



Profile of Campus Radio (98.6) Hazara University, Pakistan: The Role of Community Media in Civic Education

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ABSTRACT: This study highlights the role of community media in inculcating civic education in communities. Community media is an independent, civil society based media that operates for social benefit. These are small scale non-profit entities that enable the local community to express their issues, concerns, cultures and languages. The harmony between the awareness and understanding of rights and duties of a native towards the nation-state is enabled by civic education. Sound 'Civic Education' allows citizens to get involved in their own democratic governance; they do not just passively accept the orders or surrender to the demands of others. Studies suggest that communities have positively been facilitated by community radio stations during election process due to awareness of civic responsibilities and rights. Community radio and other forms of media are the tools that spread the education and information among communal beings, therefore it enables them to think and consequently people have a voice in decisions that affect them. Community media is an agent of communal transformation. The role of community media- in the form of community radio- regarding civic education is discussed in this paper. A quantitative survey method was conducted in Hazara University to gather public opinion regarding role of Campus Radio FM 98.6 in promoting civic awareness in the communities of Mansehra District.

Keywords: Community Media, Community Radio, Civic Education, Triangulation, Communal Welfare

I. INTRODUCTION

Community media is an independent, civil society based media that operates for social benefit. These are small scale non-profit entities that enable the local community to express their issues, concerns, cultures and languages. Ilboudo (2000) suggests that 'Community Media' proves to be an alternative for both the national and private commercial media. They provide access of information to those marginalized, rural and poor communities that otherwise would not be able to get access to mainstream media and would remain unaware of world happenings. Public after being enriched with information and awareness, also contributes into community level debate, knowledge sharing allows molding of opinions and inputs are incurred into public decision making for welfare of community.

Community media face a major challenge regarding financial issues because such non-profit media entities have no firm commercial grounds to acquire funds for programming set-up. They are owned and operated by the communities they address and serve. In global sectors, community media acts as a vehicle for community and voluntary sector, social movements and organizations work in partnership to invoke awareness and consequent progress in community (Buckley, 2011).

A radio station working on participatory or voluntary basis as a non-profit entity for a particular community to spread information and awareness of core issues to empower local communities as an effective tool is called community radio. The improvements in information technology and shifting of development paradigm can easily be witnessed by the information and knowledge transfer to the rural under-developed areas such outflow of awareness was possible only with the growth of rural radio stations. Radio provides a platform for participatory communication and programs as an effective tool which encourages economic and social development by and large (Chapman et al. 2003).

Community radio is a type of radio service that offers a model of radio broadcasting beyond public and private commercial service. It serves geographic communities' interest and the content of broadcasting largely encompasses the issues of local audience. It significantly works for rural development at the mere

basic level; it deals with the issues of poverty, agriculture, gender inequality, education and social problems among others could be the focus for programming. It enables the facilitation of capacity building activities in large numbers through media skills training and access to the airwaves. Undoubtedly, the key elements of developing a community are the exchange of information, networking of groups and the provision of skills and training (Al-Hassan et al, 2011).

Civic education is the information about a citizen's rights and his duties towards the state about which an individual must be aware. It can bring about transformation to societal norms effectively. Families, religious boundaries, work settings and other parts of civil society hold on the basic responsibility to groom an individual's ethics, character and behavioral attitude towards his part in society (Ilboudo, 2000). Social and political transformation occurs when a critical-mass of citizens know their rights, understand their democratic duties and responsibilities, increase awareness of social issues and create the conditions for greater in connection of state and public relations.

According to Branson (1998) civic education enables citizens to make wise choices in full awareness that enable a free society to exist. Learning activities such as the following tend to promote character traits needed to participate effectively e.g. Civility, courage, self-discipline, persistence, concern for social welfare, recognition of shared values, moral responsibility, attentiveness to public affairs etc. are some of our responsibilities towards state as a native whereas, freedom of speech, employment chances, freedom to elect, right to use or own property are some of the basic rights of a native towards state. The harmony between the awareness and understanding of rights and duties of a native towards the nation-state is enabled by civic education which in turn, gradually, makes the state a better place to live in. A sense of personal responsibility and civic obligation are in fact the social foundations on which individual rights and freedoms ultimately rest. Sound 'Civic Education' allows citizens to get involved in their own democratic governance; they do not just passively accept the orders or surrender to the demands of others. Citizen participation in a democratic society must be based on informed, critical reflection and on the understanding, acceptance of the rights and responsibilities that go with that membership. Civic education, therefore, should be a prime concern.

1.1 Research Objectives: The objectives of this research study are;

1. To explore students' habits of listening Community Radio FM 98.6.
2. To explore students' knowledge about civic education.
3. To explore the students' perception regarding the role of Community Radio FM 98.6 regarding civic education.

1.2 Hypothesis: The proposed hypotheses of this study are as follows;

1. The students of Hazara University listen Campus Radio FM 98.6.
2. The students mostly like to listen programs related to infotainment.
3. Mostly students' of Hazara University are aware of civic education.
4. Listeners' perceive that educational programs aired on Campus Radio FM 98.6 enhance civic education in community.

1.3 Research Questions: This research aims to answer following questions:

RQ1: Do the respondents of HU listen to community radio programs?

RQ2: Which type of programs do the respondents like to listen on the Campus radio FM 98.6?

RQ3: Are the respondents of HU aware of civic education?

RQ4: Is civic education enhanced by educational programs aired on Campus radio FM 98.6 as per the listeners' perception?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As suggested by Buckley (2006), community media contributes in disseminating information to the neglected areas in local language and works effectively in the establishment of a platform to spread civic education by airing programs regarding it and also allows the public exposure to social discussions and formation of diversified public opinions.

Douglas Kellner (1997) refers its dissatisfaction with mainstream media because it has political influence over its programming whereas supports community radio stations because they provide and promote civic education to stabilize their particular communities of belonging, voluntarily out of governmental bounds.

In this context, Browne (1996) defines community as geographically bound or as well as by similarity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preferences or a combination of some sort thereof.

Kevin Howley (2002) and Devine (1991) suggest that community media rejects market-oriented approaches and is philosophically bound to nurture mutually co-operative and enduring communal relations by defending local cultural autonomy, preserving democratic forms of communication, providing civic educational awareness to promote well-being of civil society and rebuilding a sense of community altogether.

Media theorist Robert McChesny (1997) attributes community media as a development device for community, which allows the masses to get the essence of civic sense in real which the mainstream media fails to deliver at large due to political and organizational influential, which fund the commercial and state-based radio stations. Community media primarily focus on the idea of bringing about progress in community.

Community radios empower the people by providing them with the know-how of civic rights and urge them to fulfill their responsibilities as a citizen, such awareness and implementation enables personal power of an citizen which leads to consequent community power and then power of a nation at large (Hochheimer, 1999).

According to the study of Dr. Mary Myers (2008) around the beginning of 21st century the community radio stations began to emerge in sub-Saharan Africa, proving great progress and development in societies and rural communities. The local radio stations led by communities aired health measures, family planning methods, worked as a warning system before and during natural disasters to war people in far off areas and also as a lifeline information in humanitarian emergencies. According to Dr. Myers, politically, community radio stations for instance proved way effective as in Mali the studies suggest that the officials had started to abstain from bribery and corruption because the community radio exposed some of the corrupt official's cases. Community radio enables transparency in political organization and administration at basic community level.

The report generated by the World Bank Institute on 'Civic Voice: Empowering the Poor through Community Radio' reflects that the ultimate source of exposure to a wide range of information regarding domestic and international core issues for illiterate, poor people in developing countries is community radio. It bridges the gap between isolation to civic awareness. The know-how of rights and liberties enables empowerment of poor people. Enhancement of transparency in democracy consequently reduces corruption by promoting higher level of participation and ownership of development projects incurred by government. The World Bank is working with partners such as AMARC, radio Netherlands, and search for common ground and others, to help strengthen the community radio sector in developing countries (AMARC, 2008). It also supports for the sustainability and enhancements of Civic Engagement, Empowerment, and Respect for Diversity (CEERD) as an integral part of development assistance. It supports the community radios in Zambia, Peru, Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, Indonesia, Sri-Lanka and Latin-America, for the great majority of poor illiterate people. Community radio is vital for connectivity for under-developed regional communities.

According to the project for the development of Africa undertaken by Samuel Obeng (2010) he states as in Africa, radio plays an important role in allowing information access to rural communities and is therefore denoted as 'Internet of Africa'. It provides voice to the voiceless communities and helps in the development of democratic societies by providing a forum, where the people are able to question their civic rights and deliver their duties as a responsible citizen, all due to awareness of civic values (Ilboudo, 2000). The radio stations have become a form of community centers in rural vicinities, by providing the locals with a platform to voice their concerns or ideas and seek help from audience. Rural public, in most communities contact the community radio in chaotic or emergency situations. Even the local police channelize problematic cases on air to acquire public opinions through the medium of rural radio stations

in some communities. Programs to promote civic education, political awareness, market information, health and epidemic safety guide, development and projects information, entertainment programs and community announcements are aired and delivered to the community audience by community radio stations by and large.

In this respect, Obeng (2010) quotes Ilboudo (2000) who refers to community radio stations as they are the ultimate tool of mass communication to provide an unprecedented forum for communication and dialogue.

Community radio is accredited as the sole independent and reliable source of news and information in the community it serves, moreover in some communities, radio stations incur partnership with development agents, local actors and organizations to aggravate their sphere of effectiveness by promoting progressive and developmental impacts on the communities. The programs which exhibit high impact on the audience of station are discussion of civic values, rights, reforms and duties in local languages, local news shows, local sports updates and live coverage, programs in lieu of exploring social issues, women's issues and locally-based investigative journalism shows, etc. The most captivating programs to the audience are sensitization and awareness programs, awareness to the cause and effect of the issues concentrated in these programs mold public opinion and directs the public dialogue in small, rural communities at large. The popular sensitization and awareness programs include programs regarding legal rights, corruption, child Rights, disease prevention, child-care and child rearing, access to education, gender-based violence and rape. Community radios in all locations tend to educate people by being active promoters of community sanitation and health safety measures. A majority of radio audience credited community radio as a device working to improve living conditions of community and influencing an attitude of civic responsibility and pride in regard to the community. Whereas, the radio station-leadership matters to prove radio's effectiveness and impact on the audience to a great extent. (Ahalt et al, 2009)

A case study conducted by Ahalt et al (2009) suggests that much of Radio Life's (Lofa Country, Liberia) success attributes to the momentum of dedication by the manager of the community radio QuaQua Miller, who works for about 80 hours a week to the station and has played a major part in bringing about civic prosperity and development in his addressed community by inculcating noteworthy awareness to citizens. Such efforts have promoted peace in society. However, it's upon the leader that directs the workers to spread a word of peace to unite the communities on the radio rather than spreading ethnic hatred among the masses. The community radio station; Radio Life devoted its programming to inculcate civic education in community by focusing on issues of corruption, partisanship, transparency and political conflicts, peace-building measures, non-violent conflict resolution all these efforts of educating resulted in reduced violent actions of citizens and brought about praiseworthy peaceful atmosphere in the communities because awareness leads to mature actions and reactions ultimately.

Another case study conducted by Wolff (2009) of Radio Kolenten in Kambia suggests that the community radio worked with the farmers and government officials on equal grounds and bridged the gap of interaction by providing a forum for both the sectors due to information sharing and awareness of civic rights and liberties which led to conflict resolution and prevention of violent disputes over farming and cattle-grazing, which otherwise used to occur and cause much bloodshed.

Studies suggest that communities have positively been facilitated by community radio stations during election process due to awareness of civic responsibilities and rights. People can define their interests and easily elect the candidate who supports their interests in democratic electoral system, which without awareness would not have been possible. Radio's ability to educate the voter and quickly disseminate election information between masses has counter-acted the potential for unfounded rumors to fuel conflict among sectors of community whereas, still through more inculcation of civic education community radios can play a vital role in the cause to facilitate in establishment of peaceful, liberalized and unbiased electoral process, in future, which is the ground of firm democratic system and a consequent progressive society (Ahalt et al., 2009)

Radio Dange Nwe (New Voice) emerged in June 2005 as a first community radio in the locality of Northern Iraq with the assistance of US-based non-governmental development agency named as Agricultural Cooperative Development International/ Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA), a German women's development non-governmental organization and Radio Gladys Palmera and with the

contribution of Barcelona-based radio station. All of the stated organizations strived for the mission to provide a voice to women and youth of Iraq which were deprived of literacy and civic awareness due to social and political unrest in the state at large. The areas of programming conducted by Radio Dange Nwe are topics of education and health, exploring the consequences of violence and war and accountability of local governmental officials through live interviews focusing on undelivered basic rights and living necessities of citizens'. The study of Radio Denge New (Buckley, 2011) suggests that community radios play an unrivalled role in building up civic awareness and moral uplift in communities by being devoted to their welfare and development.

Radio Winay Jatha in Bolivia is a component of a broader organized initiative led by Aymara women to strengthen the indigenous Aymara communities of the Bolivian Altiplano. It focuses on the active participation of Aymara women and young people in decision making at basic community level with a view to transform the social, political and economic structures in Bolivia at large. Its objectives also include the uprising of the strength of Aymara women's organizations and those of other indigenous nations by bridging the gap of interaction and information sharing at community level with other social organizations and also the enhancement of strength in status and respect for the rights of indigenous nations and peoples of the vicinity (Buckley, 2011)

In his review of Lievrouw's book (2011) 'Alternative and Activist New Media', Wolfson (2012) suggests that community media promotes the enhancement of public participation at community level to bring about transformation in community. Community radio and other forms of media are the tools that spread the education and information among communal beings, therefore it enables them to think and consequently people have a voice in decisions that affect them. Community media primarily highlights the highly sensitive issues generally concealed or neglected by mainstream media, such outflow of related awareness becomes the source to empower the ethnic or deprived groups and have a wider social impact on the molding of public opinion because people can relate to the issues in general.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Quantitative Analysis-Survey: A survey is an effective way to collect valid and reliable data by respondents from social settings of the real world (Kelly, Clark, Brown & Sitzia, 2003). It shows that it is most widely and accepted method to collect individually un-identifiable but personal opinion of participants in the form of anonymous responses. In media effect studies survey has become an appropriate method to collect data to have a better understanding of impact of media on youth by collecting individual views and opinions through responses. Survey research is one of the most important areas of measurement in applied social research. According to the perspective and need of the study a self-constructed questionnaire was used. It made the study more focused and gave quality result.

3.2 Universe of Study: Hazara University was the focus area for conducting this study. This survey was conducted in all departments of university. Hazara University was established in 2002. Currently it has 32 teaching departments.

3.3 Unit of Analysis: The object of the study is called unit of analysis. In present research students of Hazara University are the unit of analysis.

3.4 Sample Size: 200 students were selected as a sample which includes 100 male and 100 female students for the generalization of result.

3.5 Data Analysis: In the particular research the researcher has used the quantitative method and has incurred the survey research technique to derive findings to the research problem. After taking two hundred copies of the self-structured questionnaire, different departments of Hazara University were visited where the questionnaires were distributed among the students to draw out the survey according to quantitative method. It made the study more focused and gave quality result. For data analysis SPSS statistical software was used to make inferences.

IV. RESULTS

The results of the study reveal that both male and females are selected in equal number amongst which more than 73% respondents have the age between 18 to 22 years. The study reveals that more than 71% respondents listen to Campus Radio FM 98.6. Statistics suggest that more than 38% listeners account for those who listen entertainment programs on Campus Radio FM 98.6, 20% respondents listen educational programs, 22% respondents listen informative programs.

The study reveals that only 83% respondents are aware of 'civic education'. The statistics reveals that 81% of the total surveyed population has agreed that civic education focused programs contribute towards the promotion of civic awareness among listeners.

The statistics denote that 77% respondents agree that Campus Radio FM 98.6 plays vital role in inculcating civic education to the community whereas those who consider it insignificant account for 17% only.

V. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the results determines that approximately 70% of the respondents from Hazara University listen to Community Radio FM 98.6.

The data analysis also reveals that youth of Hazara University listens to Community Radio FM 98.6 for entertainment, education and information amongst which the number of listeners of FM 98.6 for entertainment purposes are the most because youngsters mostly prefer to vent out their stress by listening to music and entertainment programs however a relatively sound number of respondents also tune in to FM 98.6 for informative and educational purposes. The educational programs presented by students and Professors add on to the knowledge bank of the students of the university in an interactive manner.

The results of the collected data reveal that approximately 83% of the total respondents were aware of the concept of 'civic education' however the other respondents were unaware of the concept. It is a dilemma that unawareness regarding this concept prevails in our State however civic education is the key concept that enables a citizen of a State to be aware of its rights and obligations towards the State. The researcher inquired the respondents about the role of community media in providing civic education to the listeners and the results reflect that about 81% respondents positively associate community media as a source of civic education. Therefore, the researcher successfully highlighted that community media can play a vital role in inculcating civic education to communities.

The results of the study suggest that the respondents of Hazara University have favorable view of the role of Community Radio FM 98.6 regarding spreading the civic education through educational and informative programs. It can be assumed as such because approximately 77% of the respondents reflected in their responses that their knowledge about civic education is positively related with educational programs. Hence it is eminent that the Campus Radio FM 98.6 being the community radio for Mansehra District, is playing positive role in spreading and increasing civic education amongst citizens of Pakistan.

VI. CONCLUSION

The present study is suggestive of the contribution and the role of community media in delivering civic education to masses of communities, whether geographical or ethnic in nature. Mostly under developed communities had benefited from the approaches of alternative media but now it has also influenced the developed communities and trend is being followed globally. Commercial and state based radios often pose biased views on issues while community media is unbiased and solely for communal welfare. Community media rejects market-oriented approaches and is philosophically bound to nurture mutually co-operative and enduring communal relations by defending local cultural autonomy, preserving democratic forms of communication, providing civic educational awareness to promote well-being of civil society and rebuilding a sense of community altogether. The study established that Campus Radio FM 98.6 being a community radio of the locality contributes as a tool in promoting civic education among the audience.

6.1 Recommendations: Some noteworthy recommendations suggested by the researchers are as follows;

1. Civic education needs to be more focused by the community radio stations so that the listeners can get in-depth knowledge about civic education.
2. Community media can help the people to increase their literacy level.
3. Community radios should operate in rural areas of Pakistan especially.

6.2 Research Limitations: This study faced certain inevitable limitations, such as;

1. The study is limited to Hazara University of Mansehra City and should take place in other parts of the country as well.
2. Qualitative research should be promoted in our country.
3. This study only addresses the youth and should be conducted on the listeners of Campus Radio belonging to every age group.

6.3 Implications of the Study: This study will help to explore the communal benefits of community media especially the community radios such as campus radios. Community media are unbiased and work for the sole purpose of societal gain. This research highlights this fact to community leaders that they can utilize the community media on grassroots level to educate and help their communities to strive for a better tomorrow. The Community media has the potential to address local issues which other mainstream or private media fail to address. This study allows the listeners to learn that among the other media, community media can play a vital role in not only addressing the listeners about civic education but also to enlighten them politically and democratically.

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