

**ROLE OF COMMUNITY RADIO IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS**

A dissertation

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By

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LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that this dissertation entitled "Role of Community Radio in Rural Development: A content Analysis" was prepared by Mr. Suresh Prasad Acharya under our guidance. We hereby recommend this dissertation for final examinations by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

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APPROVAL LETTER

This dissertation entitled **Role of Community Radio in Rural Development: A Content Analysis** was submitted by **Mr. Suresh Prasad Acharya** for final examination to the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in RURAL DEVELOPMENT**. I, hereby, certify that the Research Committee of the Faculty has found this dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality and has therefore accepted for the degree.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this Dissertation is my own work and that it contains no materials previously published. I have not used its materials for the award of any kind and any other degree. Where other authors' sources of information have been used, they have been acknowledged.

Signature:

Name: Suresh Prasad Acharya

Date: 2015 March 15

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I would like to acknowledge all my well wishers who encouraged me to research on community radio which is relatively a new practice though have been running for 15 years. Community radio is a new area to research in Nepali context. When I shared my ideas with seniors and colleagues they encouraged me to move ahead immediately. As a working journalist, it was not so easy to move as per my interest and had to look for a convenient time as I'd to compromise with many constraints that I was facing.

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Despite my attempt to analyze the role of community radio in rural development, this research will ignite many issues related to community radio which may be of interest to researchers in the future.

Suresh P. Acharya

2015 January 15

ABSTRACT

Constitution of Nepal 1990 enshrined rights to information, freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of print and publication. The National Media Policy of 1992 which included a provision for private sector media in broadcasting, and the National Broadcasting Act of 1993 paved the way for the establishment of independent radio stations. National Broadcasting Regulations of 1995 defined the processes and methods necessary for establishing FM (Frequency Modulation) stations in Nepal.

Nepal adopted private radio in 1997. It was the beginning of community FM radio in the country as well. Radio Sagarmatha is the first independent community radio station not only in Nepal but of the South Asia. After the third successive movement for democracy in 2006 April, the door has been widely opened to the private radio including the community stations. Rule of law, gender equality, education, health, civic education, anti-corruption, good governance, environment and day to day problem and issues are being treated in different format by the local community radio stations.

The general objective of this research is to examine the role of community radio through their programs in enhancing the peoples' participation in rural development. Three radio stations from each five political development regions of the country are chosen representing geographical diversity from Himal to Terai. The research samples include the very first community radio to the newly operated stations. In terms of capacity, the sample includes the range of minimum 100 watts to maximum 2000 watts. The research also covers the audience of the same localities and the owner and/or program producers of the selected stations. In order to deepen the understanding and provide a holistic analysis, the research strategy of methodological triangulation is used, which employs qualitative methods, such as participant observations and in-depth interviews, and quantitative methods, such as an audience survey.

FM radio has increased the volume of news available to the station for its audience. Rather than in the urban areas, audience of news tremendously increased in rural areas. Number of FM stations also has been expanded after 2006 in the rural part of the country. Politics is the dominant contents of the news bulletin in most of FM stations. Beside politics news coverage include infrastructural development works, education, health, tourism etc. Events, especially, disasters and accidents make a major coverage.

Community radio has tried to provide local information about different programs of their community. Local programs in the city or the local village including marriage ceremony and funeral processions are also covered. Live programs of general assembly of cooperatives, clubs or social activities of local groups are on aired by the community radio. Among such programs few are sponsored by the organizers which are the source of finance of the stations. Some development agencies have also sponsored the development programs on health, education, gender etc. But rests of the programs are produced by the stations themselves. Entertainment, basically the music is a major component of most of the radio station as it is an only one means of the rural people to be entertained. Generally, there are three types of radio programs on development issues:

1. Prepared by community station itself
2. Prepared by third party on behalf of sponsor
3. Prepared by the network station on behalf of sponsor

Community radios are for the community. Audiences also believe that they have to work for the community. The station owner or the program producers are also committed to make their station representative of a community. But unfortunately the programs are not made by the community. The application and practice of community radio principles is remarkably inconsistent.

Though we can find linkages of different media theories followed by the community radio under this study in their contents and presentation that mostly followed the 'media dependency theory'. Among those different perspectives of media dependence theory, basically Nepali community radio has been found emphasized on uses and gratification approach. In contrast to traditional media effects theories centralized around on “what media do to people” and assume audiences are homogeneous, uses and gratifications approach is more concerned with “what people do with media.”

The development of community radio has been effectively supported by external agencies and funds, representing a positive local-international partnership. Local forces have generally driven community radio development in Nepal with international agencies and donors in a supporting role, providing for capital investment and helping to develop both local and national capacities.

Most of the community radios have neither the short nor the long term plans and policies to operate the station. Even why they are running the station is not very clear to them. They are copying the program of other stations in one or the other way and claiming that they were doing competition each other on the content of same nature. Creativity on program production is almost zero.

We can generalize the situation of FM stations regarding programs as follows:

- Most of the radio stations are community by name but not in practice. Community concept is not clear to the owner as well as producer.
- Community participation in producing radio program is very low.
- Community radio has very few programs of community interest relating rural development.
- Community radios are more dependent on networking programs.
- Community programs are driven by donor and most of such programs are received from network approach.

The findings of this study suggest that communities expect a service that is unique and tailored to meet their needs. What makes a community broadcaster worth sustaining is the fact that it addresses the specific needs of that specific community in a way that no other broadcaster does. Involving a diverse cross-section of community members in the production of programs and in the decisions taken by a station as much as possible is probably the only way of achieving community interest.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACORAB-	Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
AIJC-	Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication
AMARC-	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
AMIC-	Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Center
ATLAS-	Alliance for Technology, Learning and Society Institute
BBC-	British Broadcasting Corporation
BOD-	Board of Director
CAPPI-	Council of Asia-Pacific Press Institute
CBS-	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDMA-	Code Division Multiple Access
CIN-	Community Information Network
CRS-	Community Radio Station
CRSC-	Community Radio Support Centre
CSO-	Civil Society Organization
DAB-	Digital Audio Broadcasting
DANIDA-	Danish International Development Agency
DDC-	District development Committee
DWO-	Dalit Welfare Organization
ECR-	Environmental Circle Radio
EPI INFO	Public domain statistical software for epidemiology developed by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia (USA).
FAO-	Food and Agriculture Organization
FM-	Frequency Modulation

FNJ-	Federation of Nepali Journalists
HDO-	Hollandse Draadloze Omroep
ICASA-	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
ICIMOD-	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
IMF –	International Monetary Fund
I/NGO-	International/Non-Governmental Organization
ITU-	International Telecommunications Union
KBM-	Kapisanan ng Brodkasters ng Maragusan (Association of Maragusan Broadcasters)
KBP-	Kapisanan ng mga Brodkasters ng Pilipinas (Association of the Philippines Broadcasters)
LGU-	Local Government Unit
MDGs-	Millennium Development Goals
MoLD-	Ministry of Local Development
MoIC-	Ministry of Information and Communication
NEFEJ-	Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists
NLSS-	Nepal Living Standards Survey
NPC–	National Planning Commission
NRI-	Nederlandse Radio Industrie (Dutch Radio Industry)
NSF-	Nederlandse Seintoestellen Fabriek
NWICO-	New World Information and Communication Order
OTI-	Office of Transitional Initiative
Ofcom -	Office of the Broadcasting Regulator Authority in United Kingdom
PACE-	Philippine Association of Communication Educators
PDDP-	Participatory District Development Program

PV-	Photovoltaic
RCP-	Radio Corporation of the Philippines
SABC-	South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADP-	Small Area Development Program
SAP-	South Asia Partnership
SMCR-	Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver
SPSS-	Statistical Product and Service Solution (Earlier it was Statistical Package for Social Science)
UNESCO-	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
VDC-	Village Development Committee
WBIST-	World Bank Institute