D courses into full-fledged programmes immediately. However, without doing so, it will not be possible to match the academic rigor expected in the model when cramped into a single course.

Also curricular revision and availability of adequate teaching-learning facilities is only one aspect of the issue. Capacity building of C4D educators and making available to them the opportunity to update their subject knowledge is another aspect that requires attention. In India, the University Grants Commission organizes periodic refresher courses in different subject areas for all teaching faculty in colleges and universities governed by it. Given the significance of this emerging subject it may be pertinent to organize refresher courses in communication with special focus on C4D training. It is also important that those in the development sector actively engage with the academia, if not at a national level, then at least in their local area of operations, to chalk out a road map for effective collaboration and support. Such measures will not only go a long way to benefit the students in securing placements, but also enable the recruiters to gain sensitized and capable human resource.

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Unsung Heroes of Bangladeshi TV Show Ittyadi: Strategic Communication for Sustainable Development

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ABSTRACT

Television is a great source of entertainment. In Bangladesh Television (BTV) Ittyadi (English: Et Cetera) is a popular show created and presented by Hanif Sanket. It's one of the longest-running shows on BTV, an educational show with abint of satire screened for the last 30 years. Hanif Sanket, the witty, multi-talented well-known man hosts this program.bringing in much diversity in this program and presenting various contradictions through humour and social awareness. In the year 2010, for spreading social awareness, Ekushey Padak, Bangladesh's highest civilian honour was also accorded to the show for environmental issues. This TV show is a great example of Sustainable Development in Bangladesh, where the unsung heroes of society are presented to the audience first. Through the informative report of this event, the people of Bangladesh are made aware of ten people working for sustainable development of society silently. This research paper is developed in relation to development communication. Based on the case studies and content analysis, we can understand the overall campaign of sustainable development strategy through this event. The research paper will also be developed in tune with popular culture and sustainable development.

Keywords: Bangladesh Television (BTV), sustainable development, campaign, popular culture

INTRODUCTION

Ittyadi is a delightful event broadcast on Bangladesh Television (BTV) on sustainable developmentwhere the real heroes of society's development are being highlighted. In this article, we have analyzed the case studies of 7 individuals and two organizations, which have been directed to develop the sustainability of the society, presented at Ittyadi. All of them are working silently in Bangladesh forsustainable development of society. Extensive efforts are being made in the United Nations member countries to implement sustainable development goals. The period has been prescribed for 2016-2030. Sustainable development targets are for future international development. The goal of sustainable development is the attainment of three important global goals. They are economic, social and environmental. The SDG emphasis on poverty alleviation, hunger-free world, equitable quality education and health, gender equality, sustainable industrialization, climate change, and other related targets must be fixed and met for sustainable development by 2030. Ittyadi event has its own way of achieving these goals.

TV SHOWS ITTYADI

"An example of product placement in a television program in Bangladesh is "Ittyadi" a more than 25 years old TV Show, originated and cast by maverick television host Hanif Sanket. The show pioneers in investigative and thought-provoking documentaries on prolific personalities from different strata of society. Since the beginning, the program used product placement in their fun games, documentaries even in music".
(Barua, Adita & et all,2017)

Ittyadi is a popular television magazine show in Bangladesh. Hanif Sonketh, the proponent of this comedy bizarre event, was broadcast in Bangladesh television a month later. This event, started in the 1991s and has been ranked as one of the popular programs of Bangladesh. He did not just keep this breakthrough program entertained, but it came out through various social awareness and important information. The ceremony, arranged in different phases, is the different dissonance of society and the way to get rid of it. Though Ittyadi is initially portrayed on stage, this team is now strolling in different parts of Bangladesh. Ittyadi stage has moved from Chittagong to the Sundarbans. Noakhali to NilphamariIttyadi has become the public entertainment centre. On the occasion of the Eid, in the light of the special Ittyadi, there are various attractions. In Bangladesh, it can be appreciated about the promotion and promotion of these private package programs.

"Hanif Sanket is the pioneer of building private events. The Kaku created by him is the favourite show of the people of all classes. He highlighted the rare successes of society. Various inconsistencies got a lot of latent talent. His Ittyadi has become Eid tradition."
(Bangladesh Pratidin; 2018)

RESEARCH hypotheses:
Ittyadi, plays a crucial role
in achieving sustainable development goals in Bangladesh.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

"Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions. The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under the study exists" (Swanson, Richard A; 2013). This article is mainly based on case studies and content analysis. Secondary materials, like articles, reports of newspaper, and books of the renowned academicians have been consulted to have a clear idea on the issues.

HANIF SANKET AND ITTYADI

Ittyadi is the most popular magazine show on Bangladesh Television. For the last 27 years, Hanif Sanketh, the presenter of Ittyadi brought various variations in the program, highlighting many inconsistencies through humour.

In an article published in the newspaper, he said, ". I have always tried to highlight the people from the remote areas of the country and bring them to Ittyadi. Those who work for the public welfare, who do not do any evaluation or greed for anything, they do not have any channels, they do not have any interest in the TV screen, tor social media but they are always busy with work."
(Pavel, Younose Hafiz; 2017)

ITTYADI, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & BANGLADESH
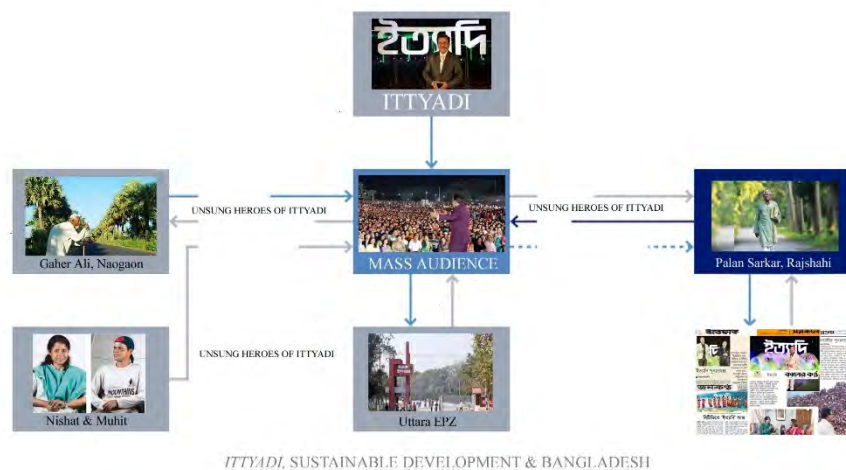
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT & BANGLADESH

"Sustainable development is a Global will to improve everyone's quality of life, including that of future generations, by reconciling economic growth, social development and environmental protection".
(Kumar, Vikas & Gupta, Pawan; 2014)

Regardless of how big development plans are, if you are not honest, using bamboo instead of the rod in building construction will certainly not be durable. Besides, transparency and accountability plays an important role in sustainable development. UNSUNG HEROES OF ITTYADI:

'Ittyadi' always brings out success stories of the young and old, educated and illiterate, rich and poor across the country? Every two months. We analyse Ittyadi's multiple episodes, the role of nine individuals and organizations. Based on the case studies it is analyzed:

1. Badsha Mullah, Pabna

Badsha Mullah is 35 years old. living in Jagannathpur village of Bera Upazila of Pabna. He is a lumbering worker by profession. He is popularly known as 'Bike Badsha' to all the people. Badsha encouraged everyone to cultivate vegetables wherever there is empty land in the adjacent villages of his or free space in different people's home courtyards. In one episode in Ittyadi, it is seen that Badsha Mullah distributed seeds in his own handsand others. He campaigns for organic farming and delivers the slogan, 'do not leave your garden - plant more trees'. He would distribute different kinds of vegetable's seeds in the house. These seeds include pumpkins, cucumbers, beans and various types of vegetables. He would not only distributethe seeds, but also teach how to plant that seed, how to take care, and teach what fertilizers to use. Occasionally, he would go to different homes tomonitor the vegetable gardens.

2. Joydev Dutta, Borguna

On December 31, 2016, 'Ittyadi' aired another exceptional man. While people were busy saving their own lives during Cyclone Sidr. Joydev Dutta played a key role in saving his life and saving the lives of more than 5000 people during various Sidr. Joydev Dutta inspired millions of people through his selfless deeds.. (Sanketh, Hanif; 2017)

3. Gaher Ali, Naogaon

Naogaon's 90-year-old Ghaer Ali, who with a rice-pulse barked a pomegranate tree, planted more than 18 thousand palm trees on both sides of the government road. Gaher Ali in Naogaon district was a beggar. As a beggar with rices-pulses, he used to bring palm's seeds and sow it on the streets. In this way, he has planted more than 18 thousand palm trees on both sides of the Rajshahi-Naoga highway. These trees protect likethe roads and play an important role in enriching the economic sector and preserving the environment. this plantation drive can be part of sustainable development. That's his satisfaction. As a special contributor to the conservation of the environment, Gaher Ali earned National Environmental Medal at the age of 80 in 2009.

4. Palan Sarkar, Rajshahi

Tarek Palan Sarkar, in 2006, was presented as an enlightened man in an episode of Ittyadi. The 86 year old Palan Sarkar resides in Bausa village under BaghaUpazila of Rajshahiand distributes books to the people. In 2011 he got the EkusheyPadak. He constructed a library through personal initiative. yYoung people of the village go to the library for gaining knowledge. And plays a crucial role in achieving sustainable development.

5. Chest of the Himalayas, Muhit& Nishat

Two consecutive times MA Muhit, and the country's first female Everest winner Nishat Majumder. was the highest peak Mount Everest of the world, And Ittyadi played the role behind their victory because Ittyadi helped them to get sponsors. That's why After reaching Mount Everest, there were Ittyadi logos in their hands. Many reports of Ittyadi made on them have inspired many later.

6. Mamun Biswas, Sirajganj

Facebook is one of the most popular social networks in the present time. Mamun Bisshas, a young man of Sirajganj's Shahjadpur, has been helping people raise funds for medical help for the helpless and poor patients through Facebook. This has inspired others to do so too.

7. Almas Mia, Chittagong

Almas Mia lives in Chattogrum. His age is not a barrier to mental energy, workshops and strong commitmentrather he has made a two-storied building in 10 years without any assistance

8. Uttara Export Processing Zone(EPZ), Nilphamari

The work of the Nilphamari's Mongapirith people in Uttara EPZ is made world'famous s in. Which is

being exported all over the world. These bizarre products like removing the poorness of the area, and are praised in the developed world. And the Nilphamari has turned into a luminous city. Ittyadi showed them and their activity along with inspired other areas people.

9. Green Savers, Dhaka

Since 2012, it has taken initiatives to plant Kalabagan, Khajurbagan, Kathalbagan, Segunbagicha, Nimtali, Jamali, etc in Capital city of Bangladesh, Dhaka etc. 300 students of the University, who are all children of farmers, have created a 'Green Savers' Volunteer Organization. introducing urban agriculture.   The aim of these youths is to fill greenery in the house and its rooftop. They have planted in around 3,000 roofs of Dhaka city till now. , Recently Dhaka North City Corporation added 'Green Savers' in the process of building a green Dhaka. The founder president of the 'Green Savers' Ahsan Roni said in an interview, "One of our characteristics is that we are all children of peasants. In our hometown, we know to respect the profession of our fathers. And since this motivation, we have learned modern agriculture and are trying to spread it everywhere. . (Kaler Kanto, 2017)

ITTYADI & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

"Sustainability of development --emerging concept since Brundtland Commission of UN in 1987 and Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992-- considers that development has to meet the needs of the present and preserve the rights and abilities of future generations to meet their own needs".
(Elliot, J; 2006)

Ittyadi has shown hundreds of such reports prevalent in the society for the last 30 years. Many qualified people scattered in the remote areas of the country, which do not get publicity, do not want to preach, nor do they fall behind the rewards likeGaher Ali, the program highlights their contributions and inspires others.. Since today's context is about achieving the goals of sustainable development, Ittyadi is also called a sustainable event. Over the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), we too have progressed to the United Nations declared sustainable development targets. That is, no one is at the forefront of development, like that of Ittyadi. (Bangladesh Pratidin; 2018, Date???)

CONCLUSION:

In the era of publicity, none of these nine people and organizations worked for publicity. "Media has always been a prime source of reform and integration of the society and there has been plenty of examples from the history". (Kumar, Vikas & Gupta, Pawan; 2014) They all worked silently and secluded. One of the most important issues related to the implementation of SDG is to get the resources to implement it. Changing global conditions for SDGs are one of the challenges. To deal with challenges for the implementation of SDGs, we need strong political pledges. The country and the world in order to achieve the goals of SDGs should implement the necessary political capital to be made in the next two decades. After the Millennium Development Goals, the world is moving forward towards sustainable development targets. Bangladesh has received praise from the United Nations for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the world. Through the successful implementation of the seventh fifth-year of the government, Bangladesh will achieve sustainable development targetsand Ittyadi playsa significant role in achieving these goals.

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Policy and Participation:
Models of Community Radio in India and Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT

By definition, a Community Radio is an ICT Tool, which is by the community, for the community, in the community and works on issues of the community (UNESCO). While in India, The Community Radio Policy facilitates setting up of Community Radio Stations, in Sri Lanka, a policy development is yet to happen. India currently has more than 120 Community Radio Stations running across different states with two very different models gaining acceptance:
- The Educational Institutional Model.
- The Non-Governmental Organization Model.

In Sri Lanka however, due to lack of a policy, what exists is more of a government (Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation) managed Community Radio. In both the situations, a Community Driven Radio, planned, managed and owned by the community itself, is yet to be introduced in the real sense. This paper presents case studies of two Community Radio Stations from the two countries, bringing out the challenges and prospects of the kind of models that have come up. From Sri Lanka, the 'Uva' Community Radio is one of the very few Community Radio Stations that is up and functional as a model managed by the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation in collaboration with the Provincial Council. In India, the NGO based PARD 'Vanoli' Community Radio running near Madurai in Tamil Nadu, brings out the story of challenges in getting a license and running a station in the community itself. Through the two mentioned examples, the paper is an attempt to discuss the aspects of 'Policy' and 'Participation of Community' in the two countries, thereby discussing how policy impacts the way models of Community radio emerge in any nation, discussing content, gender, training and sustainability alongside.

INTRODUCTION

"There is nothing as voiceless. There are those deliberately silenced or conveniently unheard"
- *Arundhati Roy*

Community Media tools are mostly conceived as local alternatives to mainstream systems of broadcasting, occupying only fringe positions around the corners of big mass media. However, they play very pertinent roles in the development processes, also in democratization and building citizenship, social struggles and awareness building. As a form of community media, Community Radio today is conceived primarily as a tool for a nation's socio-cultural, political and economic development.

BACKGROUND

For development communication to bridge the gap between information seekers, producers and the environmental factors, it becomes essential to have a reliable mechanism that fits into the social and economic environment in which people live. Gumuico Dagron (2001) prophesied that radio is the most pervasive and an economical electronic medium in the world with the potential to serve as an 'ideal medium for change'. Also, it has been acknowledged that worldwide radio reaches larger audiences than television, print or any other mass media (Epskamp 1985; George 1990; Lettenmaier et al1993; Singhal, 1990).

Out of three different kinds of radio stations, Public Radio owned and operated by the government normally serves the general public in the way that the government thinks is best. The Private Radio, owned and operated by individuals or companies entertains commercial purposes, while Community Radio is the third, with focus on reaching local communities for local context and content. Being the youngest in the field of radio industry, Community Radio (CR) is found to be breaking all the barriers in terms of achieving 'people's say'.

It enables the community members to focus on local development issues and gives an opportunity to development agencies and authorities to get involved in a constructive dialogue on issues at the local level. A regular dialogue and feedback helps to improve the program delivery. It makes the CR more responsive to the community members by giving them an opportunity to engage and being heard. Radio is especially effective because the broadcast is in local dialect, is not loaded with technical jargons and the expression is culturally steeped and hence easily grasped.

The Community radio occupies a special niche in the diverse spectrum of communication through airwaves. These are important considerations given by the Human Development Report (2002) while commenting on "Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World" saying, 'Human Development is much more than growth in national incomes, advancing human development requiring governance that is democratic in both, form and substance for the people and by the people'. Mass media perform an essential role in facilitating 'people's say'. But the existing mass media structures cannot alone achieve what is meant to be achieved by people's say, they may not necessarily represent all segments of a country's population. CRs therefore assume global and local importance. The national, regional or commercial broadcasters cannot substitute their functions.

Broadcasting in Asia has been slower owing to its colonial history of state controlled broadcasting. Sri Lanka, Nepal and Thailand etc. are examples of nations which allowed community radio stations to operate within legal frameworks. But much of what is called community radio is conducted under the aegis of state-run broadcasters or national institutions. (Pavarala&Mailk, 2007:23). The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) provided the initial capital with UNESCO to setup the first community-based radio in Asia at Philippines as a part of the Tambuli Community Radio Project in the 90s (Malik, 2007).

This present paper is a part of a doctoral research done on Community Radio in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka & United States. The paper highlights some major findings of two models studied in India and Sri Lanka. From Sri Lanka, the 'Uva' Community Radio is one of the very few Community Radio Stations that is functional as a model managed by the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation in collaboration with the Provincial Council. In India, the NGO based PARD (People's Association for Rural Development) 'Vanoli' Community Radio close to Madurai in Tamil Nadu, brings out the story of challenges in getting a license and running a station in the community itself.

Through the two mentioned examples, the paper is an attempt to discuss the aspects of 'Policy' and 'Participation of Community' in the two countries, thereby discussing how policy impacts the way models of Community radio emerge in any nation, discussing content, gender, training and sustainability of these set ups.

PARTICIPATION & COMMUNITY RADIO

It may be argued that 'Participation' as a concept may be as old as democracy itself. However, in development, it began emerging in the 1960-70s in the ideas of Paulo Freire (1972), FalsBorda (1969; 1972) and Rahman (1995). Freire argues that "development can only be achieved when humans are 'beings for themselves', when they possess their own decision-making powers, free of oppressive and dehumanizing circumstances; it is the 'struggle to be more fully human'" (Freire, 1972).

Chambers brought participation into mainstream development by emphasizing Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) (1993, 1994, 1997). PRA includes participatory mapping and modeling, (for example asking village communities to map their environment, asking them how they perceive their own situations such as health, education, poverty and well-being, and involving them in producing seasonal calendars to understand their needs better).

Other methods include interviews and focus groups, with the difference being, that rather than outsiders, these are conducted by insiders (Chambers, 1997). For Chambers, participation is where "the positivist, reductionist, mechanistic, standardized-package, top-down models and development blueprints are rejected, and in which multiple, local, and individual realities are recognized, accepted, enhanced and celebrated",(1997).

Community radio, juxtaposed to public service broadcasting, serves to bring small communities together, focuses on common man's day-to-day concerns and helps in realizing local aspirations. In this sense it aims

to contribute to the lives of the local community, through the content that is created by the people and for the people of the community and its operations rely mainly on the community's very own resources. This involvement of the local community members in the whole communication process is necessary for changing the linear one-way mass communication process of the 1970s and 1980s to a more **participatory communication** method, as the mass media's linear approach, profit motive; homogenous content, rare interaction and insignificant feedback were unable to gratify the communication needs of the subaltern masses.

This led to a need for such a participatory community media that would be favorable and beneficial for the grassroots people resulting in their holistic empowerment. This would be done by allowing them to be involved in the management and in the content production process and thereby providing them an opportunity to articulate their viewpoints and opinions that had been buried by mass media and that of opinion leaders of the society.

Decentralized community radio maintains close ties with the local community and provides local people the opportunities to voice their opinions and ideas, share their knowledge, which enables them to initiate to solve their own problems, first by hearing them on radio followed by discussions, deliberation and debates which are empowering experiences. Hence, the power of community radio to mobilize groups and bring change to societies is well recognized.

It has been a common practice to make distinction between participation as a means (instrumental) to improve developmental activities and participation as an end (transformational) ensuring people's influence on their own situation as empowerment (Oakley and Marsden, 1991). More elaborate typologies have been developed, most of them building on instrumental transformational dichotomy. Thus, Pretty et al. (1995) developed a 'scale' of seven stages describing varying levels of involvement of the community. These can be described as:
- Passive Participation
- Participation in information giving
- Participation by consultation
- Participation for material incentives
- Functional participation
- Interactive Participation
- Self Mobilization

There have been people who have further supplemented these with other categories like participation as a "catalyzing change", "optimum participation" and "Participation as manipulation."

COMMUNITY RADIO SCENARIO: INDIA & SRI LANKA

India being a developing country is in dire need of community radio, for responding effectively to the development issues at stake. With the absence of a license to broadcast, various CBO's across India have set up a number of CR initiatives using variety of innovative, sometimes indigenous, methods to communicate with the listeners. These can range from buying airtime on AIR, to using satellite radio, internet radio, cable audio and even "narrowcasting" over loud speakers.

The importance of community media for community empowerment and democratization is well known. But India was a latecomer in recognizing the scope of people empowerment through community media. In India, the campaign to legitimize community radio began in the mid 1990s, soon after the Supreme Court of India ruled in its judgment of February 1995 that "airwaves are public property". Radio for and by the people is a radical democratic idea that is slowly getting its place in India as waves of change through the Government's policy in support of community radio to address multiple social issues by increasing the alarmingly poor levels of awareness. Soon Government of India began to change its policy on radios from seeing them as luxury items to 'magic multipliers' of development and finally on 16 November 2006, the Union Cabinet approved the draft of new Community Radio Policy submitted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Finally in 2006, India developed a distinctive policy for licensing community radio realizing its importance in social and development communication. Since then it has been the driving force behind ushering in changes in the living condition of the people of the country. The Power of Community Radio being an interactive

platform lays in its participatory nature as both its content and technology is people-oriented.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, India, encourages setting up of the Community Radio Stations as it promises to provide an opportunity to the local communities to express themselves, share their views and particularly empowerment of women, for marginalized youth groups to take part in local self governance and overall socio economic and cultural development in the area.

With an opportunity to seek license to operate a CR, various rural and urban institutions (public and private) and NGOs, have set up CRs. CRs have been set up by Universities like the Delhi University, Jamia Milia Islamia, Indian Institute of Mass Communication and several others all over the country. NGOs also have been using Community Radio as a tool for not only increasing their reach but also improving lives of many. NGOs like The Restoring Force's Gurgaon ki Awaaz, Sambhav's Samudayik Radio Dhadkan, Chanderi Ki Awaaz, Rudi Na Radio by the NGO SEWA (Self Employed Women Association) etc. are reaching out to a wide variety of people both in rural and urban areas.

In Sri Lanka however, the situation is very different. There have been various regulations in Sri Lanka which have promoted the growth of Community Media. The state radio, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) was established under the freedom of expression and media freedom act and is governed by Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation Act No. 37 of 1966. The act provides for the issue of licenses by the Minister in charge, for private broadcasting stations (CPA, 2005). With no separate policy for Community Radio existing, the present initiatives are being handled mostly by the Government owned Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation and some university Internet based community radio, which do not exactly fit the classic definition of community radio but are ICT driven models.

Sri Lanka was among the first countries in Asia to launch Community radio when the 'Mahaveli' Community Radio (MCR) begun in 1981, initially as a settlement information service for villagers uprooted from their land by the mammoth Mahaveli river diversion (and damming) scheme. The service was located in the hill capital city of Kandy, from where producers of the government owned Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) were sent to the villages to spend few days among the people to bring back 'voices of the people'. (Seneviratne, 2000)

But in 1986, the focus of the station changed when SLBC decided to setup a station within the community itself. Thus, three-tier broadcasting was created within the SLBC - national, regional and community. The SLBC trained local men and women to produce and broadcast the programmes on a volunteer basis. Subsequently, two other such stations were setup with funding from UNESCO. The community radio was a misnomer for the Mahaveli Community Radio project from the very beginning and after UNESCO funding was exhausted the stations basically began to disintegrate (Seneviratne, 2011).

The much publicized 'Kotmale' Community Radio (KCR) is still functional because of its novelty with internet and radio interface. Under the UNESCO funding, KCR has been broadcasting programmes at night to introduce the internet and information therein to listeners (Seneviratne, 2000). There have been various models that have come up over the years with funding from international agencies. Like the Uva Provincial Council (UPC) in the central hill country of the island that had set Uva Community Radio (UCR), designed to make the community broadcaster more autonomous of the SLBC (Jayaratne, 2006), and the TukTuk ICT model of portable community broadcasting system, where those who are unable and unwilling to travel could also benefit from the system (UNESCO, 2001).

In Sri Lanka under existing law, broadcasting licenses could only be given under the auspices of the national broadcaster, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC), which is a government funded public service broadcaster. Thus, to change the law to obtain a community radio license, would involve empowering the rural communities to lobby with the government and other relevant authorities to introduce a parliamentary act/ legal enforcement, to establish a fully community owned radio broadcasting system, something which happened in India.

However, Jayaratne (2006) argues that none of the efforts to establish community radio in Sri Lanka "stemmed from a demand by and a strong felt need of a mobilized community." Instead, all community radio stations were established by policy makers and planners of various development projects to cater to the objectives and needs of that particular project. Due to complete lack of a Community Radio policy, a Community Driven Radio, planned, managed and owned by the community itself, is yet to be introduced in Sri Lanka. In the past however, whatever models of Community Radio have existed, have been a result of external NGOs/ organizations funded and led projects like the Kothmale Community Radio.

METHODOLOGY:

In order to deepen the understanding and provide holistic analysis, the research strategy of methodological triangulation was used, which employed qualitative methods such as participant observations and in-depth interviews along with focus group discussions and quantitative methods of listener surveys. Since ideally the two traditions should have equal status and should interact, the triangulation for the study aimed at not only validating but at deepening and widening the understanding of the subject under the study.

Questions and discussions revolved around genesis, content, gender-participation angle of community radio stations with the staff and simultaneously with the listeners-participants of the station. After discussions and interviews with 50 community participants/ listeners and the team at the station (staff including head), the findings have been discussed under the following heads:
- Policy, Genesis, and Functioning of the stations
- Community Participation & Gender dimensions

POLICY, GENESIS AND FUNCTIONING OF THE STATIONS

The two stations in the two countries are functioning as per the policy framework of CR in the two countries. While in India, the change that took place in 2006 in the Community Radio Movement led to the inclusion of NGOs in the licensing process for operation of Community Radio stations; in Sri Lanka, the Station is a result of their policy guideline that all Community radio stations exist under the purview of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation and be built in cooperation with the Provincial Council of the area.

The India NGO Model: PARD-Vanoli Radio Station, Tamil Nadu

Functioning in the Madurai District of the State of Tamil Nadu, PARD Vanoli Community Radio Station broadcasts in total for eight hours (4 hours original + 4 hours repeat) in Tamil Language at 91.2 FM in an area few kilometers away from the main city of Madurai. It was started with the vision to inform, entertain and educate the rural community in Thirumangalam, T.Kallupatty, Kallikudi and Peraiyur blocks in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu in 2009. The parent organization that started by functioning for urban slums in Madurai expanded to rural areas around the city and started work in 5 blocks zone, 60 villages area.

The area covered by PARD, Vanoli is rain-fed and drought-prone. PARD (People's Association for Rural Development) was already working in this area with the farmers and was involved in many campaigns against chemical pesticides and fertilizers. It was also functioning as the lead NGO for Madurai district to form green villages. Training to the local farmers was provided to protect the traditional knowledge in farming.

PARD is also working with children in the adopted area to ensure their enrolment in schools so that they are placed in the mainstream of development. It was with this idea to spread the message of organic farming, importance of education, health and legal awareness and human rights, PARD initiated its efforts to get a Community Radio Station for the benefit of the rural people in the adopted area in Madurai District, Tamil Nadu.

The struggle to setup the station had been a long one. The battle started when the parent NGO applied for the license involving a of struggle to gain it. During the initiation of the Community Radio, PARD Vanoli sought support from the local community to continue the activities along with parent NGO funds. Currently, along with the parent NGO, PARD supports the funding requirements for the running of the Community Radio Station, a few organizations like Department of Science & Technology (DST) have been a huge help in funding through projects for keeping the station sustainable.

Similarly, Gram Vani helped the station by gifting them the GRINS software free of cost. Money for day to day functioning has been a major challenge since the inception of the station and the running cost is mostly obtained from the projects and the interest on the loans that SHGs have taken up through the parent organization. The local advertising that has been a flexibility to promote financial sustenance in the policy has failed in the area because the area is occupied by people living in extreme poverty, and therefore there are no sponsors.

Another major challenge that exists for the station is technology. The station runs on a low cost technology options from a small room in the building. In 2010, the station faced major failure due to lightening and took time to restart the station and make it functional.

Uva (Provincial) Community Radio, Uva Province, Sri Lanka
Uva Community Radio was established through the initiative of UNDP in cooperation with the Uva provincial Council (UPC) in order to facilitate increased community involvement in planning, implementing and evaluating its poverty reduction programmes, especially agricultural development. UPC runs the station in conjunction with the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation which holds the license. Tele-centre facilities were added to expand use of information and communication technologies by both radio staff on behalf of listeners and directly by members of the local community. With the provincial council as a partner and a province - wide network, the CMCs were designed to improve public services and facilitate information flows, particularly in regards to development and governance. The tele-centre facilities are operated in collaboration with local information Technology Societies.

Uva Community Radio was established through UNDP's 'Areas Based Growth' and 'Equity Programme' with technical assistance from UNESCO and in partnership with the Uva Provincial Council which also provides the space for both of the CMC facilities. As the only licensable entity, SLBC holds the broadcast license and provides the station with a controller (manager) and a technician. UNESCO established the CWC facilities in Bandarawela and provided training and internet connectivity with support from Belgium.

Additional ICT equipment later linked to the main facilities were provided through UNESCO's global CWC Programme, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation. The telecentre facilities are run by local community based Information Technology Societies, which maintain their own bank accounts, membership and executives and recruit, train and coordinate volunteers. A wide range of local government departments, NGOs and community groups collaborate with the CWC.

Setup in a huge building with an upgraded technology, the Uva Community Radio came into being in 2002 with daily broadcasting in an area of 300 sqkms. Keeping in perspective the large geographic area it caters to, it doesn't fit in the global definition of a community radio but in Sri Lanka, it is the popular model of Community Radio. It can be therefore said that the policy has resulted in a model of this kind to come up where a 5KW transmitter transmits content to 26 divisional areas in two districts with every divisional area having around 30-40 villages.

Reaching a population of 1.2 million people, Uva falls in the Southern eastern province of Sri Lanka. The broadcasting happens for a total of 18.5 hours every day of the week in English, Sinhala and Tamil.

While finance and technology are not a challenge, the greatest constraint faced by the Uva CWC is the complex partnership structure of the radio and the predominant roles played by state and political institutions. Building and maintaining the trust of local communities, achieving social, organizational and financial sustainability are all significant challenges. Internet connectivity in rural areas is expensive and so that is a challenge for the station that was initially supported by UNESCO but later was to be borne by the Station.

Jointly run by the SLBC and the Uva Provincial Coucil , the Uva Community Radio station is the most independent and influential community station in the country so far. While carrying their own news bulletins in addition to linking up with the SLBS morning news, the station also broadcasts programmes on issues deemed sensitive, such as questioning actions of both government as well as those in opposition and trade unionists. The radio station generates income from programme sponsorships and advertising sales, which are remitted to UPS, which covers local staff salaries and running costs. SLBC provides one management/editorial

staff and one technician.

Community Participation and Gender Dynamics

While participation is the basis of a sustainable functioning of a Community Radio Station, it is seen that mostly participation on volunteer basis has been promoted worldwide. While that exists, what is crucial is the presence of a core team to carry the station forward. As discussed in the section earlier on participation, levels of participation vary in any community initiative and that can be seen to impact the process of content development too. One of the major aspects of Community radio that has been explored is the linkage between participation and gender empowerment and how that is responsible in overall community development.

The India NGO Model: PARD-Vanoli Radio Station, Tamil Nadu

Apart from the parent team at the Madurai office, the on-ground staff consists of only 3 male members who manage the station from content to technology. Women however have remained as more of volunteers over the time, though a few have become core team member. The five (5) years that the broadcasting has been in process, the stations connects to more than 60 villages around which have played a very crucial role in content generation process of the station.

PARD has a tradition of being fully engaged with the community and its radio programmes are no different in this respect. The programmes are produced with the participation of the local villagers and thus the local people feel that it is their own radio station to express their feelings in the community. The station is set up at a very far off and secluded place and hardly gets any visitors, but interviews with the community listeners revealed that though majority of them had never visited the station personally, but have participated in the functioning or helped in generating content at least once at some point of time. In this entire region spread over 60 villages, all have participated in the CR activities including women, men and school children. The college interns have been active at the CR, therefore, the content of radio programmes has ranged from agriculture to health to folk & culture and history.

Due to the difficulties faced by the farmers in agriculture, the people migrate to nearby cities. To prevent this migration and to help farming activities (and, in turn, to retain the villagers in their villages), PARD, Vanoli emphasises on organic farming. It has collected information about the villages on its social, cultural and historical background to make the villagers feel proud of their traditional values. The content generated is based on experiments using Dialogue and Discussions, which are well appreciated.

The core team of three people, understand the community needs pretty well, and they decide what goes 'on air'. The station conducts meetings with all stakeholders to discuss the functioning in depth, review of the content and extend the help needed.

People's Participation was observed in providing feedback, participation in meetings, suggestions for programme content etc. A lot of participation is generated through programmes on special occasions, birthday wishes etc where people call in for requests. People's participation is encouraged by the CR. Travel is a major challenge and the station team has bridged this by traveling to the community. Since the people around are poor with mostly everyone being a farm worker, the fact that station has brought down the broadcast to the community says a lot.

Though majority is involved with the CR simply as listeners, few others provide feedback. Except for the team, nobody is really trained or keen on editing and broadcasting the programmes. This can also be due to the fact that the station faces financial crunch as it is not capable to pay to community volunteers even a meager stipend or honorarium. The core team is also paid a very meager salary, the three-members travel from village to village to interact with community groups, artists, women & men, children, religious and cultural event organizers, seek help from the community to gather stories and contents for creating shows for the station. During events in villages, they broadcast live from the venue and enthuse locals as they can be heard across villages. It was widely believed that people are glued to television after work, but generally the older people expressed that TV has left them with little cultural content to cherish and that is where the radio station fills the gaps for them. The participation of more than a hundred rural singers singing without any honorarium makes the station a special tool for the community people to enjoy. From ex army officials to current Panchayat leaders and doctors, the station has truly helped to build a holistic community for everyone to learn from,

stories to hear and experiences to share.

Uva (Provincial) Community Radio, Uva Province, Sri Lanka

Uva Radio is housed in a huge building with many team members sitting and working across different tables. It was pretty evident that the station did not face any financial crunch and had enough funds to support a huge team. The management of the radio is overseen jointly by a station controller who is appointed by SLBC and an executive director, appointed by Uva Provincial Council (UPC). Technical matters are attended by an SLBC technician. Radio programming is done by a team of fifteen to eighteen radio producers, generally young people recruited from Uva Province itself, with roughly equal numbers of men and women, and Tamil and Sinhala speakers. The Buttala tele center facility is largely run by local volunteers, several of whom receive a small stipend for training and for taking charge of the facility in the absence of any full-time paid staff.

Uva as a district is served by state radio and television services, commercial radios whose programming originates in Colombo and by the national newspapers. Uva and Giradurukotte Community Radio services are the province's only local media. The participation from the local community groups and schools is immense. Interviews with the team members revealed how the UNESCO training that had taken place in the beginning when the CR was set up, all the people were oriented towards understanding their role towards community. The area being a major contributor to paddy and tea production of the country, farming has been one of the major content focus area of the station. The area of Uva is known for self-employment activities and therefore, the station has over the time facilitated participation through constant programmes on vegetable plantations, income generation and rural women empowerment. Walking down the tea estates, it is a very common sight to catch people listening to Uva Community Radio.

It caters to a very heterogeneous community of Tamil, Muslims, Sinhala people, spread over a huge area, enabling people's participation from all walks of life, through personal visits, telephone and letters, emails etc. The station tries to involve women from faraway places by recording their voices over calls and from the field, playing them in programmes later on. While the station was started with a motive to build in community relationships, the fact that the team members feel at ease in life is an indicator of how smoothly the station functions. Volunteers from the community have been motivated and a strong bond has been established over the years with several trainings and now they are the key contributors to the stations progress, helping in all possible ways.

However, in terms of community ownership and decision making related to content development and broadcast is governed by the hierarchal structure of the station management. The fact that the policy is so strict that even the Provinicial Councils cannot get an independent license for running a Community radio. There is strong government control, which influences the content selection. The staff at the set up agreed that even though participation of community in content development is encouraged but they do not have the flexibility of raising issues without decisions at the top, so ownership of the CR by the community was not as it has to be as per the philosophy of setting up CRs. People groups who have actively taken up the cause of community radio movement are struggling with government involvement in local level contents. There are listener groups that exist in different communities of the station but those too remain just content generating ground staff, instead of strong involvement in decision-making.

Around 40% of the content is based on community/public affairs issues with 20% education and children based programmes. A small chunk of content is news that is provided by the SLBC with little advertising and some entertainment through music programmes. News is mostly restricted to newspaper reading and so, it clearly points out on how strong a hold the system has on the content management and broadcasting, leaving little space for the actual community to decide. This CR was therefore following verticals in a Top-Down approach. The station though is successful in broadcasting but struggles to let go of the notion that the "Government knows what's best for the community".

Observations and Analysis

It can be said that that both the stations, one in India and Sri Lanka, the models that have emerged have had deep and direct linkage to the Community radio policy situation in the two countries. During discussions it was seen that a major struggle in Sri Lanka has been going on with constant lobbying by activists and social researchers to promote an independent Community media/radio policy, something similar to what had led to the Community radio policy in India.

While NGO station was more needed as stated by the community, with support of the NGO, in Sri Lanka, the station came into being as an effect of Government intervention along with an international organization (UNESCO) from outside as a need for community development. This is very obvious in the way the infrastructure has shaped up in both the stations. In PARD, Vanoli, the system struggles to function with all kind of constraints – financial, human resource and technological too. In Sri Lanka, these are very different as such issues are solved through government intervention and funding. The human resource too is seen as a government employee and so challenges vary distinctly.

It was interesting to see that on one hand while the NGO run CR station in India had local community representatives as the key decision makers, the same seemed to be completely lost in the SLBC run station in Sri Lanka. While both men and women seemed to be involved in the station at all levels in Sri Lanka, the absence of a female team member in NGO run CR in India, definitely was an issue that the station struggled to address. The community participation was more in-depth as community volunteers and representatives were amongst the main custodians of the CR being run by an NGO model in India, something that was not seen or possible in SLBC run Uva Radio, because of the policy differences. The fact that Sri Lanka as a country is still struggling with the Community Radio movement has made way for different kinds of community radio models, many of which are run and managed by the Provincial Councils and Broadcasting Corporation but as discussed they do not truly represent the spirit of CR.

CONCLUSION

Policy and people's participation have an intrinsic relationship. The larger political systems that govern the formation of policy in a country, do so to create space for people to participate freely. The community media do not function in a socio political vacuum and they can be the powerful means of articulating people's needs, desires and also discontent. In India, while the Government has defined a clear-cut licensing policy and guidelines of functioning for a Community Radio, the CRs sometimes face issues of participation due to lack of funding and infrastructure. With no money to offer, the challenge in human resource sustainability in stations is a major reason for the fluctuating functioning of the stations. Though that exists, decision-making involvement in community radio of the community is slowly gaining momentum as the station gains popularity. In such a scenario, ownership as a long-term goal is not hard to be achieved if the financial issues are solved amicably with the involvement of government systems.

In Sri Lanka on the other hand, the fact that there is a complete absence of a policy on Community radio has left people with no choice for such media. Though structures like Uva have been termed as Community radio, they lack the essence of one, as community involvement in deciding and developing content is limited to the permissiveness of the higher officials overseeing the operations. The fact that the whole system works like a government body makes the hierarchal barriers difficult to be broken.

Though the station continues to run with constant government involvement, people can be motivated to participate but community ownership is not possible. It could be due to recent political events that any such movement may not find favour but so far any such movement does not seem feasible. This leaves people with little community media to cherish and enjoy freedom of speech. That has been a reason why the only systems that exist in the country are either stations like Uva or Kothmale or Internet-based community-campus radio stations.

The CR stations in the two neighboring countries have a lot to learn from each other. While financial support is a major player in community radio, better policies in India will help facilitate smooth functioning and progress of the existing stations in the country. Sri Lanka on the other hand has a lot of work to be done at advocacy and lobbying level in order to promote the dire need of people led development.

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DOES COMMUNITY RADIO FUNCTIONS TRULY AS AN AUTONOMOUS SPHERE?

STUDY ON ITS STATUS IN SOUTH ASIA

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ABSTRACT

Community Radio (CR) in South Asia has been thriving with a unique identity as result of collective activism and lobbying by various stakeholders, including practitioners, civil society activists, academia, media freedom fighters, international agencies and several others. Nepal became the first country, in South Asia, to liberate the airwaves for the use of community with the inception of Radio Sagarmatha. Presently, around 350 CR stations are functioning in various parts of Nepal. The CR agenda in India, was mostly led by a activists and individuals. Around 217 CR stations are functioning in India. The revised CR policy guideline (2006) in India provides scope for both academic and local NGOs to receive CR lisence. However, the ability of Indian CR stations to air news and current affairs programs is legally challenged. The advocacy for CR in Bangladesh was initiated in early 1998, but it took a decade for local organizations to gain legal recognition. Presently, 18 CR stations are functioning in Bangladesh where CR largely facilitate a development goal. . In general, CR in South Asia has been flourishing for the last three decades. However, it is widely believed that CR, in the region has failed to gain its own autonomy despite its long history of existence. This study attempts to understand as to what extent the CR in the region – in Nepal, India and Bangladesh has been functioning as a truly autonomous sector.

COMMUNITY RADIO IN SOUTH ASIA

In Nepal the National Broadcasting Act was enacted in 1993, but due to a failure in formulating the adequate regulations, the Act remained idle for two years (Dahal and Aram, 2011). However, with this development, the CR activists, led by Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ) managed to mobilize a strong support base to promote independent broadcasting. NEFEJ, for the first time, applied for a license on 23, October 1992. Five days later the government announced the new communication policy declaring allowance of independent broadcasting in the country (Bhattarai & Ojha, 2010). Radio Sagarmatha, was licensed on 18 May 1997. In 1995 the National Broadcasting Regulation was issued. However, the regulation has provisions to impose special conditions over Radio but that was not clearly explained by the government. However, In Nepal, sector is growing without a specific policy.

The Indian Supreme Court ruling in 1995 provided space for the CR activists to challenge the state monopoly over public airwaves (Bath, 2011; Pavarala and Kanchan 2007). However, despite the Supreme Court rulings and activism by stakeholders, the then Indian government was apathetic, and no policy announcement was made. Subsequent events, such as Bangalore Declaration in 1996, Pastapur Declaration in 2000, and formation of the Community Radio Forum – India (CRF-India) in 2007 paved the way to push CR advocacy toward legal recognition. The Indian CR community networked for almost two decades in order to set up CR (Parthasarathi & Chotani, 2010). Ramakrishnan et al. (2017) quoted the official website of the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB)as of November 2016, there were 200 operational CR stations across the country, of which more than 150 were over two years old, and approximately one-third were over five years old. Ansari (2017) noted in the publication of Young India the growth of community media has been marginal all these years as the promoters have been struggling with low resources, inadequate patronage and technical issues.

In 2000, the discussion on the CR, in Bangladesh was started (Ganilo et al. 2016). The early discussions were led by Mass-line Media Center (MMC) and several other organizations and individuals. The Dhaka declaration 2006 further emphasized need for CR. Finally, the agenda of CR was acknowledged in the election manifesto

of the Bangladesh by the Awami League party in the 2008 General Election. Organizations such as BNNRC then extended CR advocacy and maintained high-level collaboration between the state and non-governmental sectors. In 2008 the government of Bangladesh passed the 'Community Radio Installation, Broadcast and Operation Policy (Bangladesh Gazette, 12 March 2008).

UNDERSTANDING AUTONOMY

While autonomy is a broader term, it is expressed in various forms- CR should be independent (Rajaseharan and Nafala, 2009); it should work through multiple funding sources (Janowski, 2003; Lewis, 2002); it must be owned and controlled by the community (Jallov, 2012);it must be independent from commercial interests (Pavarala and Malik 2007) and shouldn't be influenced by anybody of central or local government or face undue influence by such bodies through ownership or funding (Buckley, 2008). Autonomy works better when a CR is truly owned by community and managed by the community and recognized by the legal system.

Ownership and Autonomy

CR should be owned, managed and controlled by the Community (Rajaseharan and Nafala, 2009). CR can be owned by non-governmental organizations working in communities (Mtinde et al.1998), or by civil society organizations or the local governments operating in the area (Rennie, 2006). The ownership and control aspects of CR are often shared between community members i.e. local residents, members of the community and community-based organizations. It uses participatory relationship and provides open access to its community (Rennie, 2006). Kruger et al. (2013) in its assessment toolkit titled 'The Healthy Community Radio Station', emphasized that the people must take control and stakes in decision making. Therefore, to what extent Community members and community organizations are given legitimate ownership to make their own decision is a key determinant of autonomy. The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) indicates that a CR station is owned and controlled by a not-for-profit organization, the structure of which provides for membership, management, operation and programming, primarily by members of the community at large (CRTC 2010-499, section 13). In Ireland, the policy is defined as:

> A community radio station is characterized by its ownership, programming and the community it is authorized to serve. It is owned and controlled by a not-for-profit organization whose structure provides for membership, management, operation and programming, primarily by members of the community at large. Its programming should be based on community access and should reflect the special interests and needs of the listenership, it is licensed to serve (BCI, 1996, p.3).

Da Costa (2012) was of the view that in order for the people to take control and lead in CR, it has to be fully owned by the groups of people not an NGO. He argued that NGOs are often run by groups of individuals in the name of a community. In practice, since not everyone in a community can participate, ownership and control of community radio stations is often undertaken by an association, trust or foundation (Fraser and Estrada, 2001).

Self-Management and Autonomy

Self-Management is one of the core factors that contribute to the strong autonomous and independent status of CR. If people in the community are given exclusive space to have a stake in all aspects of organizational and policy development of the CR, it can have a structure of self-management (O'Connor, 2004; Berrigan, 1981). CR is not only owned and controlled by the people but also managed and administered by the people (Mainali et al. 2009). What distinguishes CR from other media is the high level of people's participation, both in management and programme production (Tabing, 2002). According to Tabing (2002) the management aspect of CR can be handled by one group, by combined groups, or of people such as women, children, farmers, fisher folk, ethnic groups, or senior citizens. The essence of his idea is that people should lead the radio; people should have the maximum freedom to make decisions on administrative and policy affairs of the CR that is a major source of community communication. People participate not only in running and managing the radio station but also sustaining and managing the programme production process too (Howley, 2010).

Legal recognition and Autonomy

When it comes to broadcast media, be it community, commercial or public service, they must use airwaves (broadcast spectrum), which is limited and considered public property. Therefore, it is owned by all the

sections in the community, not merely the one who are in power and business. Due to the limited nature of airwaves, it is vital that broadcast owners represent a plurality of voices and include different viewpoints. (Weerasinghe, 2018). Legal recognition for CR has increasingly becoming an important aspect discussed by academics and practitioners. It is the responsibility of governments to regulate the airwaves more accountably and transparently, giving fair ownership to the people. Coyer et al. (2007) see CR as an alternative sphere that should be protected, as a way of safeguarding democracy. CR policy helps the survival of the CR sector, ensures its autonomy and independence, including a convenient licensing process. Having a policy is a global commitment for governments (UNESCO, 2011).

Study Design
This study is an attempt to understand as to what extent the CR in South Asian region – Nepal, India and Bangladesh have been functioning as a truly autonomous sphere. In order to reach at this objective, 45 in-depth interviews with CR experts from the region was conducted. The respondents include CR experts, practitioners, CR advocates, academics and practitioners who have a wealth of knowledge and experience on the development of CR, in their respective countries. In Addition, the researchers visited two CRs in Bangladesh and four respectively in India and Nepal. The researchers visited India and Nepal twice and Bangladesh once for the study. As discussed above, autonomy is largely achieved through community ownership, self-management and the legal recognition. However, status of legal autonomy in the region hasn't been taken into account for this paper.

Status of Autonomy in South Asia
After close inquiry, it was revealed that CR in the region has been thriving as a promising sector but with several challenges. It was learned that the sphere is largely owned by NGOs, CSO's, community cooperatives, academic and educational institutions. Nepal has a different ownership model. In Nepal, NGOs, people's cooperatives, academic entities and some local authorities are given licenses as community radio stations. It was evident that people who apply for licenses on behalf of NGO's, local clubs, corporations that have registered under the CSO Act and pay due amounts, will get the licenses and frequencies. If someone can prove they are members of a NGO, local club, corporates, there is high likelihood that they will become eligible to get the license. According to Ministry of Information and Broadcasting website presently, 251 Community Radio Stations have become operational in India. According to Young India (2017) out of 20176 are operated by NGOs, 110 by the Educational Institutions and 15 by State Agriculture Universities / Krishi Vigyan Kendras. ACORAB (2018) claims that at present nearly 350 Community Radio stations (CRS) function in Nepal. Out of 350 CR, few are academic radio and rest are owned by local NGO and Corporative. BNNRC (2018) claims presently nearly 18 Community radio stations are functional in Bangladesh of which 17 are owned by local NGOs at varying capacity. And these entities do not entirely represent their communities at large. In the region, the broadcasting policy enables NGO's to own CR stations. Nepal doesn't have CR specific law, but the larger broadcasting policy and the CSO act enable local NGOs and corporative to own CR. Indian CR policy guideline (2006) allows local NGOs with minimum three years' experience to have their own license and frequency. The revised CR policy (2018) in Bangladesh make it very convenient for local NGO's with 5 years' experience to own the CR station. It became highly obvious such ownership nature in the region has largely challenged the real autonomy of the CR.

Primarily these local entities have their own limitations to represent the larger community and cross-section. On the other hand, community has its own limitations to share the legal ownership and make vital decisions with their own interest. While the host organizations claims that they have some representative arrangements – Board of Director, Advisory Committee, Program Committee, and Lister Clubs, community reporters etc to share the ownership and to include people in the larger operation of the CR, its was observed that these bodies doesn't always represent their community and are empowered to overrule the interest of the local host organizations. Local NGOs in all the three countries holds high level of control and decision-making power they can simply overrule community interest. It is learned that in majority of the CR, the community members cannot make autonomous decision on non-programmatic aspects of CR. In India, most of the respondents firmly hold that local license holders were expected to transform the ownership to the real people in the community.

One of the common responses observed was that under the current ownership structure in South Asia, the actual community is often not given autonomous space to own the radio - stations are legally and socially owned and controlled by their host institution; in some stations people do not feel any shared ownership, some respondents firmly believe that the host institutions are not fully accountable to their target audience. A majority of respondents noted involving community members through an advisory committee, Board of Director, Program committee etc., is an ineffective arrangement that does not truly safeguard community interest in vital moments. Often the advisors neither make decisions nor oppose directives of the host institutions. The ultimate decision-maker, in the case of most Indian community radio stations, is the host institution.

Status of Community Ownership

CR in South Asia has its own ownership models with clear differences. Looking at the aspect of community ownership in India, CR ownership has historically been limited to academic institutions. As Dutta and Ray (2018) and UNESCO (2011) observed, the amended policies announced in 2006 had gone beyond educational institutions to include community-based organizations (CBOs), State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) under its ambit. This makes the ownership plurality to be further widened. For example, Sangam Radio is legally owned by Deccan Development Society (DDS). Nammath Dwani (Our voice) is legally owned by the Voices. In Odisha, Radio Namaskar is owned by a local organization called Young India.

In Nepal, CR stations are largely owned by NGOs and people's Cooperatives. Radio Namo Buddha, for example, is owned by a local NGO called Joogle Association of Nepal. Radio Sagarmatha is owned by a local network of environmental journalists called NEFEJ. Radio Krishi FM is owned by an NGO named the Dhunibhesi Community Agricultural Communication Center. Radio Rajmarga functions as a community communication center formed by a local cooperative. A Radio station called Metro FM is owned by traffic police and this CR is specialized in traffic issues. Staff members of ACROB say the Municipality has been planning a CR for all the local authorities.

Bangladesh it makes it possible for NGOs to own licenses. Well-established involved in local politics own CRs. Some of these NGOs are considered rural elites. Radio Pollikontho is initiated and hosted by BRAC, one of the largest NGOs. Radio Nalta is owned by Nalta Hospital and Community Health Foundation. and was founded by a physician and a local politician. Radio Jhenuk was initiated by Srizony Bangladesh, a well-established local NGO. It was evident that local NGOs shared development values with the government of Bangladesh (GoB). The problem raised here is to what extent the host NGOs promote their strategic development priorities through radio. The staff members of the Radio Sarabela confirmed the radio station is deeply informed by the development agenda of the host NGO, SK Foundation. NGOs are often funded by International aid organizations and the target audiences, beneficiaries, objectives and scope of the programmes are often determined by the host and the funding organizations. This trend is absolutely contradictory to Mtinde et al. (1998) that CRs should be governed by locally based organizations. Some of the organizations, SK Foundation, BRAC are huge national originations. Strategically, it is challenging for them to pay much concentration into small social settings. Such heavy NGO domination in Bangladesh has limited the scope real community ownership.

A majority of respondents in Nepal indicated an internal democracy and process of accountability exists in Nepal. They claimed that policy decisions are made democratically, very often at the AGM. The respondents who are practitioners in Nepal noted that when radio licenses are given to these kinds of local organizations they clearly need to adhere to some form of institutional and local accountability. Members, boards of directors, working committees and Executive committees are elected democratically. The governance body -board of directors will oversee policy matters of the CRS, while the radio station manager and the radio staff run the radio station operation, providing an element of an internal accountability. However, an analysis of responses makes it clear that people do not actively participate in internal policy development of CR. The so-called NGO and cooperatives owned radio stations find it challenging to maintain higher level engagement with their communities. The elite nature of some NGOs does not provide a sense of social ownership. The radio stations owned by cooperatives can make profits and such profits can be shared among the shareholders. The Radio staff and management is accountable to the shareholders. One can argue that ownership in this context is rooted in the system. However, Ragu, Mainali, a Nepali CR expert and advocate disapprove the way the ownership is being established. His expert view on this is presented in following Vignette1.

Mainali makes a valid argument that there should be a shared values and goals between the radio station and the community, and such discourses are not visible on a larger level in the region. Indian respondents made it clear that in most of the CR stations, either the aspect of radio is missing, or prominence of community is missing. The heavy development orientation of local NGO's tends to use radio as an outreach arm. There, the principles discussed by Mainali are fully compromised. In some cases, heavy focus is placed on the production process while community engagement is found to be missing.

CRs in most instances are forced to compete with commercial radio stations, earn money, sustain audiences and facilitate social change. Respondents noted that this is a huge challenge for CR stations. Respondents from Radio Namo Budhda noted that their radio station needs to fight with 40 similar stations. Due to this competitive environment, community radio is unable to maintain social accountability and engage community members in a real CR production.

Status of Self-Management

Self-management in community radio exists with challenges. From the very outset the majority of the CR stations in the region have some form of internal governance in which community representatives "claimed to be" involved in self-management at various degrees.

All three countries allow self-management mechanisms to exist in CR stations. In addition to the license holder most stations in the region are governed by a station manager, staff members, BoDs, other governance bodies, paid members and sometimes by community members. In general, most of the CR stations have established some form of local accountability and governance system. Day to day operations are often managed by the station manager, staff members and volunteers. However, it was revealed that in majority of the CR stations, the 'community' is not involved in managerial and administrative decision-making. The higher-level decisions remain in the hands of the host organization. A majority of the respondents noted that self-management is not entirely open for the real community groups. There is a higher possibility that the representatives of the license holders can easily manipulate and influence managerial decisions reached in consultation with community members. The other observed issue is that, prime representatives of the license holders don't fully represent the target community. There is also a higher possibility that the license holder can easily influence the station manager and the rest of the staff. Most of the respondents, in the respective countries, claim that local hosting entities are representatives of the local communities. They claim that the radio governance body is representing the community. However, through serious questioning and observations it was discovered that the claim, made by respondents who are predominantly from the host entities, – is not entirely true.

In India, it was discovered that Radio Sangam, managed by the DDS, used to consult village level voluntary listener groups, voluntary producers and paid producers regarding the programmes. During the field survey, it was discovered that management staff at the DDS seek inputs from community members on management affairs of the CR. 'General' Narsamma and Algole Narsamma, two dynamic CR workers, very popular among Indian academics who study about CR, confirmed that the DDS used to consult them not only on the management issues, but also about the programmes. Similarly, it was discovered that that Radio Namaskar, In Odisha, maintains an active engagement with community members, consulting them primarily on the

programmes. The administrative process of this radio is kept accountable to people. It was learned that Radio Namaskar sends radio reporters/producers to the community to collect community grievances, request feedbacks and comments about the programmes. However, the academic and other respondents who are non-practitioners hold completely different views about the status of self-management in Indian CR. They claim that the practice of self-management does not exist and does not work-well when CR stations are pre-dominantly controlled by academic institution, government organizations and well-established developmental NGOs. They hold that few people associate with CR. Even if they do, they do not hold any authority to make administrative and managerial decisions. In most cases people are not concerned about these matters. Majority of the respondents mentioned Radio Active, based in Bangalore, and Radio Mewat, Haryana as two exemplary CR for highest people participation self-management.

In Nepal, community representatives are involved in radio management. Krishi FM for example is run by 13 staff members. They are supervised by a Radio Manager. They are accountable to 200 paid members. The paid members share in the profit. Radio Rajmarga is managed by a station manager and six staff members. They are answerable to 40 shareholders who are paid members. Radio Namo-Budhda is run by 10 staff members, one Executive Director and one Director and a Manager. This Radio has 15 patron members (who pay Rs. 50,000), lifetime members (who pay 15,000), general members (who pay 5000) and 50 community members. Radio Sagarmatha is managed by NEFEJ. The respondents from this radio station, during the field survey, indicated that the chairperson, station manager and the radio Board are answerable to the General Assembly with 125 fully-fledged members. A higher number of respondents claimed that even though management affairs are often carried out by the paid staff and volunteers, they are part of a wider community.

However, as discussed in the previous section, these representatives do not always represent a good cross section of the larger community. The data does not address whether these representatives truly act as community representatives. It was observed that these limited representatives are involved in policy formulation, administration, human resource development and decision making. However, this space is very protective and there is clearly less freedom for representatives of the larger community to participate. In the case of cooperative-owned radio stations in Nepal, the shareholders and NGO representatives are often friends, likeminded people and people with the same affiliation and livelihood characteristics. Sometimes it was evident that people become friends and part of a network, just because they wanted to apply for a license and run a radio station. This notion has been considered a challenge for inclusive management.

In Bangladesh, as mentioned previously, CRs are predominantly owned by local NGOs. As in Nepal, clear internal management systems also exist in Bangladesh. Radio Sarabela (RS) - 99.2FM, is equipped with 10 full time staff members and 40 volunteers. Records at RS noted that it reaches nearly five lakh listeners. It was observed that the programme decisions are usually taken by the management staff and are mostly beyond the control of the SK Foundation. The Programme manager has the greatest decision-making responsibility. He/she works with an assistant programme manager, two Full-time producers, two assistant producers and other Interns, a total of eleven staff. Radio Borendra (RB), initiated by Naogaon Human Rights Development Association (NHRDA), a local NGO. is run by nine staff members and 20 volunteers and covers a 17 km area and reaches nearly five Lakh listeners. RB has 22 listener clubs and two children's clubs including the Dalit community club. A total of 34 youth work for RB, including 22 boys and 12 girls.

The station manager and the secretary of RB claimed that the community ownership is intentionally transferred to their beneficiaries. The community makes decisions about programmes. The community is given full freedom in making content and participating in the programmes. They also claim that RS engages community members to receive their feedback and integrate their input on the regular affairs of the radio station. A respondent who is working for the NGO that runs CR in Bangladesh noted that "when we have an agenda to help people" our agenda by default is not harmful to our people. We do not tell people in the RS what to do and how to do it. Our role sometimes would be to mentor the young people. We do not define who should come and who should not come.

In the case of Radio Borendro, the secretary general, staff members and volunteers confirmed the programmes are sometimes inspired by the operational goal of NHRDA, however, the programmes of RB are not limited to the interest of NHRDA. Programme level decisions are made exclusively by the programme staff and they

noted that youth coming from far-corners have their own space in this radio station. Their interests, abilities, and needs are never disregarded by NHRDA. In an in-depth interview, a staff respondent confirmed that she has full liberty to cover anything that she thinks is newsworthy. It was noted that news agendas are absolutely determined by the radio station staff with the support of, the chief editor. She said they we cover community issues and events, and various local meetings but not politics.

According to respondents who are representatives of host NGOs community members are given membership, the appointed for specific responsibilities, annual general meetings are hosted, separate finance audits are maintained, administrative and programme decisions are taken freely and without influence of the license holder. Respondents expressed the opinion that this creates accountability and assures community ownership. Yet, the level of reliability, accountability, functionality and capability of the above mechanisms is not clear. Further evaluation is needed to determine to what extent the above mechanism ensures the real autonomy of the people in the periphery and to what extent it is representative of the larger community.

In South Asian, true efforts taken by the host entities, in general, inviting people to be involved in broader administrative affairs of CR is very low. People's involvement in organizational policy development should be a part of the self-management although people should not have direct access to control the radio station. Evidence was not adequate to substantiate the existence of such features in the CR stations in South Asia. People's contribution to management is faced with various challenges.

CONCLUSION

In all three countries the broadcasting regulatory system has extended the scope for community broadcasting. Both in India and Bangladesh, the right of the people to own a CR station has been legally acknowledged through respective CR policy guidelines. At the same time, the regulatory system in Nepal, has allowed independent, community-based groups as well as registered NGOs to own radio stations, despite the fact that Nepal does not have any dedicated CR policy. It is also apparent that the sector as a whole does not fully function with absolute autonomy due varying local circumstances. While the idea of autonomy has been very much generalized each country has its own challenges and limitations in growing as a fully autonomous sector. For example, the NGO involvement in Bangladesh is inevitable and unavoidable, but very high. Similarly, in Nepal, the dominance of local NGOs and co-operatives organizations are unavoidable reality. Therefore, the concept of autonomy needs re-construction and each country should be able to establish 'autonomy' within its own context. This study concludes that autonomy can remain a key value, but its parameters may vary according to the unique circumstances of each country. In this study, it has become obvious that policy can ensure the ownership and autonomy to a certain extent, but the sustainability and effectiveness may not be guaranteed by the policy alone. The host entity should play a proactive role in reflecting community interest.

It is in the broader context explained above; it is found that heavy NGO domination of CR in the South Asian region has highly compromised the core feature of CR - autonomy. The ideal community ownership and self-management by the people is immensely compromised by the complex nature of NGO ownership. Despite the claims by the host NGOs that they represent community through advisory committee, BoD, listeners club and shareholders etc, do not always function autonomously in the case of making, strategic, policy and administrative decisions. However, the ability for the communities to make program decisions are not severely compromised. Furthermore, it is found that community in most extent cannot overrule the decisions of host NGOs or the institutions. The advisory committee, BoD and other representative arrangement cannot overrule the host NGO to safeguard the true community spirit

Learning from South Asia, it is obvious that the domination of the local organizations – NGOs, corporatives, educational institutes/universities and any other development organizations over CR, has become an unavoidable reality. Communities can not directly share the ownership of the CR, as the legal ownership for the CR stations remains in the hands of such organizations. Close examination released that representative democracy – involving community members in the advisory committees, BoD's, program committees, listeners clubs doesn't fully help people to feel sense of shared ownership of the CR. It is under such reality, claiming for an absolute community ownership by the community members is utopian. Therefore, a new discourse for a new operational mechanism that could ensure the highest level of shared ownership between the host organizations and community groups is highly needed

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WHY CRINGE POPS ARE POPULAR IN SOCIAL MEDIA? A CLOSER LOOK ON AN INDIAN CRINGE ARTIST AND VIRALITY OF HIS CRINGE CREATIVITY

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ABSTRACT

The new media has given birth to a new genre of entertainment, popularly known as Cringe pop. Because of social media platforms like Youtube, Facebook this genre is gaining much popularity and the cringe artists are turning to be internet sensations within a very short time. The digital media is stated responsible for giving birth to this new genre of entertainment. The present study deals with the popularity of cringe pop over social media platforms, Facebook and YouTube. The study also aims at finding the reason behind the huge fan base of the cringe artists and also studies the psychology of both the cringe artist and the audience. The study analyses the reactions of the viewers over social media towards the cringe songs of one of the popular cringe artist of Assam, Rajkumar Thakuria which he releases and shares in social networking sites like Facebook and YouTube.

The study is a significant endeavour, which will benefit the society in understanding the situations or personal and individual behaviour which is a factor behind choosing this new genre of entertainment, called the cringe pop.

Introduction of the area of study

Communication dates back to the era where human beings started exchanging thoughts through sounds, which acquired meaning much later. Later along with the development of oral or verbal communication, slowly evolved other forms of communication such as writing and later the mechanical printing press changed the course and reach of communication.

Gradually the process of communication became faster with time with the coming up of electronic media. New media in this case have made a greater contribution in the field of communication. With the coming up of new media in the process of communication, communicating and reaching the mass have been made easier and very quick. Anyone with the availability of internet can reach any desired target audience. Exchanging and sharing contents and messages over the internet is just a matter of few seconds.

The platform of new media includes internet, the various search engines and the social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube etc. The new media or the digital media has provided a platform for easy access to information as well as entertainment. Communicating with the mass across the globe has been made much easier with digitalisation. It is a free of cost platform where people like, share and comment on different issues. The new media has also given birth to a new genre of entertainment, popularly known as "cringe pop". Because of social media platforms like Youtube, Facebook, this genre is gaining much popularity and the cringe artists are turning to be internet sensations within a very short time. The digital media is stated responsible for giving birth to this new genre of entertainment. With an easy access to internet, cringe pop has penetrated our entertainment industry. The contents of cringe pop becomes viral and even though it annoys the viewers, people cannot stop watching them. The music, videos and the popularity of the cringe pop are taking over the traditional entertainment contents. Cringe pop, is the latest vocabulary in the social media world today. People like, share and comment on these videos of the cringe stars and this makes them more popular among the younger group of people.

Conceptual framework

In the article, 'cringe benefits' published in The Hindu, Prashathy J. Nath describes cringe pop as so bad that we cannot stop watching them. "Welcome to cringe pop, the new vocabulary in the social media world, for videos that go viral for all the wrong reasons" (Parshathy J. Nath. (2016, april 29). This new genre is an outcome of digitalisation. The internet serves as the best medium whereas the social media is the one best platform where the cringe contents are released and within no time these contents and the artists become popular and clicks everyone's attention even though some find it annoying.

Rebecca Black's Freaky Friday in the year 2011, marked the beginning of cringe pop. Since than many other cringe artists like Psy from South Korea, Taher Shah from Pakistan, Bhim Niraula from Nepal, Dhinchaak Puja and Omprakash Mishra from India have been gathering huge views from the social media platforms. This new genre has also gained popularity in Assam with many cringe artistshaving gained popularity over the social media. Cringe artists like Rajkumar Thakuria, Kussum Koilash, Sristi Nandini are to name a few who's popularity have grown exponentially within a shortest span of time. Cringe pop genre of entertainment has been the most popular form to grab the attention of the audience at present.

The present study aims to, analyse the reason why people enjoy the cringe contents over social media and to find the factors that are responsible behind the popularity of cringe artists.

The study undertakes some research questions which are:

1. What is the reason behind the popularity of the cringe stars?
2. Why do people watch and enjoy the cringe contents, specially the songs?
3. Are cringe contents a source of escapism for the audience?

Theoretical Framework

People with an internet access, actively share the cringe contents over social media and likewise these contents attract viewers and these artists turn out to be famous internet sensations. The study could be based on the theory Uses and Gratification Theory, introduced by Elihu Katz. The theory states exactly opposite of what the magic bullet theory states. The Uses and Gratification theory states that the audience actively expose themselves to the media and the content they choose are product of their demand. In a nutshell, this theory deals in individual functions and dysfunctions where mass media audiences make active use of what the media has to offer arising from a complex set of needs in which the media in one form or another gratify (Aggarwal & Gupta, 2001).

By applying the Uses and Gratification theory the researcher explores how people actively expose themselves to the cringe contents and help it become popular within no time. According to this theory the audience are responsible for choosing their convenient media and likewise attains satisfaction.

Research Methodology

The researcher after identifying the research problem of the study has chosen the sample of the study by observation. As the study deals with the popularity of cringe songs available over the social media, the researcher has chosen cringe artist Rajkumar Thakuria as a sample for the study. The reason behind choosing Rajkumar Thakuria as the sample, is is because he is one of the first most popular cringe stars of North East India with a large number of viewers and followers over the social media .His contents are not only famous in the state but also has gained popularity across the globe among diaspora North eastern community, which is why.Rajkumar is a global internet sensation popular. His songs and films have more views and are maximum shared compared to the contents of other cringe stars of the state.

Talking about popularity and penetration of cringe pop into the Assamese entertainment industry, the beginning was marked by the most popular cringe sensation Rajkumar Thakuria or popularly known as Mr. Rajkumar who in the year 2011 entered into the world of cringe with his first film Terrorist entered my house, after that he has been directing, producing, acting, singing in most of his films and is deemed the most popular cringe figure in the state as well as across the world. With films like Criminal Hunter, Super Master, Super Warrior, Mr.James, Wondrous Army and songs like, Agar main Chand hotatoh, Dibanitu Dibani, Anamika You live in America, You Are A Doctor, Dibrugarh meinaya, ChalChal Arunachal, Mr. Rajkumar has been the most popular cringe sensation specially among the younger generation.

To get an idea on the consumption of his content the reactions of the viewers of the contents of Rajkumar Thakuria over Facebook for a period of two months October 2018 to November 2018 were monitored, and also two psychologists were interviewed.

The researcher have analysed the Face book fan page with maximum members. The contents of the page was analysed for the months of October 2018 to November 2018. The name of the Facebook page analysed, is Mr.Rajkumar Fan Club, which as per December 2018 had 9,161 likes and a total of 9417 followers.

While carrying out the analysis of the fan page, the researcher categorised it in seven categories which are,

Date of content upload, Type of post, Total Number of reactions Type of reactions (here the categories of reactions available over facebook is mentioned, for example Like, Laughter, Sad, Angry, and Love), Type of comments (Abusive, Insult, Wishes, Praise and Mention) , and total number of shares. The reseacher analysed the comments of the posts uploaded by the fan page.

From the analysis of the month of October it was found that there were total thirteen posts uploaded in the month by the fan page admin. In most of the post the reaction of laughter is maximum compared to other reactions available in the Facebook. From the analysis it is also found that the total number of abusive comments outnumber other categories or types of comments. The members also share the contents over Facebook.

In the month of November, the admin of the fan page uploaded,a total 15 posts which included both video songs of Rajkumar Thakuria and memes related to him.Ffrom the analysis of this month, it was found that, people mostly reacted with laughter icons to the posts compared to other reactions available. The other reaction which followed the reaction of laughter was the reaction of anger. The total number of abusive comments outnumber the other categories of comments. The contents are shared by the fans in great numbers from their profiles.

FINDINGS
    a) Out of all the reactions available on Facebook, the contents mostly receives the reactions of like(thumbs up) and haha(laughter).
    b) The reactions like angry, sad and wow are very minimum.
    c) In case of the comments the number of abusive and comments insulting Rajkumar are higher than the comments categorised under the category of praise and mentions.

Views of Psychologists
The researcher has taken the interview of two psychologists to understand the mindset of both the viewers and the cringe artists. The two psychologists interviewed, were Sangita Das, a clinical psychologists and Dr. Rita Rani Talukdar, Head, t Department of Psychology, Gauhati University.

When asked about the reason behind people watching cringe videos psychologists Sangeeta Das said, "People have hugely shifted to cringe content watching when it comes to entertainment. They watch it for no other reason except for fun. They never accept this genre as an art or their contents as creative but only watch them for temporary escapism."

Regarding the psychology of the cringe artists she added, "According to my view the cringe artists could be victims of delusional disorder which means a state of mind where the person is totally drifted away from the reality. As we can see people mostly mock these artists and highly abuse them but the artist never accepts that fact."

Even commenting on the audience psychology, she maintains thatthe audience scroll the contents over social media, for pleasure and entertainment. The cringe contents makes them laugh and for that moment their minds are relaxed."

Highlights-I:
    a) Audiences watch cringe to escape from daily monotony and do not consider this a work of art.
    b) Cringe artists could suffer from delusional disorder.
    c) Audience unwhirl themselves after watching cringe contents.

Even Dr. Rati Rani Talukdar, statedd,
    "The audiences watch cringe videos for refreshment. The cringe contents are watched just to gain sadistic pleasure and nothing except that."

Commenting on the psychology of the cringe artist, she stated that cringe artist think themselves to be creative people. Except that they are attention seekers, they enjoy the attention they are getting no matter

how negative that attention is. They use the social media to get off their loneliness and insecurities. These artists reside in a fantasy world." She further added, "The cringe artists may be the stage of regression where they move away from the reality. They might be suffering from the psychological issue we call defence mechanism where people look for social approval in their lives and this helps them defend their ego."

On audience psychology, she said "humans enjoy poking a fellow human and that's what the audiences do. They enjoy the cringe contents as they can poke the artists and also abuse them, make fun of them openly over social media which helps them boost their ego. This group consists majorly of youngsters. Moreover audiences derive sadistic pleasure from the contents and thus have hugely titled to this genre of entertainment."

Highlights-II:
   a) Audiences watch cringe for refreshment.
   b) The cringe artists may be suffering from defence mechanism.
   c) Audiences derive sadistic pleasure i.e deriving pleasure from the humiliation of other fellow human being by watching cringe contents.

Findings and Conclusion

The contents which is cringe worthy are the most trending contents available over social media, specially the songs. Cringe, is the genre which has undoubtedly taken the social media by storm. This genre which is most popular among the younger group of people is the new medium for entertainment irrespective of their unusual nature and evoking of the prominent elements of cringe like, irritation and embarrassment among its audiences.

People enjoy cringe contents, share them over social media platforms and make these cringe artists internet sensation within a day. The reason behind this huge fan base and pull towards this genre is to get a temporary relief from daily stress and boredom. People watch the cringe songs and these contents become an escapism source. The contents no matter how serious they are intended to be yet the viewers find them hilarious, which is why they watch them over and over and enjoy them.

People also derive sadistic pleasure (which in the study is defined as a pleasure derived by the audience watching the humiliation of others) watching these cringe artists. People mock, abusive and insult the contents mostly over the social media and also continue to view them. The reason is that social media provides a space to express the views and abusing the cringe artist, provides relaxation to the viewers and also boosts their ego. People enjoy making fun of people and this gives them self-satisfaction and some level of confidence.

The cringe artist never are concerned with the contents they release all they want is fame in whichever way it is possible. They seek attention from the masses , and social approval, where from they derive confidence. They are may be totally drifted away from the reality and they mostly reside in an imaginary space.

Social media has served to be the best and no cost platform for these artist as well as the audiences. Despite providing temporary relief to the audience through its contents, cringe contents is the new favourite entertainment genre among the audience no matter how embarrassing and irritating the contents or the artist are.

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NEW MEDIA IMPRESSIONS AND ASSERTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study is to understand whether the parochial traditional media along with its gate keeping has been completely substituted with New Media, and are the age old reading habits replaced in reality? The second question it delves into is to estimate how far are Indian users of New Media suffering from ailments associated with long term use, as researched in developed countries? These includes the impact of usage on parenting, physiological, behavioural and cognitive skills of an individual. There have been a number of studies in the developed world to determine the impact of New Media on conventional media consumption and its impact on an individual and his/her behaviour like in Active Audience Theory, Character Theory, Media System Dependency Theory etc. In India, however, studies on issues that focus on the impact of new media and media consumption pattern are limited. This paper ascertains beyond doubt that New Media, when introduced, leads to re-designing the trends and usage of the pre-existing media. In the contemporary technological world of India, this study considers secondary data from Nielson Research Foundation and Indian Readership survey, to access internet usage in Indian population. The research methodology used is survey method, to ascertain patterns of use of the New Media for purposes of news consumption. The study reflects on the above questions and also delves into intricacies that revolve around longterm usage of media. Methodology used is analysis of secondary data and survey.

KEY WORDS-New Media, reading habits, Impact studies, problems associated with media usage.

INTRODUCTION

It is being conceived that the advent of New Media has posed a challenge to the conventional media. Consequently, the addition of a new media vehicle imparts their effect on other forms of media like print and broadcast. There has been a decline in the circulation of print newspapers, especially in states like USA. According to Kohli,2008) Global reading time has fallen from 32 minutes to 27 minutes. However in India, the effect of the New Media on conventional media is different. Since its emergence, New Media has affected individuals in different ways. Various research has been undertaken to examine the effects of this "new source," for accessibility of news, on individual's behaviour, physiology, believes, attitudes and its influence on other media forms, their consumption and business. With the introduction of the technical definition used in the work, a conceptual analysis of the various definitions, forms and theories related to New Media has been followed.

For the purpose of the study, New Media is defined as "on-demand access to content anytime, anywhere, on any digital device, as well as interactive user feedback, and creative participation." Another aspect of New Media is the real-time generation of new, unregulated content as most websites permit content to be added continuously. Most technologies described as "New Media" are digital, often having characteristics of being manipulated, networkable, dense, compressible, user-friendly and interactive. Some examples may be the   computer multimedia, video games, CD-ROMS, and DVDs. Internet or New Media is appreciated because it has paved the way for media convergence. It is a phenomenon through which, various different types of media (e.g. Computer, Television, Radio and Newspaper) are combining into a single media due to the advancement of technology. As a result, media content no longer falls neatly along the lines that used to separate print, radio, TV or film. This has catalyzed two way communication in a very unique way as it allows the user to share the information, consume it any time he/she wants, enables the user to access different information at a

single click, it endues him with "on demand" access to content and get rid of scheduled information consumption; a person can mute or skip the advertisement that does not interested him. Every new development of technology further facilitates the user to access information at convenience. There is a general trend of convergence between time and space. New Media brings together the "three Cs"—computing, communications, and content.

Until the 1980s media relied primarily upon print and analogue broadcast models, such as those of television and radio. The last twenty-five years have seen the rapid transformation of media which are predicated upon the use of digital technologies, such as the Internet and video games. However, these examples are only a small representation of New Media. The use of digital computers has transformed the remaining 'old' media, as suggested by the advent of digital television and online publications. Even traditional media forms such as the printing press have been transformed through the application of technologies such as image manipulation software like Adobe Photoshop and desktop publishing tools which not only make publication of high quality but also processing of news easier.

CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Media theory is traced in the five schools of Mass Communication theory; namely the Era of Mass Society and Mass Culture, Emergence of Scientific Perspective, Rise of limited effects, Cultural Criticism and emergence of moderate Effects. In the introductory chapter of the book on Mass Communication Theory, Stanley J. Baran and Dennis K. Davis have concluded by saying that all social theory is a human construction, it is dynamic and always changing as society, technology and people change. New Communication technologies have changed traditional notions of the mass audience, the mass communicator and the relationships between the two.

The Bullet theory in Mass Communication propounded that media left audience spell bound and mesmerised, indicative of the passive audience. Something, the world later witnessed under Hitler's propaganda messages, preparing for a world war. On the other hand, Limited Effects showed the discretion that audience employ on determining what they would like to view depending on their cultural disposition. Every time a new medium was made available, like the printing of Bible after Gutenberg's press, the reaction of fear followed as to how it would undermine the authority of the churches. Later with the advent of radio, the Authoritarian Theory reiterates how it was considered prudent to allow the government to be made responsible so that the elite status quo is maintained. The similar pattern of ownership was promulgating in India as Doordarshan was launched on September 3rd, 1959. Television effects have been studied in a number of audience effects studies world wide.(Bogart, 1972), Chung, L. C. (2012), Atkin, C. (1983). After the television, the latest invention in the 1970s was internet which has also been under introspection.(Barnes, S. H., &Kaase, M. (1979), Western, M. (2006), Wong, R. (2004).Chou, C., & Hsiao, M. C. (2000).

W. Russell Neuman (1991) suggests that whilst the "New Media" have technical capabilities to pull in one direction, economic and social forces pull back in the opposite direction. According to Neuman, "We are witnessing the evolution of a universal interconnected network of audio, video, and electronic text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication".

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Based on the above conceptual framework, there was an urge to understand whether New Media has actually displaced the old conventional medium. The following research questions were conceived

1. How do the consumers / audience use New Media?
2. Whether the consumers use conventional media at all and if so to what extent?
3. Which media are popular amongst users?
4. Which is the most reliable media?
5. What are the fallouts of consuming New Media on one's health?

    To ascertain the above research objectives, the following hypotheses were framed

    *   The New Media has emerged as a viable alternative to the conventional media
    *   Although New Media has a strong popularity base amongst a segment of the population, the reliance on the conventional media stands undisturbed.
    *   At best New Media merely rises as a viable substitute but does not displace use of conventional media.
    *   Although New Media usage is significant, but ailments associated with it can also be attributed to life style as well as nutrition, and not merely to long usage.

METHODOLOGY

To analyze the above research questions and prove the research hypotheses, the following four measures were employed (i) Media preference (ii) Time spent on media (iii) Credibility associated (iv) Associated ailments.

The methodology employed was survey of 120 students and teachers in a university. The research tool was a questionnaire consisting of sixteen research questions which were open ended. The students comprised of 60 respondents, with a mean age of 20.05 yrs and the teachers comprised of the other 60 respondents with an average age of 40.05 years. The students as well as the teachers comprised of a young lot as it is assumed that the New Media is a tool basically used by the younger generation.

The sample was drawn from a range of faculties like Law, engineering, Fine Arts, Journalism, Management, Biotechnology, Pharmacy and Hotel Management. This group therefore ably represents a good representative of the three commonalities- a) They are literate persons studying or teaching in University. b) They have access to internet and are high end users of internet spending at least 4-5 hours on internet every day. c.) The group comes from a socio-economic class which represents a life style representing the upper middle class (Rs. 12 lakh per annum-30 lakh per annum). The analysis takes into consideration the secondary data from Nielson's Research and Readership survey in India to establish the contexts and prove the hypotheses.

The questionnaire included both open ended as well as closed ended questions pertaining to preferred media, media consumption behaviour, time spent on reading newspaper and over the internet, effective media, any evident physiological effect due to media consumption, effect on literary and cognitive skills, socialization over real and virtual world and internet addiction. The respondents were contacted personally and their responses were recorded and on the basis of these responses the analysis of the data was done. It also includes an explanation of various Media Studies that form the conceptual analysis proposed earlier and it also contains a description of various studies undertaken to study various impacts of internet on an individual and its behaviour.

For this study, a cumulative response through interview of 120 respondents was done. Some of the respondents positively replied to the questions asked and also revealed other facts that they knew about "New Media" and its impact. They also discussed the approach being followed to complete the study. While many were reluctant to complete the questionnaire. After personally approaching

200 respondents, about 120 returned finished responses. The sample was drawn from the campus of a private university- Amity university, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh India. The analysis of the results is being discussed in the appendix and the important observations drawn, form the content in the conclusions.

ANALYSIS: NEW MEDIA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

It has been the contention of scholars such as Douglas Kellner and James Bohman that New Media, and particularly the Internet, provide the potential for a democratic postmodern public sphere, in which citizens can participate in well informed, non-hierarchical debate pertaining to their social structures. However, contradicting these positive appraisals of the potential social impacts of New Media, are scholars such as Ed Herman and Robert McChesney who have suggested that the transition to New Media has seen a handful of powerful transnational telecommunications corporations who achieve a level of global influence which was hitherto unimaginable. Lister et al. (2003) and Friedman (2005) highlighted both the positive and negative potential and actual implications of New Media technologies, suggesting that some of the early work into New Media studies was loaded with overtones of technological determinism – whereby the effects of media were determined by the technology themselves, rather than tracing the complex social networks which governed the development, funding, implementation and future development of any technology.

The argument holds that people have a limited amount of time to spend on the consumption of different media, therefore the Displacement theory suggests that the viewership or readership of one particular outlet leads to the reduction in the amount of time spent by the individual on another. The introduction of New Media, such as the internet, therefore reduces the amount of time individuals would spend on existing "Old" Media, which could ultimately lead to the end of such traditional media.

In contradiction, studies conducted by the author under the aegis of *Indian Council of Social Science Research* in India show that among Indian audiences, receptivity of multiple media, particularly in terms of receiving news is increasing. There is a consistent effort to gather from different sources, compare and contrast and then draw individual conclusion after discussion. (Project on Role Of Media in Ideological Realignment Of Political News And Behaviour: A Study Of Talk Shows In Indian Media, 2013).

THE PERSPECTIVE IN INDIA

Convergence is changing the approach of not just users of new media, but also encouraging relearning in users of the traditional media. The addition of LED HD Televisions and built in setup boxes to record the aired programs have proliferated in the Indian urban middle class, more digital Television users. According to the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)-PricewaterhouseCoopers report on the media and entertainment sector in India, TV penetration in India is 60 per cent. Lower than that of developed countries where it is greater than 90 per cent.

The 2013-14, Annual Report of TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India), India had 129 million TV-owning households, of which 64 million were analogue cable TV subscribers and 30 million had digital cable. Active DTH subscribers were 37.19 million. This number is expected to grow in five years. According to the latest Nielson Informant Mobile Insight, there are 51 million smart phone users in urban India. This indicates that about 17% mobile users in India use smart phones. According to statistics by Internet Live, there is a penetration of 19.19% population that use internet. This backdrop sets the pace to analyse implications of New Media usage and its impact on Indian users.

When the same data is compared with subscriptions to news papers as available on the site of the Audit Bureau of Circulation, interesting findings are revealed. The ABC website given percentage of population subscribing to both regional and English language newspapers is; in Hindi it is 35.7%, followed by English at 17.3% followed by a range of other languages follows. Therefore the Indian perspective appears widely different from the developed world where internet penetration is high reliance and internet dependence for news is also high. To further this claim the Nielsen Reader survey of 2014 can be quoted where figures of the readership of Hindi language (DainikJagran rises from 15527 in 2013 to 16631 in 2014) as well as English language daily show a steady increase. (Times of India 7254 in 2013 to 7590 in 2014).

CONCLUSION

The survey results proved that newspapers were subscribed by 98% of the respondents, therefore the age old habit of reading the newspaper has not declined amongst the respondents. More than 60% spent up to an hour on reading the newspaper. Therefore the print media had the highest impact (34.15%), followed closely by television (32.25%) and radio (19.6%). Whereas New Media showed 14% impact on respondents. The interesting aspect was that news from more than one source was being utillised as 66% respondents admitted using internet for news after having read the newspaper. 72% used television and newspaper a combination which was the most popular choice. New Media usage reflected more for personal reasons although only 5% respondents used internet strictly for professional reasons.

Although accessibility of New media amongst the respondents was not a problem but preference of other supporting traditional media like print or broadcast shows that the Indian populace using internet prefers to delve in more than one kind of vehicle to retrieve news. This was also evident as 65% respondents treated newspaper as the most credible source against internet as preferred by 9.76%. This data can be used to ascertain the validity of the hypotheses.

The responses showed internet use of less than 5 hours but high resultant ailments and complaints meant that problems could be linked to both diet and lifestyle. Cumulatively, Indians use internet for seeking job in an ever shrinking job market, hence the problems and perspectives of net use are widely different. The reliance on elders as reflected by the resurgence of joint family set up and social contacts do not isolate Indians easily. Although a high percent admit addiction to net but the associated ailments do not show chronic health hazards. Indian internet usage reflects mere 19.19% as against countries where scores of people are addict to internet. This analysis shows that only 24% say yes when asked if they are addict to internet (Data Analysis Chart 16). This shows that a very small fraction of people are obsessed with internet use and still people love to socialise in real world and find other thing more important things to do than spending time on internet.

In India individual privacy is still not deep rooted and people love to be in company of friends and family and discuss their problems and issues. This is revealed in the Data Analysis chart 13, 14 and 15 where many respondents say they find themselves more expressive with people to find solution to their problems. 65.85% of respondents talk to their elders and friends. Only 14.63 % search for solution over internet for their problems. The concurrent statistics point to the fact that internet has less impact on the relationships of individuals in India.

According to Data Analysis Chart 1, 98% agree that they have subscribed to newspaper and only 66% read news from internet. This shows that print media is deep rooted in the Indian society and a dense proportion of audience rely on it for the news .In order to become more popular internet has to penetrate deeper among the audience. Print Media is still predominant on readers. This stands true in the study as Data Analysis Chart 8 shows that 34.15% respondents believe that Print Media has predominant effect on them. New media lags far behind in this run as only 14.63% people find it predominant.

With almost all the content being available on internet the credibility of the content is still questionable. It is said that written document is most credible source and only Print Media fits into this condition. What is printed once remains unchanged for ever, but in New Media editing is easily possible. Anything that is written once can be altered the next moment. To the question of credibility of media Data Analysis Chart 7 shows only 9.76% of respondents find internet credible whereas 65.85% believe that newspaper is more credible.

Studies like those done by Chinese Academy of Science state that internet has a great impact on an individual's physiology but in India where people spend very less time over internet this issue is negligible as out of 65.85% people who are suffering from any ailment like weak eyesight, improper posture etc. only 62.96% believe that it has resulted from prolonged consumption of media, (Data Analysis Chart 9 and 10).

In case of any effect on literary and cognitive skills due to internet usage, 48.78% feel that it has affected positively, and 34.15% say that they don't find any effect on these skills due to internet, as stated in Data Analysis Chart 10. This is because despite spending time on entertainment and social networking people prefer spending time reading things and searching for valuable information. Compared to this the negativity is far less it is just 17.07 % people believe that internet has negative impact on their literary and cognitive skills. Similarly the Brain Power study shows that internet has an impact on the brain power of human beings but statistics show that 53.66% respondents say that they experienced no change in brain power because they do not use it for a long duration. (Data Analysis Chart 12).

According to the secondary data available on http://www.internetlivestats.com/internet-users/india/, the internet usage in India shows the following pattern of growth.

Year (July 1)	Internet Users**	User Growth	New Users	Country Population	Population Change	Penetration (% of Pop. with Internet)	Country's Share of World Population	Country's Share of World Internet Users	Global Rank
2014*	**243,198,922**	14%	29,859,598	1,267,401,849	1.22%	**19.19%**	17.50%	8.33%	3

Source: *Internet Live Stats* (www.InternetLiveStats.com)
Elaboration of data by *Internet & Mobile Association of India (IAMAI)*, *International Telecommunication Union (ITU)*, *World Bank, and United Nations Population Division.*

The Nielson's survey also quotes on the website http://www.mruc.net/sites/default/files/IRS%20 2014%20Topline%20Findings_0.pdf
The net users are 58518000 and newspaper or magazine users are 301510000 with a base of 962389000 individuals who are above12 years of age.

These statistics show that in developing countries like India, the situation differs a lot from the developed world. The penetration level of internet is low and conventional media still holds a strong position. However change is imperative for anything to grow that is why conventional media repeats reports on its websites and social media. This is symbiotically benefiting the internet and the print media itself as a popular medium. This enhances credibility but also helps them to grow in long run.

Following conclusions have been drawn from the study:
Internet is a less popular medium than projected by the west though its popularity and penetration in the Indian population is 19.19%, it is slated to grow further with access through smart phones. It proves the hypotheses given above, that New Media has emerged as a viable alternative to the conventional media. Although New Media has a strong popularity base amongst a segment of the

population, the reliance on the conventional media stands undisturbed. At best New Media merely rises as a viable substitute but does not displace use of conventional media. There is no question of death of print media rather it has added one more platform and taken the new media into its ambit.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS FROM THE STUDY

According to Galtung & Ruge (1965) in case of news value, two specific values of consonance and personification lie altered in the contemporary world as evident in India. Consonance means, if a journalist has a mental pre-image of an event, if it's expected to happen, then it is more likely to be reported. This is more likely poosible if the event is something the journalist wishes for to happen. The consonance used for agenda setting and gate keeping has become diluted because of the use of social media through internet. The Nera Radia tapes controversy, and the initial hesitant publications of the Delhi rape case, Kejriwal-Anna movement, are good examples when the main stream media refuse to take up the issue head on but persistent and consistent internet content from social media force them to break the silence.

The second value is personification when events that can be discussed in terms of the actions of individual actors are more likely to be reported than those that are the outcome of abstract social forces. By the same token, social forces are more likely to be discussed in the news if they can be illustrated by way of reference to individuals. A research on Prejudices of Portrayal: A study of Femicide Reporting in Select Indian Newspapers (Asian Man, Vol.7 Issue 1 &2) concludes that the initial reporting of a Delhi rape case, although given initial front page exposure, started being ignored until the case was highlighted by the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union who used the Munirka bus stop most often from where the girl was initially picked up.

This support from the students union was enhanced by use of New Media through social media sites generating a cascading effect on the coverage of the rape case by the mainstream media. In other words, the effect of personification lies shredded with the current cult of New Media revolution involving the Indian populace. Future trends of research should not be myopic in dealing only with the New Media and ignoring the traditional print and broadcast as consistent researches reveal a trend of substitution rather than displacement of the traditional media. A new and high speed platform has been generated in New Media that has re-shaped traditional media usage but not completely disposed it.

IMPLICATIONS OF NEW MEDIA USE

Most of the studies that were conducted in west reflected the threat possessed by New Media to the conventional media especially print. A number of studies show the decline in circulation of newspaper and the time spent in reading hours like the Pew Research Centre "*Number of Americans Who Read Print Newspapers Continues Decline*" 2012. According to these studies internet has a great impact on a person's behaviour, physiology, brain power, brain mechanism,
traditional reading, attention span, productivity and even on relationships.

Thinkers like Chomsky have established that media train the mind of the people to a virtuous attachment to their government and to the arrangement of social, political and economic order in general. He goes on to say that the purpose of the media is to cultivate public stupidity and conformity in order to protect the powerful from interference by the lower order. This analysis of media behaviour holds true for both the new media as well as the old media as most new media owners have an electronic version or edition which is an exact copy of the day's edition. Critics would say that blogs, Twitter or Face Book and the social media in general produce content which is generated by multiple people and therefore defies agenda setting. But the truth is that social media groups around the world do not have universal followers.

In conventional media like television, with increasing channels and pressure to perform for TRP ratings, the channels have to come up continuously with something new that sells. In the west particularly most of media are privately owned. So when it comes to choose between profit motive and civic responsibilities the media are biased towards profit motive. This modifies the make-up given to news which is given an entertainment quotient which is higher than information quotient. From agenda setting to framing (shifting citizen's frame on public issues) and priming (altering the criteria by which voters choose), media research has revealed a lot of persuasion that goes on the part of media to favour a certain policy. This largely forms part of the process of opinion building.

In India, approximately half of all Indian households own a television. In 2010, the country's collection of free and subscription services over a variety of distribution media, was through 828 channels out of which 150 were paid channels. As in 2013, India had 129 million TV-owning households, of which 64 million with analogue cable TV subscribers and 30 million had digital cable. DTH subscribers were 35 million. It is also estimated that India had (as on March 2013) over 828 TV channels covering all the main languages spoken in the nation. (Ministry of Information and Broadcast, GOI).

The Media creates a wave of specific issues- called Agenda Setting in Communication research- this hype created by media multiplies through different media channels. As against the information and entertainment quotient in the West, the Indian media is divided into, presentation in English and regional language. The English news is more direct while dramatisation is seen in regional language news. This kind of approach of some channels has in fact led to criticism within their own peer group and the sensational presentation has been categorically negated. In spite of this the local masses show preference for watching such programs.

MEDIA STUDIES RELATING TO PHYSIOLOGICAL/ BEHAVIORAL IMPACT OF NEW MEDIA USAGE

Various researches have been undertaken to scrutinize the effects of Internet use. Some researches employ studying the functions of brain in the Internet users. Some studies claim that these changes are damaging, while according to others the changes are advantageous. Conclusively the main ailments that have resulted from excessive use of New Media can be summarized as below.
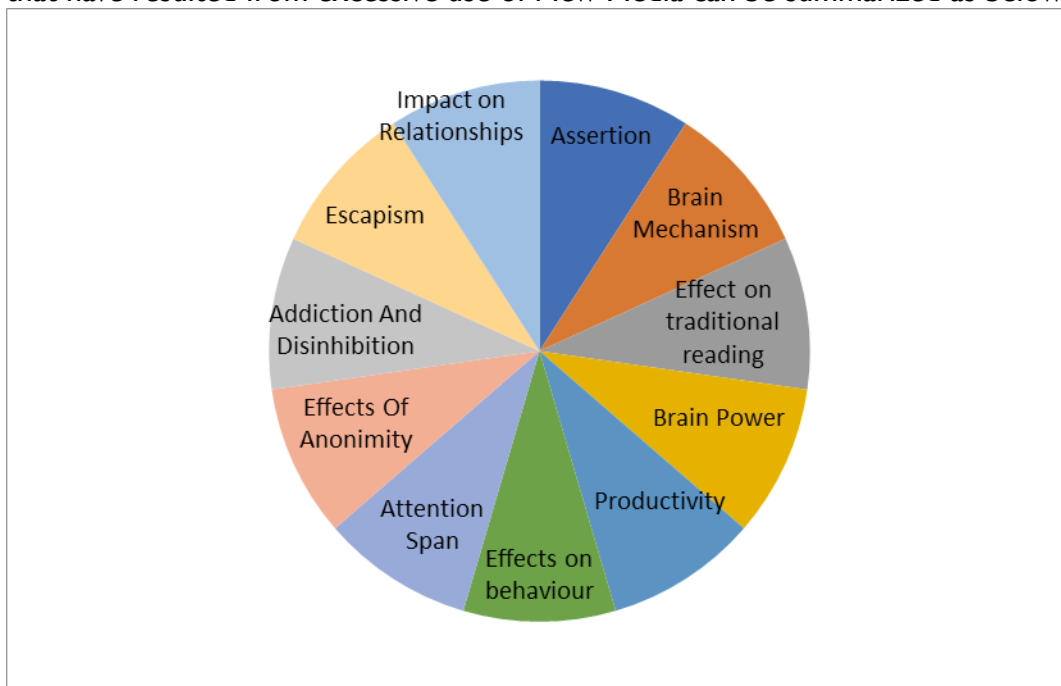
PIE-CHART SHOWING AREAS OF STUDY UNDER "IMPACT OF INTERNET"

The most important contrast that comes after observing Indian usage as projected by Nielsen statistics and concluded by the survey is that the penetration of internet being only 19.19% of the total population and average time of usage around 5 hours, the ailments that plague Indians are not necessarily the result of internet usage. According to studies in the west, American writer Nicholas Carr asserts that Internet use reduces the deep thinking that leads to true creativity. It is concluded that the hyperlinks and overstimulation means that the brain must give most of its attention to short-term decisions. It becomes difficult to retrieve the most essential and useful information as content on net Psychologist Steven Pinker (year), asserts that people have control over what they do, and that research and reasoning never comes naturally to people. His perception is that experience does not revamp the basic information-processing capacities of the brain and asserts that the internet is actually making people smarter. There is a tendency to acknowledge the new generation as more techno savvy than the old and this assertion basically is derived by the prowess that youngsters show in using the net.

Psychologist Andre De Castro from York College, NY says that social networks are the true downfall as social networks allow people to draw on their "mirror image."

The BBC describes the research led by Hao Lei of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Wuhan, specialised MRI brain scans showed changes in the white matter of the brain—the part that contains nerve fibres—in those classed as being web addicts, compared with non-addicts. In an August 2008 article in *The Atlantic*, Nicholas Carr asserted that using the Internet may lead to lower attention span and make it more difficult to read in the traditional sense. The worldwide recession in reading habits is an example. In many workplaces, Facebook and MySpace are blocked because employers believe their employees will be distracted. The web filter violations have come into existence as internet is looked upon more for purposes of entertainment. Everywhere, social networking is considered as potentially harmful for people. Facebook accounts disprove that they have hard-to-verify health problems like depression; employers have checked social networking sites to vet future employees.

According to the New York Times, although attention span has been decreasing over time (decreased from 12 seconds to 8 seconds in 2000-2012), it is found that those who read articles online go through the article more thoroughly than those who read from print. But online interactions initiates one on unrestraint behaviour and minimization of authority. Whereas it may help highly anxious people who are socially conscious, but at the same time it brings down the level of actual interaction and lowers self confidence. People become addict or dependent on the Internet through excessive computer use that interferes with daily life.

Aric Sigman's presentation to members of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health outlined the parallels between screen dependency and alcohol and drug addiction: the instant stimulation provided by all those flickering graphics leads to the release of dopamine, a chemical that's central to the brain's reward system". Last, the net provides a route to escape prevalent problems. This when combined with doing away the nursing and child keeping parental obligation, leads adults to the problems of passive parenting and benign neglect, caused by parent's reliance on gadgets".

The above study proves the fourth hypothesis that although New Media usage is significant but ailments associated with it can be attributed to life style as well as nutrition, not merely to long usage.
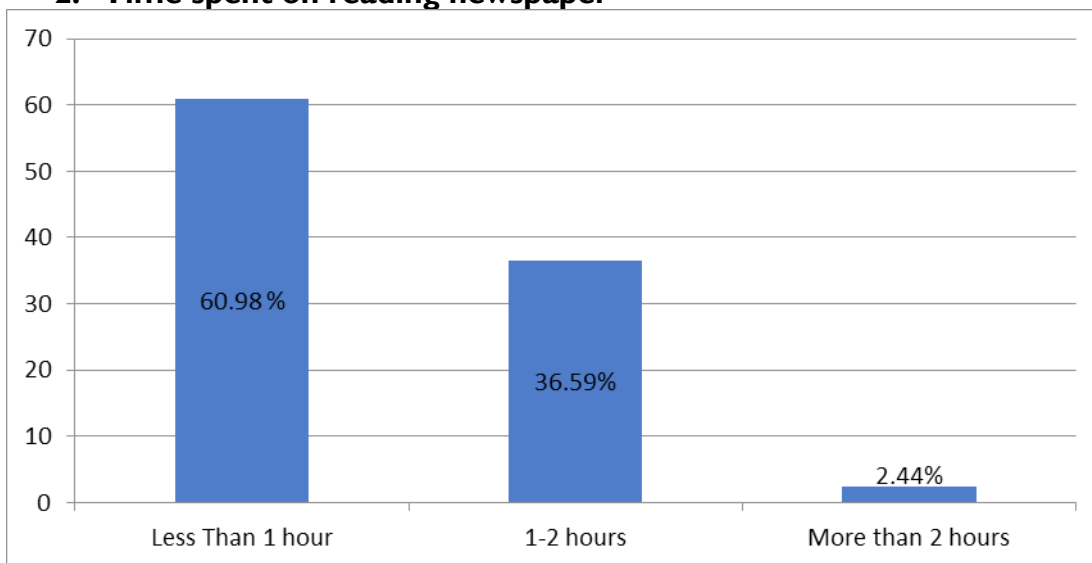
APPENDIX

ANALYSIS
1. Newspaper Subscription
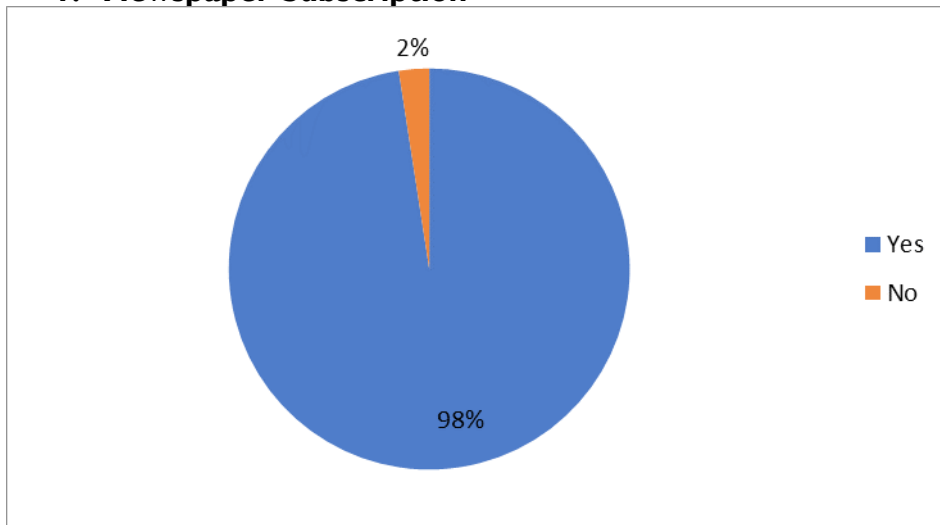
PIE-CHART SHOWING NEWS CONSUMPTION

The data clearly shows that a large fraction of people still rely on newspaper as their first source of news and print has a strong market in India

2. Time spent on reading newspaper

BAR SHOWING HOURS OF NEWSPAPER READING

Since most of the respondents belonged to working group they could not spend more than 1 hour in reading news paper. This can be seen from the data as 60.98% say they spend less than 1 hour but even then about 36.59% of respondents spend 1-2 hours in reading newspaper which is quite a large fraction.

3. Accession of news from internet
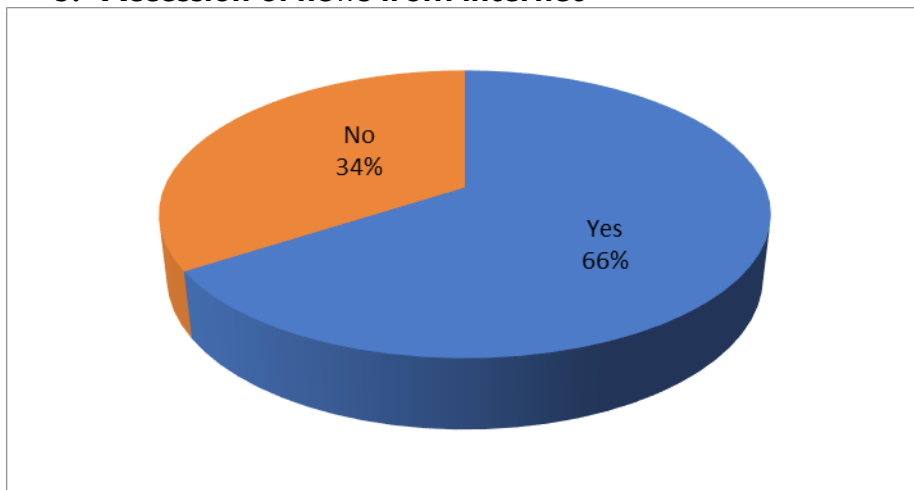
PIE SHOWING ACCESSION OF NEWS FROM INTERNET

66% of the respondents read news from internet which shows that the medium is quite popular among the audience. And they consider it as a source of news. Although when compared to the first question, it can be concluded that many of the respondents are using both print and internet as source of news.

4. Purpose of using internet
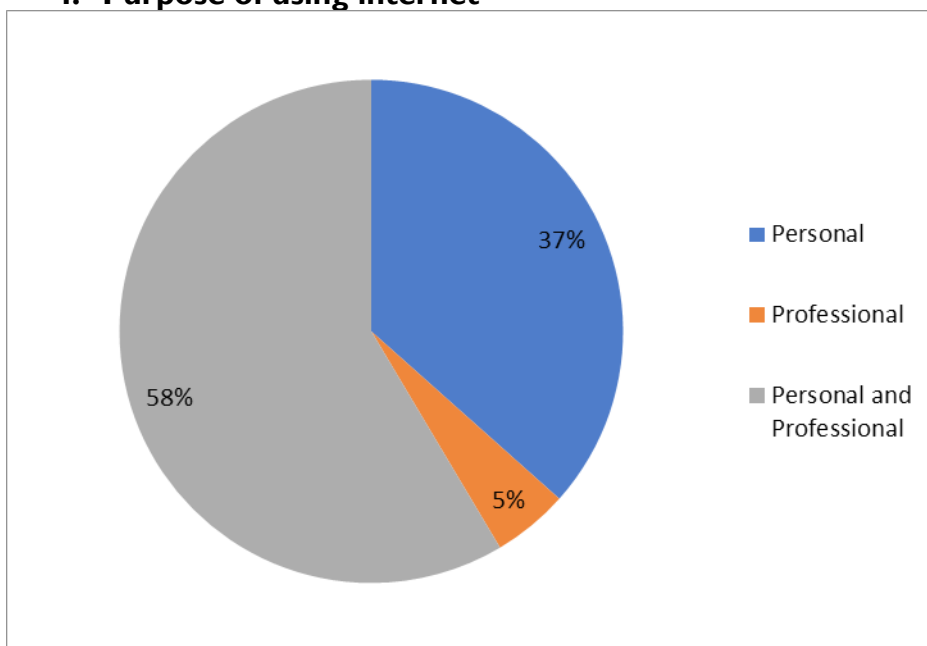
PIE CHART SHOWING PURPOSE OF USING INTERNET

As the data clearly shows 58% respondents spend time over internet for personal as well as professional reasons, they use it for mails, research work and sometimes for entertainment. 37% use it solely for personal purposes and only 5% use it for professional reasons only. Data indicates that internet usage exclusively for professional purposes is a rarity.

5. Media having predominant effect
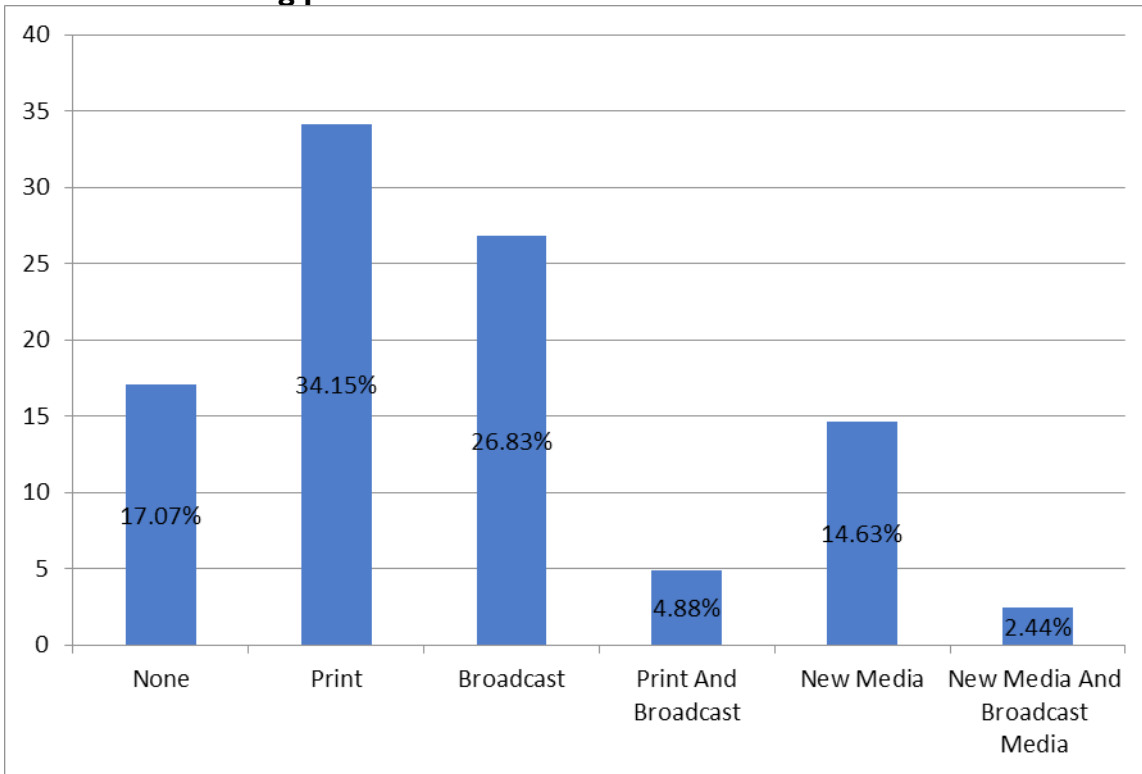
BAR SHOWING POPULARITY OF MEDIA VEHICLE

The data shows that for most of the respondents (34.15%) print has the predominant effect on them, followed by broadcast (26.83%) which is another popular medium among the masses, for 14.63% New Media has the predominant effect. Rest of the respondents depend on combination of media.
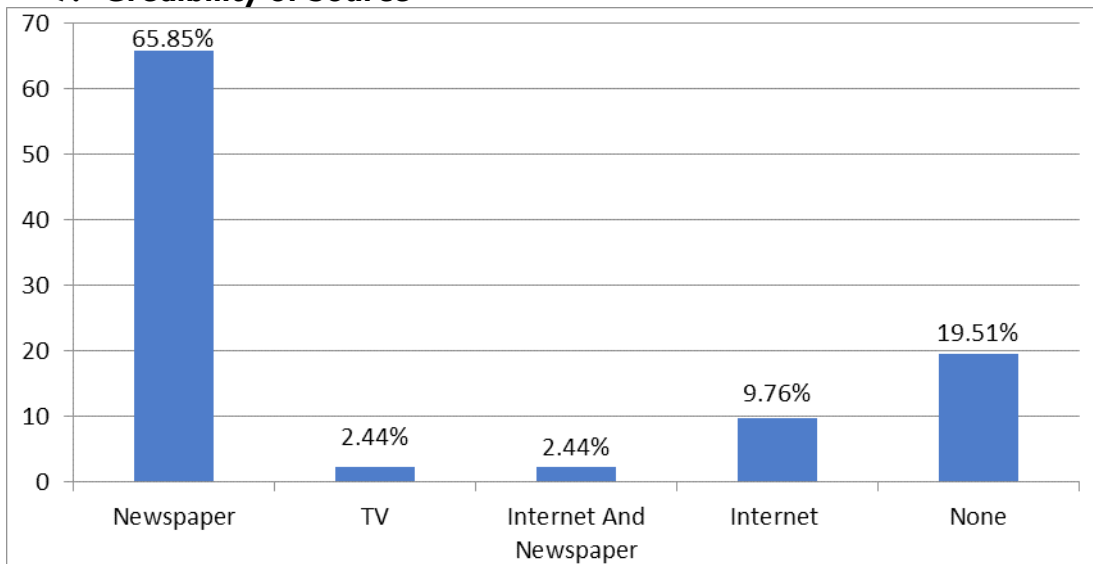
6. Convenience of accession of Newspaper or Internet
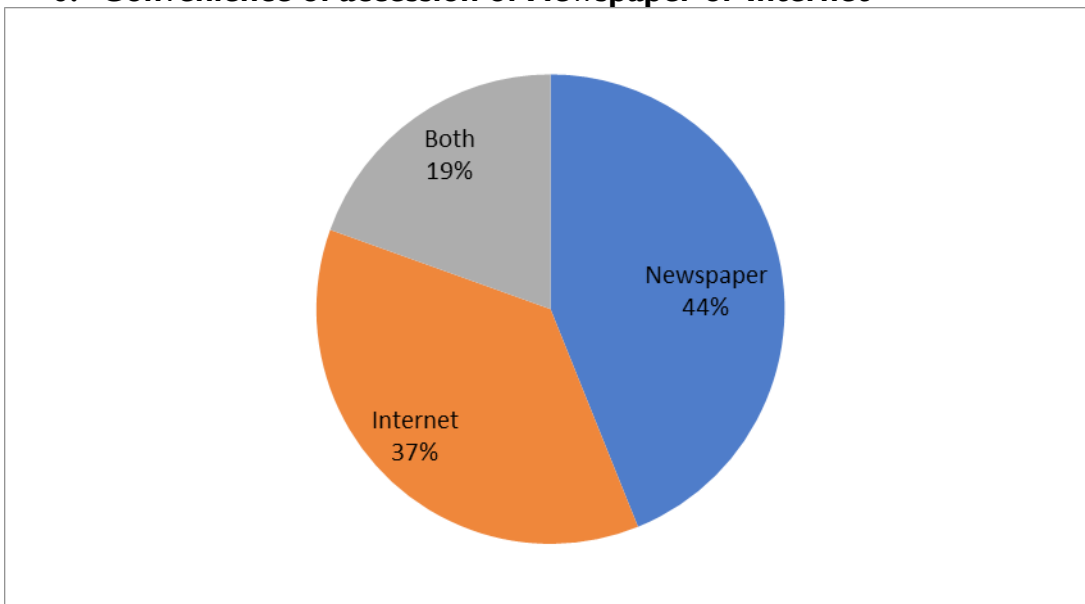
PIE CHART SHOWING PREFERENCE OF USAGE

The data shows that the largest fraction of respondents find newspaper to be easily accessible. For 37% respondents, internet is easier to access.

7. Credibility of Source

BAR CHART SHOWING CREDIBILITY OF SOURCE

The data shows that when it comes to credibility 65.85% people believe in newspapers. Assimilating this response with the responses generated in the initial questions on time spent in reading and subscription, it can be safe to say that print in India has a strong footing, much more preferred than the internet which seems to operate at a platonic level only.
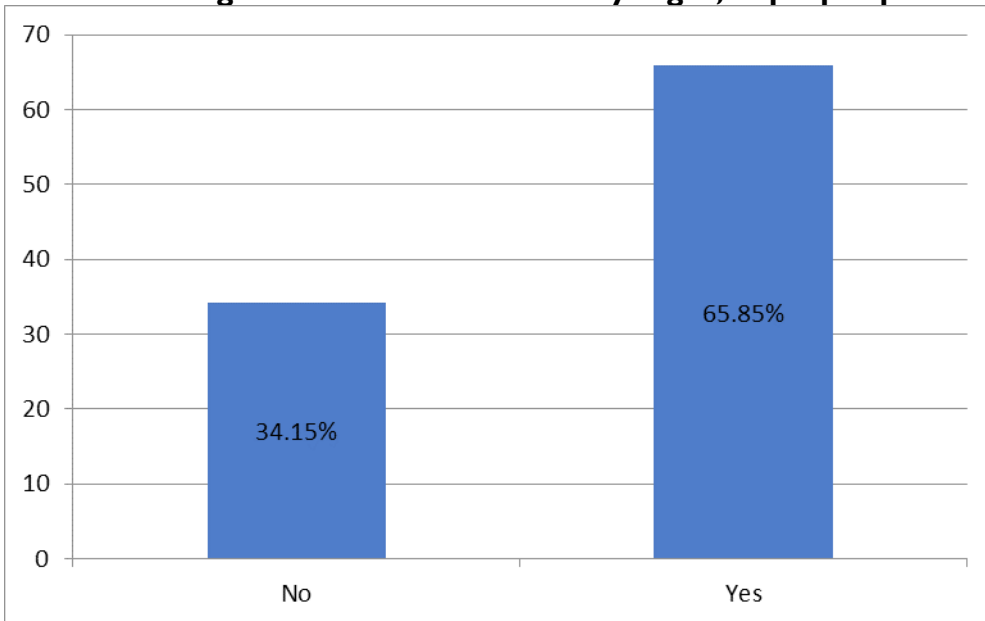
8. Duration of computer use
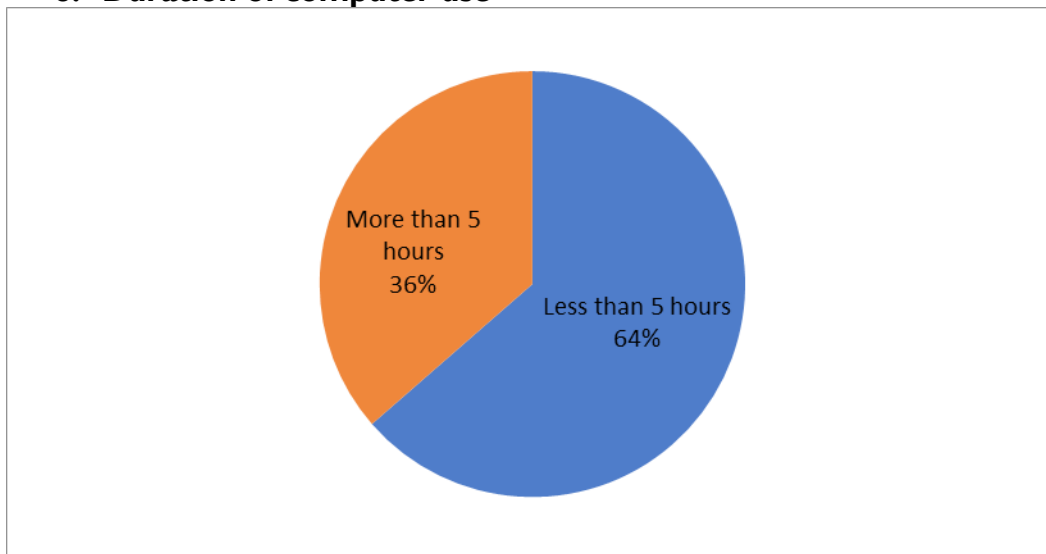
PIE CHART SHOWING DURATION OF COMPUTER USE

Quite a large number of respondents use computer for less than 5 hours a day. 36% respondents agree that they use it for more than 5 hours but they reveal that they use it during their office hours for professional purpose.

9. Suffering from ailment like weak eyesight, improper posture etc.

BAR SHOWING NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS SUFFERING FROM AILMENTS

65.85% respondents agree that they are suffering from ailments like weak eye sight, improper posture. It is to be pointed out that as already established the consumption of internet is not primarily to gain access to news but it could be on account of work in the office or work related to academics or even indulgence in social network sites, therefore all the collateral damages of postural defects, eye sight problems and other psychological and neural problems may be attributed to the use of computer.

10. Prolonged consumption of media resulting into ailment
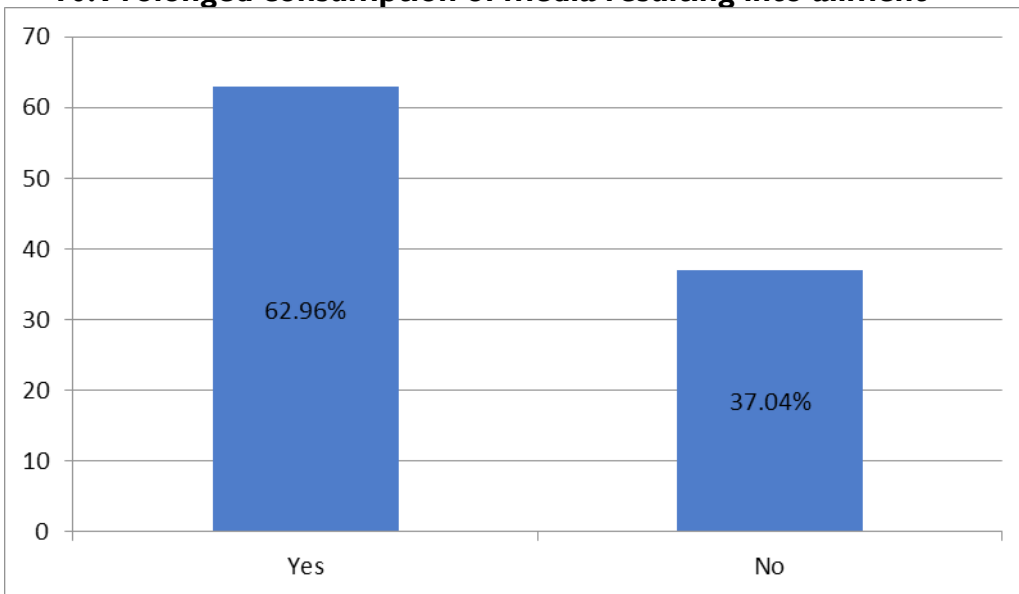
BAR SHOWING PROLONGED MEDIA CONSUMPTION RESULTING INTO AILMENTS

Out of the above 65.85% respondents only 62.96% feel that it has resulted due to prolonged consumption of media which is not an alarming statistics. Here the responses attribute to media vehicles which are audio-visual in nature therefore even television is included in the response.

11. Internet's effect on literary and cognitive skills
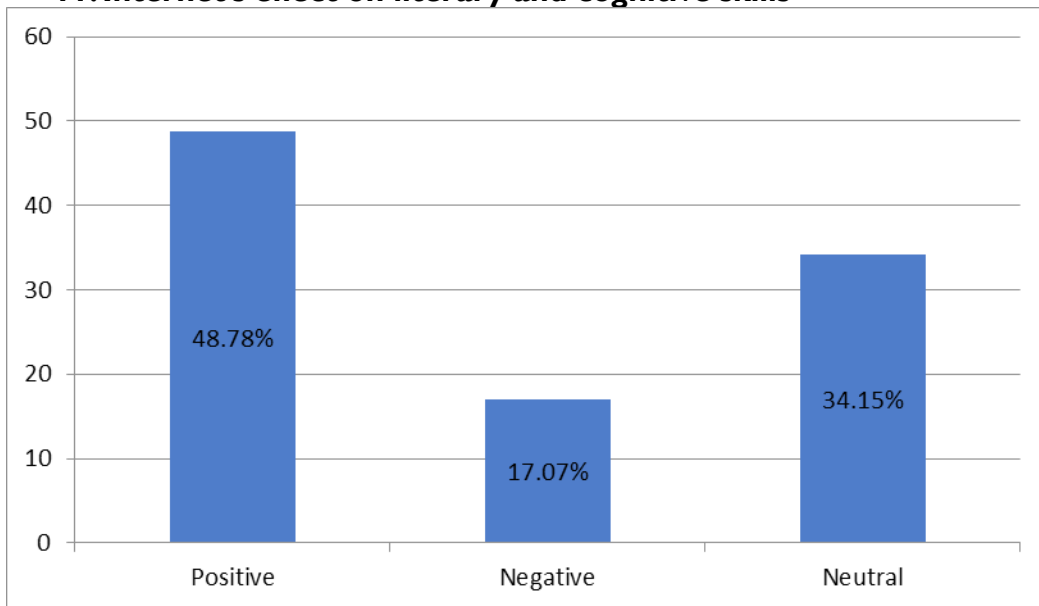
BAR SHOWING EFFECT OF INTERNET ON COGNITIVE/ LITERARY SKILLS

Most of the people agree that internet has affected positively on their cognitive and literary skills because they spend time over internet reading and searching for new things. At the same time, there are 34.15% respondents who are confused and another 17.07% who take the impact as completely negative. The negative responses increase as effect on brain power and attention span also fall into the ambit of the questions.

12. Internet's effect on brain power and attention span
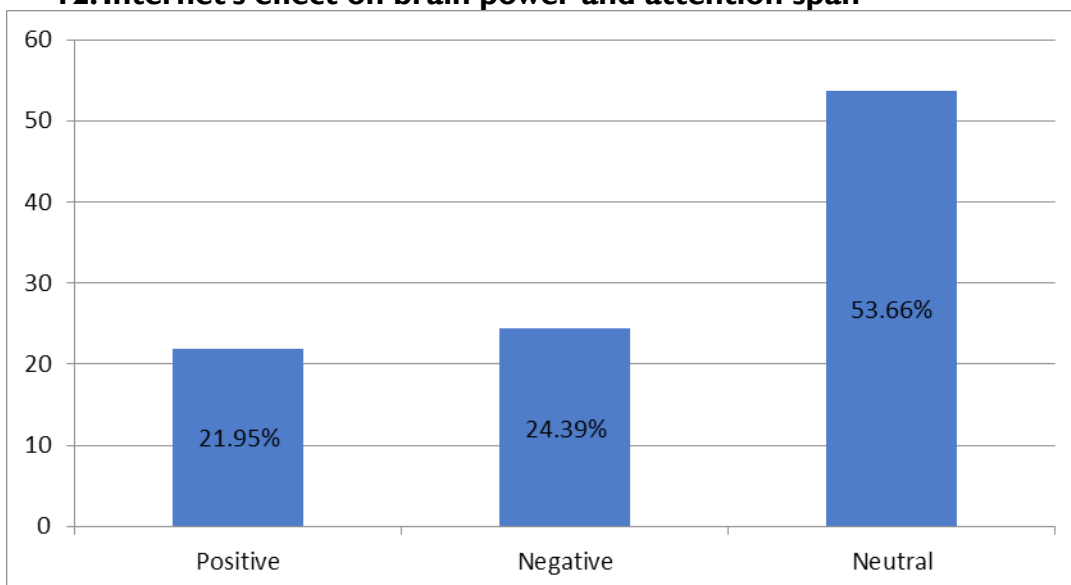
BAR SHOWING IMPACT OF INTERNET ON BRAIN POWER AND ATTENTION SPAN

53.66% people feel that internet has caused no effect on their attention span or brain power this is so because they do not use it for a long duration. The responses are collected from the people who are basically academicians and work in Amity. These responses therefore are based on the hours of usage and therefore there is variation. The negative response of 24.39% can therefore be concluded to have come from respondents who are using internet for a longer duration and thereby being impacted negatively.

13. Level of socialization
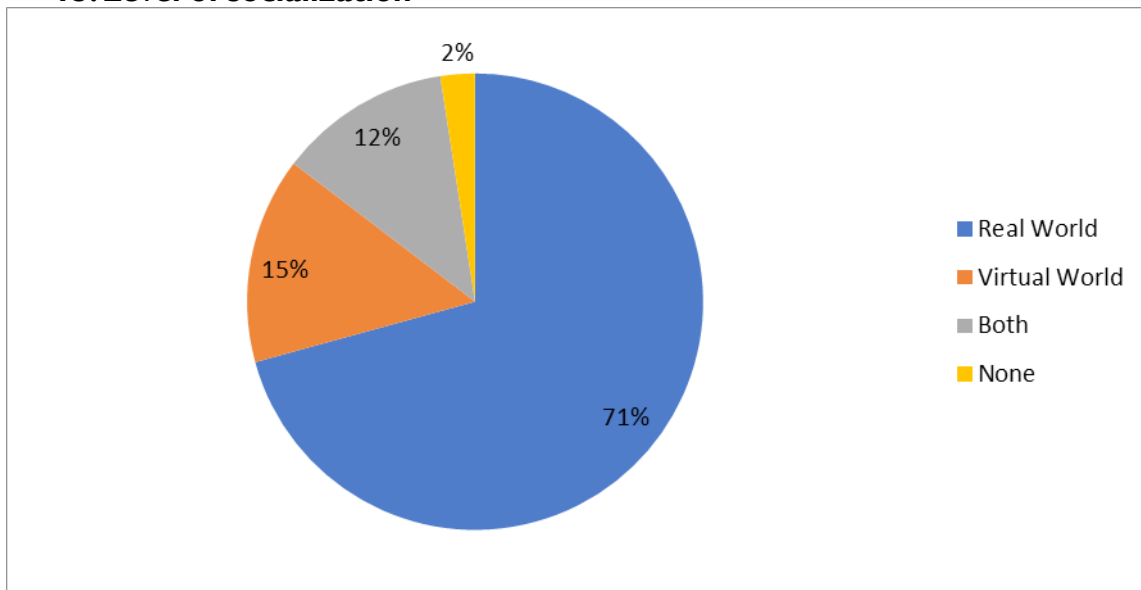
PIE SHOWING LEVEL OF SOCIALISATION

Statistics clearly establish that despite the nuclear family and individualistic culture creeping in the society, 71% respondents love to socialise in the real world, only 15% respondents are more active in virtual world. The minor 2% who do not have any virtual life reflect the respondents who either do not or seldom use internet for socialising and more of their work on computer is related to official category.

14. Expressibility of feelings
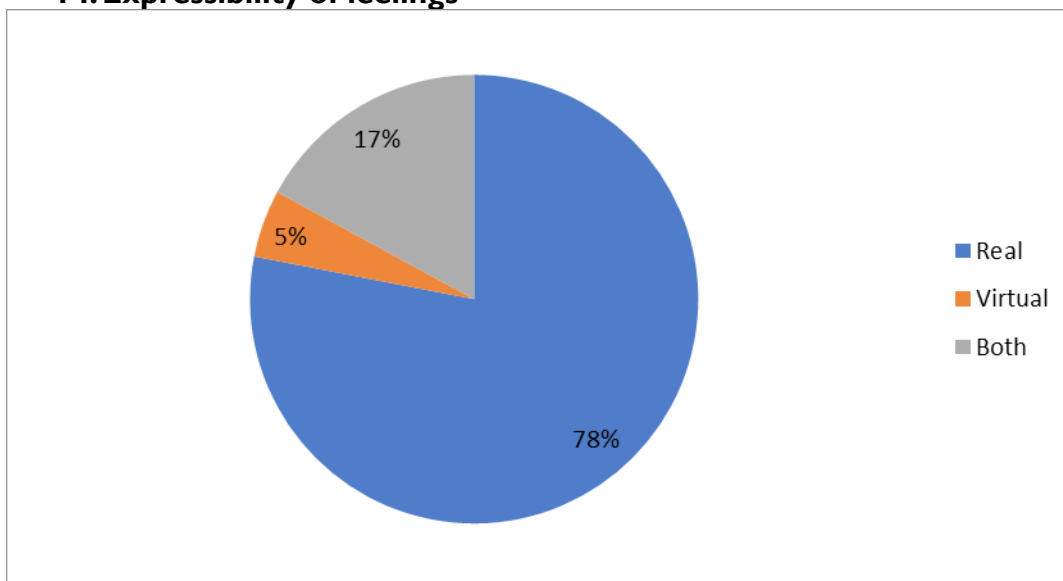
PIE SHOWING RESPONDENTS EXPRESSING TRUE SELF IN DIFFERENT WORLDS

The statistics indicate that internet is still not deep rooted as an option over which feeling can be expressed. Quite a large number of respondents (78%) find themselves more expressive in the real world. Only 5% feel that they are more expressive over the internet.

15. Looking for solution of problems
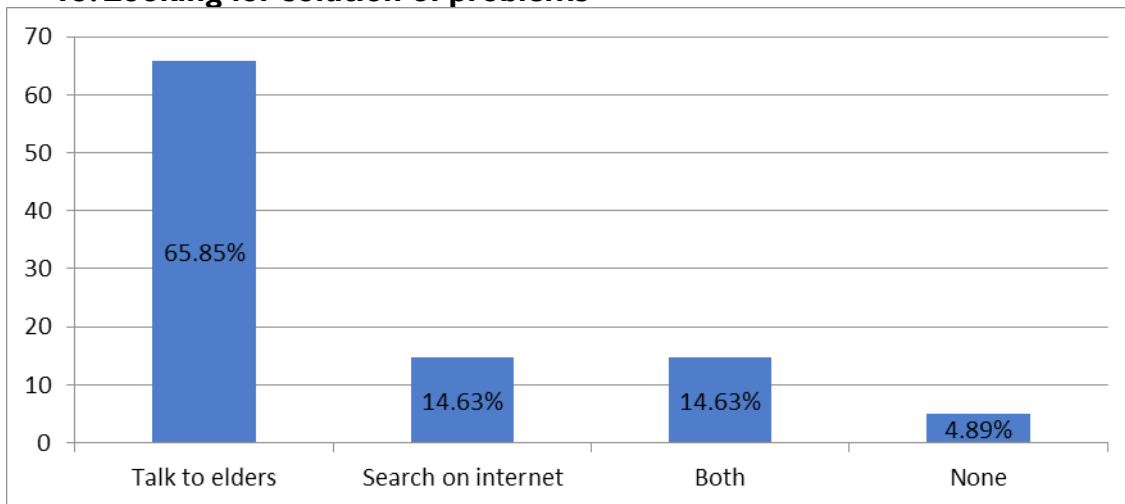
PIE SHOWING INCREASING NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS RELYING ON ELDERS FOR SOLUTION

65.85% respondents talk to their friends or elders in order to look for the solution of problem, 14.63% search on the internet for the same. There are people who rely on both the things and such group comprises only 14.63% of the total number of respondents. The response on both indicates the rising level of reliance on information generated through the net.

16. Addiction to internet
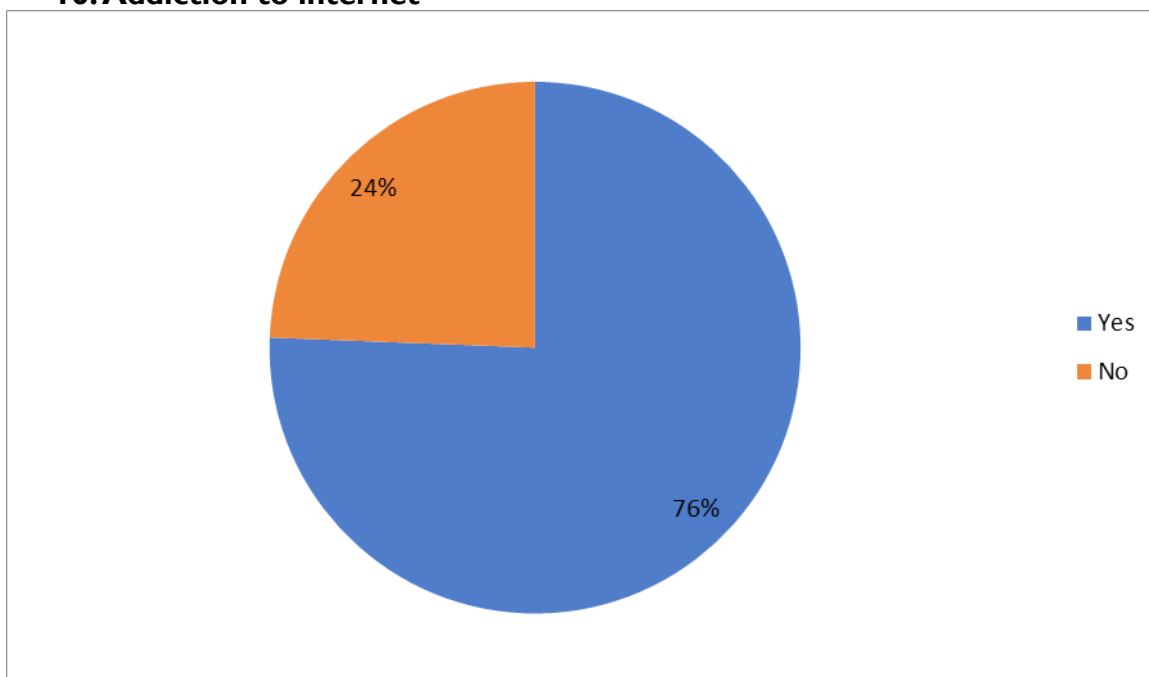
PIE-CHART SHOWING ADDICTION TO INTERNET

76% people find that they are not at all addicted to internet. But the 24% respondents who say they are addicted clearly points to the fact that medium is gaining popularity among masses. But the overall responses when analysed, points out that the cases as reflected by the respondents do not fall into the category of chronic ailments. Respondents who are showing a high level of usage may have faced problems of related types such as affected eyesight, postural problems and even lesser attention span, but there is nothing to say that the touch with reality has gone. As a society, India still enjoys the middle class dining table conversations, and rising trend of nuclear families facilitates such bonding therefore complete isolation and virtual life of individuals is not a norm in India as of now.

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DIGITAL GREEN

Anamika Ray

Introduction

It can be said that seeing isbelieving. Technology when combined with social organizations can effortlessly facilitate the diffusion of innovations. With the help of hi-tech boom in media, by the end of 2016, Digital Green aspires to reach one million farmers across eleven thousand villages in India and other parts of South Asia along with Sub Saharan Africa (Annual Report 2012).

Digital Green aims to empower as well as improve the livelihoods of rural communities especially in farming sector by engaging target audiences in a process of knowledge exchange. Though the concept of participatory communication is not novel, participation in a digital platform like producing localized videos and disseminating them through human mediation can be considered a new paradigm for rural development. The videos are produced 'by the community.' The topics of these audiovisual resources are based on the various needs and interests 'of the community'. The videos are screened 'for the community'. Digital Green, a nonprofit international organization, has made this possible. This approach has been found to be ten times more cost effective, per rupee spent, than traditional agricultural extension. services.

With the help of local public, private, civil society organizations and the engagement of local communities, Digital Green has produced over 4,000 videos in more than 28 languages, reached 4,000 villages and over 400,000 farmers. Emphasizing on the knowledge exchange of improved practices and technologies pertaining to agriculture, livelihoods, nutrition, and health, the organization has selected nine states (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, and Madhya Pradesh) of India and parts of Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Afghanistan in association with 20 partners.

The Background

India, like most developing countries, depends upon agriculture for its existence. Agricultural extension often represents a major part of government policies. But as technology has pervaded certain parts of society, the digital divide among farming communities has expanded. Considering this context in 2008, Digital Green was started, to involve communities in development (especially on agriculture extension) by combining social organization and technology. The use of participatory video for information dissemination on various improved practices of livelihood and agriculture by Digital Green represents a unique strength, where the adoption of new process for increasing productivity has become very easy for the farmers.

Reason Why DG

Dearth of required knowledge on farming
Asymmetric access to information in rural communities
Continuous land degradation
Increasing transition to high-value agricultural production
Decreasing rate of public investments in agricultural development
Trend toward liberalization of agricultural trade
Though India has the second largest number of extension workers, it cannot be ignored that due to a variety of factors, such as increasing debts, farmers are forced to sell their land due to loss, and some even take the extreme decision of suicide. In this context, Digital Green came into existence with the idea to support agricultural communities through proper training, problem solving consultancy, direction for suitable marketing and knowledge exchange.

Groups attending disseminations	Number of videos shown	Adoption rate	Average disseminations per day	Average attendance per dissemination	Villages with recent disseminations
38143	1334	72.81 %	441.15	16.03	557

Country	Viewers	Villages	Videos Produced	Disseminations	Viewer Adoptions	Practices
Ethiopia	26515	535	78	6507	30077	40
Ghana	561	8	2	25	370	1
India	415141	4686	518	154477	510690	148
Niger	0	0	2	0	0	0
Tanzania	94	2	8	10	0	0
Total	442311	5231	608	161019	541137	189

Source: http://www.digitalgreen.org/analytics/overview_module

How Digital Green Works

The organization's approach involves three key elements: Initiation, Production, and Diffusion.

Initiation: This is basically the stage of background research and training. It includes mobilization, situation analysis, and capacity building. In this stage, the preliminary work is to select villages and understand the local context, identify resource persons from the community that can be engaged, and prepare a project plan. Video topics are decided through focus group discussions. Digital Green then provides training on video production, mediated video screening, and feedback and data management to the local community resource persons. They are taught how to handle video camera, write storyboards, edit videos, handle Pico projectors, facilitation skills, and data capture and analysis protocols. As a part of data management, Digital Green introduces its management information system, called Connect Online Connect Offline (COCO), Analytics Dashboards, Videos Library, and Farmer book.

Production: This phase includes content production, storyboard writing, shooting, and editing. Based on expert opinion, local relevance, and community and scientific appropriateness, the content is decided for the final production. The community members serve as the actors as they are keen to share their experiences and be seen as role models within their communities. The videos do not have a script, but rather, employ a simple storyboard format to ensure the completeness and clarity of the messages. The storyboard includes a story line for the video, visual panels, and key adoption points. After video production, the community filmmaking team uses simple video editing software, like Windows Movie Maker, to assemble the footage into a final video. Subject Matter Specialist (SMS) then approve it before distribution.

Diffusion: This stage includes activities like video dissemination, farmer adoption, and community usage data and feedback recording. Videos are distributed to community groups, mostly women-led self-help groups, using a battery-operated Pico projector. These screenings are facilitated by a member of the community who pause and rewind videos and engage community groups in an interactive discussion based on the presented content. There typically are 6-8 such groups in each village and each are comprised of 10-15 farmers that attend one video screening every fortnight. The videos are screened are sequenced, based on geographic and time sensitivies related to agricultural cycles. At each screening, mediators record farmer attendance, questions, and interests and afterwards which practices farmers actually applied on their own farms. This data is recorded in COCO. Digital Green also has quality assurance protocols for gauging mediator performance and cross validating the adoptions that mediators report.

Major Activities

Path To Use Our Approach to Support A Program

On Maternal and Newborn Health in Uttar Pradesh

Innovations in Nutrition Globally (Spring) Project in Odisha

Save the Children, and International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

International Development

Enterprises (IDE) to Improve Livelihood Opportunities of Farmers by Promoting

Low-Cost Irrigation Technologies and Improved Agricultural Practices

Collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture, Oxfam America, and Sasakawa Africa Association

To Strengthen the Government of Ethiopia's Extension System 'The World Cocoa Foundation' to Promote Practices Related to Cocoa farming.

Source: http://www.digitalgreen.org
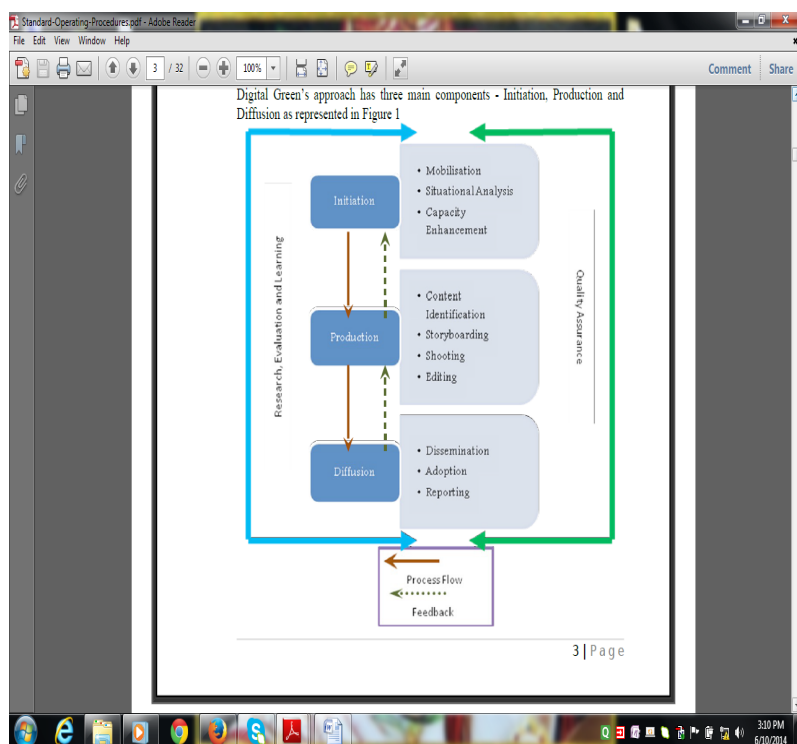
Conclusion

Digital Green is reshaping agricultural development by building a social network of community members learning and sharing locally relevant knowledge with one another through technology. Digital Green also established relationships with other organizations, like IRRI and ICRISAT, to bring together research and extension partners on a common platform. Digital Green has extended its approach for agricultural extension to issues related to community mobilization, financial literacy, health, and nutrition.

The organization received the Manthan Award in 2012 and Rs. 3 crores as Global Impact Award from Google in 2013. With 75 team members, Rikin Gandhi (CEO of DG) is the man of the noble success of the organization. This Indian American boy is the anchor of Pan India Movement, which is called Digital Green. He was awarded IFA Norman Borlaug Award by the International Fertilizer Industry Association in 2012.

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Dr. Ray was an Assistant Professor in Mass Communication at Gauhati University, Guwahati. This article has been reviewed by Mr. Rikin Gandhi, Chief Executive Officer of Digital Greens and he can be reached at rikin[at]digitalgreen[dot]org. Photo Credit: Digital Green.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN ONLINE NEWS PORTALS: A STUDY ON TAMIL LANGUAGE NEWS ONLINE SITES IN SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

The way in distributing and updating, the information has been drastically changing in recent past through the emerging new media. The sender and the receiver experience the attitudinal transformation in information path. In the post war era in Sri Lanka, the dimensions of online journalism particularly the vernacular Tamil language news portals shifts the parameters to rapid, gossip, personalization, intruding in private life and non-accountability from the horizons of ethical deliberations. The study employed the content analysis and approached the trends appeared in news online sites via expected ethical guidelines for the press in Sri Lanka and identified the deviations and the problematic pattern of functions.

Keywords: Online News Portals, Ethics of Press, Post War Era

1. Introduction

The history of Sri Lanka's mass media commenced two centuries before. The first printed periodical, the Ceylon Government Gazette, was started by the British colonial administration in 1802; it continued as the journal for government notices. The first newspaper in English was launched in 1832, whereas the radio broadcasting commenced in 1925 and the television broadcasting in 1979. [1]

The commercial internet services arrived in Sri Lanka in 1995. The newspapers in Sri Lanka started their web editions from September 1995; state-owned Lake House commenced issuing internet editions of their English papers 'Daily News' and 'Sunday Observer'. In September 1997, 'Virakesari' the first Tamil newspaper entered cyber space through its online edition. [2]

This manifestation makes a notable difference in the Sri Lankan mass media scenario and among the receivers in receiving news and, finally led to a new era. Further, it paved the way to a number of online news portals to enter the Lankan news horizons.

The necessity and development of these online news portals arise dramatically when the civil war reached its peak in latter part of the nineties. During the war period, when the local print and electronic media covered by the various pressures of the Sri Lankan government, the news portals in Tamil, which were administrated by the Tamils in Sri Lanka and abroad, played a major and vital role in informing the ground situation and the then current developments in war tone areas to the world.

Since there were strict government regulations imposed on the local and foreign independent journalists to access the ground reality freely, the people in and out of the country, they were unable to know and understand what is going on in the war-affected areas actually. The mainstream media: state and private press and electronic channels of Sri Lanka more or less acted as the organs to convey the stand of the government and ruling authorities and released the news based on the arena permitted by the government. They were not in the position to report from the independent sources and unbiased sectors of the society.

The government imposed the restriction through the formal and informal censors. The security forces, particularly the military took the upper hand in handling news and information like other war times all over the world. The journalists and media outlets who try to maintain the press freedom and function as a fair press struggles to continue their way because of the numerous forces and threats comes from different angles ; even led to kidnapping, disappearance, assaulting, and sometimes killing.

At that juncture, the web news portals comparatively functions with the freedom in reporting about the

war and unspoken issues which were purposefully neglected or omitted or compelled to sidelined by the mainstream media. The Sinhala, Tamil, and English web news portals attracted the common people to help them to obtain the above news items as an alternative medium; satisfying the urge for the balanced and neutral information. Apart from the web editions of the mainstream print and electronic media, the websites bloomed and administrated by the journalists who flew away from the country and settled abroad because of the threats to their lives, and the websites administrated by the pro - rebel forces: individuals and organizations who were on the scene.

2. Ethical Dilemmas

Sri Lanka's constitution adopted in 1978, guarantees freedom of speech and expression. Section 14 (1) (a) says 'Every citizen is entitled to the freedom of speech and expression including publication'. However, as the limitation, there are some notable clauses can be found in the same constitution, as follows:

Article 15 (2) of the constitution says that the freedom of expression may be limited and such restrictions prescribed in law in the interests of 'racial and religious harmony, or in relation to parliamentary privilege, contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.'

Further, Article 15 (7) of the constitution says that the freedom may be limited by restrictions prescribed in law in the interests of 'national security, public order and the protection of public health and morality, or for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedom of others, or of meeting the just requirements of the general welfare of a democratic society'. [3]

Even though the constitution pointed out about the restrictions, there is no sound legal procedure, in terms of regulating the systems and functions of online news portals in Sri Lanka and thus provides them a space to continuously enjoy the so-called 'freedom of expression' in a non-positive way.

There are regulating systems to monitor and streamline the print media in Sri Lanka; unfortunately, not for the electronic and new media fields. Even the Code of Professional Practice (Code of Ethics) of the Editors Guild of Sri Lanka adopted by the Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka is binding only the press institutions and journalists from the print medium.

The Code of Ethics has its objective to make the journalists abide to be free, responsible, and sensitive to the needs and expectations of the readers, while maintaining the highest standards of journalism.

Further, the Code of Ethics asked to follow the newspapers to strive for accuracy and professional integrity, and to uphold the best traditions of investigative journalism in the public interest, unfettered by distorting commercialism or by improper pressure or by narrow self-interest which conspires against press freedom.

Moreover, the Code of Ethics allows the newspapers and journalists, while free to hold and express their own strong opinions, should give due consideration to the views of others and endeavour to reflect social responsibility.

However, unfortunately, the online news portals do not take any of the above seriously since they do not have any moral or legal obligations to abide by the Sri Lankan framework.

At same time, it is important to mention at this juncture that the above Code of Ethics is not widely accepted by the media community, and it is not legally binding the whole print media, as per the observation of the 'Rapid assessment on the status of media in Sri Lanka', the report prepared by the eminent scholars and journalists. [4]

Apart from the existing Code of Ethics, the Ministry of Mass Media and Information of the previous government drafted a Code of Media Ethics, which was planning to cover all media including news casting websites.

The draft code addresses reader complaints and reporting on suicides and crimes. Further, according to the draft, Journalists are advised against identifying victims in reporting on sex crimes and to be avoided

providing "excessive details" in reporting on suicides ; If readers complain and an editor or journalist does not "apologize or regret an error," the journalist "must be prepared to offer the aggrieved party a fresh opportunity to reply and, Journalists are also barred from linking to sites that the government has banned. [5]

Anyhow, strong criticism come out for this draft and the journalists and advocacy groups express deep concern that its provisions were too sweeping and could curtail freedoms already under threat in Sri Lanka.

Another main concern is that this particular draft code of ethics cannot be set out as regulations under the existing law of Sri Lanka.

The earliest Press Council Act of 1973 deals only with the print media such, newspapers. However, the draft code attempts to herd the electronic Media and websites. The only form of law applicable to these forms of media is the Sri Lanka Telecommunications Act No. 25 of 1991, which by its provisions, does not provide regulations of this nature, and by its preamble does not suggest any such inclusion. [6]

Finally, the former president assured the editors that the government was not going ahead with the code.

At this situation, when anyone tries to find the status of media in the present condition, they can easily find out that the online news portals become the hot zone in terms of the struggle between the media freedom and the violations.

Why it has become a noteworthy, the silence of guns, and the end of the war divert the most of the online media from the serious issues such as reporting war and the problems relevant to humanitarian concerns to gossip, sex, crime, abuses, political aspirations, and personal attacks.

This is not a blanket charge against all the Tamil online news portals in Sri Lanka or administrated by the Diaspora Sri Lankan Tamil community. Some of them are very keen on the professional ethics, handle the news release genuinely, and protect their image as reliable and trustworthy among the audiences. Further, they have been consistently maintaining an open access for the feedback and the reflection and the counter opinions too.

However, the problem arises with a notable number of news portals, which function under anonymous administrators and unidentified editorial teams but has a very popular status among the local Tamil readers. Considering all the above, the study entitled 'Ethical Dilemmas in Online News Portals: A Study on Tamil Language News Online Sites in Sri Lanka' tries to trace out the new dimensions and problematic issues of the vernacular Tamil language news portals in the post –war period in the light of ethical guidelines for the press in Sri Lanka.

For this study, the samples are collected from the Tamil online news portals for the last two months, October and November 2016 for the observation and discussion.

2.1 Gossiping

In order to increase the number of hits and the popularity, most of the Tamil online news portals create more space for gossip news mostly from the unknown sources and the news are based on emotions and sensations that are not widely covered by the print and electronic media. The gossip news about the VIPs (Very Important Persons), admired figures, political leaders, academics, community leaders is the most popular.

Even though the common readers are not in a position to believe or taken into account these types of reporting, but the sensation makes them run through and create the 'talks' in different platforms. Most of the time, these news bits commonly evaporate with the time, some of the gossips very seriously affect the relevant people and make impacts not only on their public life and on private life as well ; while considering the social setup of Sri Lankan Tamils, the so-called 'image' or 'honour' , the self-esteem of a person being treated very important.

2.2 Missing the Opportunity for Making Critical Opinions

The notable feature identified in the Tamil online news portals is the increasing number of youths tends to divert their media attention towards the new media from print and electronic, particularly to know, and update the developments in the news field. However, unfortunately, there is no valid evidence for critical opinion making on salient issues in the Tamil landscape of Sri Lanka by using this tremendous change of interest.

The lack of involvement in follow-up events and non-continuation in news coverage among the online journalists and news portals are the basic reason for this missing part in critical opinion making. Even, sometimes, the journalists do not understand fully the seriousness of the need of making critical opinion in terms of public welfare and the professional responsibility. This manner of ad-hoc approach has become a trend in Tamil online journalism and affects the desired outcome expected from the media activities.

2.3 Partiality in exposing corruptions and scandals.

The investigative journalism always attests the effectiveness of the worth of democracy and the importance of transparency in administrative and financial systems. When the story grows in scope and depth beyond a routine report that provides an opportunity for the investigation rather than just 'reporting' the incident. The Tamil online journalists do not have much interest in multi source than single evidence and, not having accountability over the publishing news, the consequences since much of the portals are not registered, and they do not adhere to the legal system, thus create a vacuum in real investigative journalism.

Further, generally, the investigative reporting often takes a longer time to research and they are based largely on the documents and the extensive interviews. The intolerant journalists who are much interested in hurry-up pattern of news presentations would not penetrate and spend time and energy regarding them. This paves another setback in extensive reporting such as investigative journalism.

The certain Tamil news portals associated with political ideologies, political parties at times openly act as the propaganda organs and, some are believe to closely work with intelligent and secret services of the country. They are mostly biased in exposing the irregularities and anomalies in the system. Moreover, this way of reporting on corruptions and scandals dilutes the ultimate aim of creating the environment to make the common person informed and making awareness. This will also deviates the urge to make the people indignant towards these mishandling of the public funds and properties.

2.4 The problems in accurate reporting

The media must take all reasonable care to report news and pictures accurately and without distortion and every reasonable attempt should be made by the editors and the individual journalists to verify the accuracy of reports prior to publication. However, in most of the instances, the Tamil online news portals are not following these basic principles. Further, they tend to publish the news materials in such a way and endorse them without evidences and verifications.

2.5 Lack of professionalism and understanding the basics of journalism

It is noted that the lack of professionalism and exposure are the biggest barriers among the working journalists of Sri Lanka, as well as among the online journalists.

Particularly, when considering the challenges in media education and training at all the levels in Sri Lanka: schools, universities, and training centres they clearly made severe impacts in different dimensions in keeping professional standards and following ethical norms.

The following are some of the main concerns:
There is a block in incorporating media professionals and making them as part of the teaching media educators in universities since there is a regulation that a university degree is must for the university teachers. The curriculum of the most of the degree programmes are not reviewed from time to time according to the requirements of the job market. The schools do not show much interest, particularly schools in Tamil medium, to introduce and encourage their students and staff to engage in the 'Communication and Media Studies' subject at the General Certificate in Education, ordinary and advanced levels. The very low numbers

of texts are available to study on media education in the vernacular languages, particularly in Tamil. Only very few Master's degree and research programmes are available in the universities. Comparatively there is no opening available to accommodate the Journalists who are working in the professional field without the academic qualifications, degrees and the unwillingness of professional media outlets in media industry to provide internships and training for the media students. [7]

2.6 Publishing personal details of victims and suspects
As per the Code of Ethics, 'specify the need to be cautious when publishing personal details of a suspect unless it is of public interest'. However, some of the Tamil news portals frequently violate this code of ethics. For instance, when reporting a court case, the portals reveal not only names but also the other information, such as, a suspect's profession, whereabouts, and personal information.

2.7 No Space for Legal Obligation
There is no law or regulation requiring all journalists including online news journalists to register before they can practise their profession in Sri Lanka.

Only the requirement is an identity card issued by the Department of Information, known as Media Accreditation. This is permits the bearer to attend the official press conferences and the state functions.

Visiting foreign correspondents may also apply for a temporary accreditation with endorsement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.Until to date, out of the many Tamil online news portals function in Sri Lanka, only ten have been registered, others are anonymous.

As per the open announcement of Ministry of Mass Media, local news websites are requested to be registered and the registration expects the respective sites to acknowledge and follow ethical media practices and maintain standards.

There are two different views among the administrators of the news portals; favour and in favour towards the registration. Chief Editor of the Sri Lanka Mirror, Kelum Shivantha Rodrigo says, 'we, Sri Lanka Mirror, have been for registering websites since the beginning. When it came initially in that way, we applied for registration. No sooner than we submitted our application, we received registration. Only 24 websites got registered the first time. We are the seventh on the list. At that time too, we did not go against the registration of websites '. According to him, only unregistered web sites publish websites false or mud-slinging reports. [8] On other hand, Free Media Movement and Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association have taken a different view. C. Dodawatta, secretary of the Free Media Movement says that 'these types of decision may not help improve media freedom. Such decisions must be taken via discussions and agreements with all stakeholders. Government alone must not take such decision.' [9]

Hence, there is no way to accesses the portals for legal inquiries or clarifications if there any violations. The unregistered online news portals cannot be brought before the courts under the civil defamation laws in the country. Earlier, libel was a criminal offence as per the Section 479 of the Penal Code. 10 It was repealed because of the pressure of many Sri Lankan media organizations and international advocacy groups.

Another setback in regulating the online news system through the common structure of Sri Lankan media is the space for the complaints about the online news portals is not included in the Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka (PCCSL). The Press Complaints Commission of Sri Lanka (PCCSL) formed in 2003, to institutionalize self-regulation as a voluntary mechanism by the join hands of media industry and journalists' associations. PCCSL's Dispute Resolution Council (DRC) comprises 11 members, six of them represent civil society, and the balance five is senior journalists. It's main concern to resolve inaccuracies that may appear in newspapers, magazines, journals and, online editions of newspapers but not online news portals.

Another parallel regulatory system formed by the government; Sri Lanka Press Council (SLPC) in 1973 is also failed to gain the credibility among the media advocacy groups and media organizations and, widely condemned for the utilization for political agenda in the last regime of Sri Lanka.

The new government does not show any interest in its continuation. The media advocacy groups want to deactivate it permanently. [11]

2.8 Streamline the Contents

Other than the pornographic websites, others cannot be blocked with Sri Lankan court orders obtained by the police. There is no legal provisions to block any websites involve in publishing hate speech or personal attack on any common person.

Anyhow, there is a dilemma over this issue when it is use for satisfying political aspirations of the authorities and the government. On par with that, there is blocking so far implemented for the political reasons in the name of national security, the independent media observers charged. The first documented blocking of access to a website within Sri Lanka was in June 2007, when Tamilnet (www.tamilnet.com), a Tamil news website, was blocked by all major Internet Service Providers (ISPs) on the orders of the government. [12]

The media advocate, Centre for Policy Alternatives (CPA) noted the internet freedom in Sri Lanka as follows: 'The directives of national security and arbitrary judgements by government officials on what constitutes the national interest and public morality have been manipulated to stifle dissent and block web content that is considered offensive'. [13]

Unregistered websites are also included in the list of blocked. In early 2012, the Free Media Movement (FMM) filed a fundamental rights petition challenging the Ministry of Mass Media and Information for the grounds for blocking five unregistered websites. However, Supreme Court of Sri Lanka dismissed the case a few months later. [14]

The 'Rapid assessment on the status of media in Sri Lanka' further says that 'Arbitrary blocking of political and critical websites ended only in mid January 2015, shortly after the new regime was elected. Court sanctioned blocking of pornographic websites continues.' [15]

In 2016, there is recent development; Sri Lankan government authorities have blocked a Tamil online news portal over a complaint that it had carried news critical of the judiciary. According to that, the access to newjaffna.net, a Tamil online news portal has been blocked in Sri Lanka on a Justice Ministry order, Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) said.

The website had reportedly been critical of the Kilinochchi Magistrate and the High Court Judge of Jaffna both from Tamils dominated Northern Province and after several other complaints were lodged against the website, for allegedly carrying false information and trying to incite racial hatred, the government said. Director General, Department of Government Information Dr. Ranga Kalansuriya stated investigation on the website would be made available soon and until then the website's access will be blocked. [16]

Further, it was found that the addresses given in the blocked website said to be evasive and not authentic according to government authorities. It is suspected that the site is being updated from Oslo, Norway and not from Sri Lanka.
The advocates for media freedom in Sri Lanka against this move from the government and argue that 'there is no law that allows Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) to block web sites without proper legal procedures'. [17]

3.0 Conclusion

Whatever the innovations and technological developments are, they should help the mankind by elevating their standard of living and thus facilitate to live a dignified life. The development in media also should contribute to the same. The expansions of online media, that pave the way for the democratization and the liberation of sharing information, should not be the cause of demoralization of the human values and ethics. The force and the urge of the beginning of the Sri Lankan Tamil online news portals and the role they played in crucial time of the struggle for political freedom set an example for the 'alternative war journalism' for the suppressed people.

A medium that forgoes its conscience over the human interests and wellbeing of the people cannot be a medium that voices for the voiceless.

At this juncture, the review over the problematic issues of Tamil online news portals in ethical background and the concern of the trend they tend to move shows the gravity of the regulation and accountability, and this issue must be addressed immediately. In the meantime, the authorities should realize the necessity to have a genuine and none biased system to monitor and guide the online news medium in Sri Lanka.

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Asian Journal of
Communication Studies
Volume 2 Issue 2 | July 2019