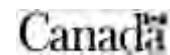


CONTOURS OF MEDIA GOVERNANCE: Technology, Institutions, Practice

An International Seminar organised by
Centre for Culture, Media & Governance
Jamia Millia Islamia
8-10 December, 2008
New Delhi

Supported by Canada's International Development Research Centre(www.idrc.ca)



with
UNNATI, Ahmedabad
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PRO HELVETIA, New Delhi

“The Contours Media Governance” Technology, Institutions, Practice

Concept Note towards an International Seminar

Over the past two decades, a set of renewed modes of thinking about and perceiving communication have appeared. These reflect the merging of existing social processes and intellectual conceptions, with the beginnings of fresh ones. It thus becomes crucial to locate points of reference that enable us to comprehend the breaks and continuities of this period---and, in doing so, help identify the institutions, instruments and actors marking this sphere¹.

The need for such an exercise arises due to two inter-related reasons: first, the radical and intense transformations in the dynamics of information and media over the last two decades, and secondly, the varying ability of an interdisciplinary Media Studies to systematically engage with this transformation.

The Subject

Interestingly enough, in both instances, what attracts attention is the problematic of governance. In the first instance, it emerges as the challenge of governmentality being faced incrementally in various domains---by the state, within the market and in civil society, engulfed as they variedly are in the evolving dynamics of communication. In the second instance, the problematic concerns the persistence of a blind spot in teaching and research in Communication; this is principally because standing emphases---thematic, conceptual and theoretical---are delinked from a critique of the evolving milieu.

That the centrality of media governance has gained credence at both, the operational and epistemological grounds, is what has principally inspired the proposed dialogue. Exploring the articulations of governance, itself a pliable phrase², in the sphere of the media involves identifying key juro-administrative mechanisms, institutional fulcrums and civil society initiatives that have come to shape the framing and functioning of public policy³; and simultaneously, unravelling the salience of, and silences in, the field of Communication towards demarcating a renewed canvas for future engagement and intervention.

The Context

In July 2008, the Centre for Culture, Media & Governance ([CCMG](#)), Jamia Millia Islamia launched its Masters course in ‘Media Governance’, the first such teaching programme in Asia. To broaden the canvas and scope of discussions around this theme, CCMG is organising an international seminar “*The Contours of Media Governance*” at New Delhi, on 8-10 December 2008.

The Objective

Bringing together a select group of scholars & advocates from India, Europe, North America & the Asia-Pacific, this seminar aims to

1. engage with the multiple sites, institutions and actors constituting the sphere of media governance;
2. highlight the most relevant cross-national issues and national/regional approaches to them, and
3. refine the agenda beseeching academia, public policy and advocacy.

Being held in the week following the IGF, the core concerns of latter-- openness, access, security, diversity, and critical resources – provide the seminar a ready reference, in as much as arguments about internet governance have become even more important when considered in the larger framework of media governance. It thus becomes crucial that

¹ B. Das, V. Parthasarathi, G. Guy Poitevin (2006) “Investigating Communication: Re-mooring the Contours of Research”, in J. Brouwer, B. Das, V. Parthasarathi, G. Poitevin (Ed.) **Communication Process – Vol. 1: Media and Mediation**; Sage.

² M. Doornbos (2006) ‘Good Governance: The Metamorphosis of a Policy Metaphor’, **Global Forces and State Restructuring: Dynamics of State Formation and Collapse**, Palgrave.

³ CCMG (2007) “Media Governance in India: A Preliminary Mapping”; Centre for Culture, Media & Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.

collaborative, transnational efforts by scholars & advocates are envisioned along these lines and emphasise, inter alia, mapping and addressing the emerging principles and processes, and their relationship to broader social, political, and cultural concerns are important⁴.

The Design

The dialogue between local, national, regional and transnational concerns, as well as between research, advocacy and policy will be reflected in all the 6 sessions spread over the 2 days.

Each successive session is framed by 3 presentations, of 20 minutes each, followed by a chair/discussant's commentary and an open-floor. Presenters are requested to submit a 300 word abstract before 4th Nov., and a 4000 word draft-paper by 1st Dec.

Convenor

Biswajit Das

Professor & Director, CCMG

Co-Convenor

Vibodh Parthasarathi

Associate Professor, CCMG

⁴ P. Napoli (2008) "Issues And Challenges Facing Internet Governance: A Report From The 2007 Internet Governance Forum"; The Donald McGannon Research Center Working Papers; Fordham University, New York.

Seminar Design

8th Dec.1700-2130

1700 (Edward Said Hall): University Lecture at JMI
Riddles of Media Governance –by Monroe Price
 (Chair: Niraja Gopal Jayal)

1830 (FTK Centre for Information Technology) **Sufiana Qawwali by Mohammed Ahmed Warsi Nasiri & Party**

2000 (Nehru Guest House): Dinner by the Vice Chancellor, JMI

9th Dec. 1000-1730:
 IIC Conference Room 2

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Chair</i>	<i>Speaker 1</i>	<i>Speaker 2</i>	<i>Speaker 3</i>
<i>The Complexity of Governance</i> 1000-1130	Bishnu Mahapatra (Ford Foundation)	Marc Raboy (McGill) Towards a Sociology of Media Governance	Manuel Puppis (Zurich) Media Governance: A New Concept for the Analysis of Changing Media Regulation	Marianne Franklin (Goldsmith) Rethinking Governmentality for Computer-Mediated Settings

1130-1145 Coffee/Tea

<i>Conditionalities of Flows & Governance</i> 1145-1315	Arun Mehta (Radiophony)	Stephen McDowell (Florida) Borders and Mobility in the Infosphere	Caroline Nevejan (Free University) Presence and the Design of Trust	Elena Pavan (Trento) Mapping transnational networks on Internet governance
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1315-1415 LUNCH

<i>Regimes of Digital Technologies</i> 1415-1545	Subodh Kumar (Telecom Commission)	Arun Mehta (Radiophony) Government as 'Player' and 'Referee': Telecom-Internet-Media Policy in India	Rohit Prasad (MDI) Spectrum Management in India: A Critique
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1545-1600 Coffee/Tea

<i>Governance & Broadcast Industry</i> 1600-1730	Hemant Joshi (JMI)	Minna Aslama (McGannon Centre) European Public Service in Transition from PSB to PSM	Daya Thussu (Westminster) Tamasha of TV News	Peng Hwa Ang (MICORE/NTU) Possibilities & Limits of Self-Regulation of Indian Broadcast Content
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1900 (IIC-Annexe Lawns)
 Seminar Dinner by CEC & CCMG

10th Dec. 1000-1800:
IIC Conference Room 2

*Informatics in
Institutional
Reform*
1000-1130

Marc Raboy
(McGill)

Dr. P.K. Mohanty (Union Government of India)
ICT in Governance

Pradosh Nath (CCMG)
**ICT & Governance: Issues for Marginal
Economies**

1130-1145 Coffee/Tea

*Enumerations
of RTI*
1145-1315

Biswajit Das
(CCMG)

Manish Sisodia (KABIR)
RTI and Governance

Alice Morris (Unnati)
**Social Audit and RTI in the
context of NREGS**

Johan Lidberg (Murdoch)
**International Freedom
of Information Index**

1315-1415 LUNCH

*Contexts of
Advocacy*
1415-1545

Maitrayee
Choudhuri
(JNU)

Phil Napoli (Fordham)
**A Social Movement Theory
Perspective on Media Reform**
Presented by Minna Aslama

Aditya Sood (CKS)
Are there Rights to Usability?

Aarathi Pai (CFAR)
**Media Advocacy & the
Marginalised**

1545-1600 Coffee/Tea

*Knowledge in
the Information
Age*
1600-1730

T.R. Kem
(CEC)

Pradeep Kaul (CEC)
E-content- CEC's Initiatives

Osama Manzar (DEF)
**Digital Content & Media for
Inclusion**

Nalini Mohanty (Jagran
School)
**On Citizen Journalism in
India**

Wrapping Up 1730-1800

Vibodh Parthasarathi
Chair: Biswajit Das

1930 (IIC- Annexe Lawns)
Reception by Routledge-Taylor & Francis (India)

Public Lecture ***Riddles of Media Governance:
Multiple Stakeholders, Multiple Objectives, Multiple Perspectives***

Presented by Monroe Price

*Professor & Director, Centre for Global Communication Studies,
Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania*

Chairperson Niraja Gopal Jayal

*Professor & Chair, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance,
Jawaharlal Nehru University*

Guest of Honour Mushirul Hasan

Vice Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia.

Monroe Price started by exploring the relationship between the socio-political-cultural structures existing in society and the emergent narrative of media governance. He contextualized media governance by reflecting on the new world order characterized by varied movements towards multi-polarity and shifts in the narratives of identity, ethnicity and religion. The standing narrative of governance, according to him, was dominantly used to influence, almost control, expectations by various publics in the range of actions of the government. Talking about the significance of the relationship between the narratives and media governance he said any change in the combination of narratives directly affects the law and policy outcome. He looked at the Media Governance as a multifaceted notion that could encapsulate the triad of governance of the media, governance by the media and the impact of media on governance.

‘Governance of the media’ is the traditional, most obvious connotation of media governance, and has always been tempered by a combination of narratives, or shifts in such narratives. Price illustrated this by touching upon the shift in the narrative of security in recent times, especially due to situations like a terrorist attack, which has initiated debates on how media should act in such exigencies, and the need of government guidance or directives.

In contrast, ‘governance by the media’ has its genesis in Cultivation Theory in Communication, wherein pervasive exposure to broadcast media was observed to have long-term effects which could be small but cumulatively significant. Recognising that the story that our media tell reflect the larger picture and passions of the times, he identified nationalism, patriotism, idealism, and consumerism as being the superior themes of the government, as reflected in the trajectory of news and opinions.

The third implication of media governance consists of the ‘impact of media on governance’. Focusing on the relationship between institutions of the media and the functioning of the government, it deals with the efficacy of a well-functioning media as a watchdog, thus bringing into play concerns of transparency of and accountability in formal protocols of the government.

Moving to the principles of media governance, Price reminded the floor that principles are the ideals or concepts that privilege certain narratives over others, and thereby impart some sets of ideas greater legitimacy, authority and mobility than others. The role of principles is especially important in moments of crisis, as it is during such times that the tension between the narrative and the principles emerges; and it is in this tension that the surge for legitimacy occurs, as the principles provide the basis of criticizing the dominance of existing or emerging worldviews.

Price then referred to the Internet Governance Forum as a case in the struggle within media conventions and international bodies for procedural legitimacy. In doing so, he introduced the work of the lecture’s co-author, Stefaan Verhulst, on adjudicating the legitimacy of institutions like the IGF wherein he had identified four deficits such forums tend to suffer---namely democracy deficit, expertise deficit, agility deficit, sovereign deficit. Price underscored

participation, representation, accountability and transparency as the principles of legitimacy to overcome these deficits. In contrast to the oft seen symbolic participation, he viewed meaningful participation in terms of equal opportunity for involvement and freedom of dissent; and posited within this was his emphasis on representation, as the idea that makes participation operative and gives it a meaning.

Concluding, Price advocated prudence in viewing the vocabulary of governance as being independent of the narrative. Recognising how strategic communicators try to use their power to shift from one narrative to another, or seek to move one narrative over the other, he reiterated the need to explore the inter-relationships between narratives of governance, their persuasiveness in society, and the consequent societal shifts from one set of narratives to another.

In her opening remarks as the Chair, Niraja Gopal Jayal wondered on the differences in the nature and working of stakeholders vis-à-vis strategic players, and if 'strategic player' is the new term for stakeholders. She further questioned how to evolve and address regulation within sovereign nation states when their media encompasses international and trans-national players. Drawing attention to uneven levels of regulations and corporatisation within different segments of the media industry in India, Jayal explained how while foreign cinema in India has to go through the Censor Board, the same does not apply foreign TV channels.

Jayal underscored the fact that the four principles rightly enumerated by Price---viz. participation, transparency, accountability, representation---had their genesis in Democratic theory. However, she found discomfoting the new phenomenon of the media representing itself as being, not one of the many but, the sole mechanism of accountability---precisely because this, often almost completely, renders the democratic government irrelevant. The political and governance implications of citizen vigil activism encouraged by the media, she finds to be encouraging a certain kind of 'anti-political' arguments.

While Price agreed that citizen vigil activism, much like citizen journalism, needs to be both, praised and criticized, they equally open up onto serious issue concerning the profession of journalism and the relationship between reportage and accountability. Responding to the query on strategic communicators and stakeholders, Price clarified that while all strategic communicator are stakeholders but all stakeholders are not strategic communicators. Moreover, while strategic communicators seek to address and converse with 'audience' or 'target group', the concept of stakeholders is more social.

From the floor, Johan Lidberg was curious to know how the changing paradigm of the market may influence the way our media is governed. Clarifying that we do not have a set narrative of the market and its affects on media governance---as with, say, the narrative of security and its affect on the freedom of media---Price argued that although corporations invoke the market as a means for resolutions of disputes, in the new narratives of the market and media, the former want the government to protect them, and sometimes bail them out. And in parallel, governments are looking at how to supply information for citizenship in contexts where the market does not work.

December 9

Session I *The Complexity of Governance*

Chair: Bishnu Mahapatra (Ford Foundation, New Delhi)

‘Towards a Sociology of Media Governance’

Marc Raboy
*Department of Art History and Communication Studies,
McGill University*

‘Media Governance: A New Concept for the Analysis of Changing Media Regulation’

Manuel Puppis
*Institute of Mass Communication and Media Research,
University of Zurich*

‘Rethinking Governmentality for Computer-Mediated Settings’

Marianne Franklin
*Transnational Communications and Global Media Program, Goldsmiths,
University of London*

Marc Raboy presented a detailed outline of the concept and ecology of Media Governance, and its constituent set of issues and actors. Locating the concept in the framework of globalisation, he highlighted that while, on the one hand, media issues are increasingly transnational, requiring international conventions and measures, on the other hand, efforts to intervene in these issues require national initiatives which are dependent on national sovereignty.

Raboy argued that the term ‘media governance’ is often used interchangeably with media policy, although it entails a much wider conceptual ambit. Media Policy has a restricted mandate and refers to the legally and formally qualified mechanisms to regulate the media, none of them being absolutely accurate and comprehensive in explaining the activities surrounding media. In contrast, Media Governance refers to all the processes, formal and informal, where actors with different degrees of power and autonomy define and express their interests, produce relevant knowledge and cultural practices, and engage in political negotiation while trying to influence the outcome of decision-making in the domain of media and communication.

Elaborating on the different types of actors that are part of the Global Media Governance environment, he underlined that many of them are highly formalised, and operate ritualised processes with a very clear mandate to push the media system in their own broader interest. These include the *Multilateral organisations* (such as the UN, World Bank, WTO), *International ‘clubs’* (such as G7/G8, OECD), *Regional Groupings* (such as NAFTA, EU), *Nation states*, *Transnational Private Sector* (such as INTELSAT, ISO) *Global Civil*





Society (such as World Social Forum, CRIS), *'Hybrid' Structures* (such ICANN, Internet Governance Forum, Global Network Initiative). However, despite such multiplicity of actors and actions, there are a few issues that still remain *'homeless'* and need urgent attention.

Furthermore, Raboy emphasised that the role and influence of these multilateral bodies is almost never transparent and one really has to dig deep to see who is doing what. He cited

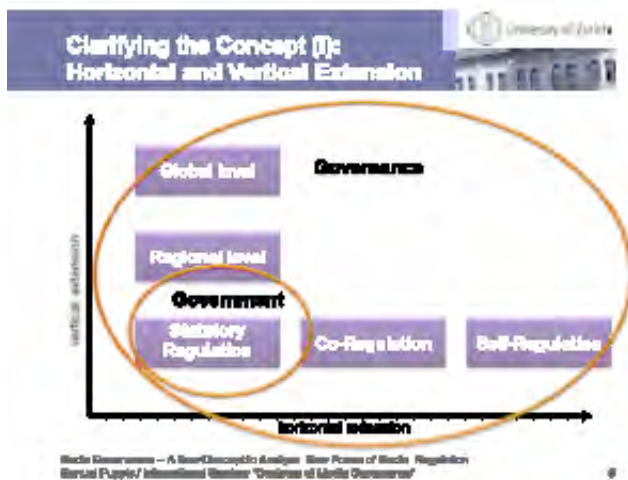
the example of the Global Network Initiative which includes Corporations like Microsoft, Yahoo and Google as participants along with academic institutions, non governmental organisations and journalists. In this light he raised a fundamental question on whether media governance is a multi-stakeholder initiative, a corporate driven structure or a hybrid structure.

Concluding his presentation Raboy drew attention to the different paradigms/models that compose the media governance environment such as libertarian, self regulation, closed clubs and top down, and remarked that we still have a long march towards a democratic media governance and culture. As a final comment, he summarised Media Governance as a brokering process between the state and economic actors; it is about framework structuring, and enabling rather than control.

Tracing the notion of 'governance' to its origins in economics, social sciences and political science, and its recent incorporation in communication science, marked the entry-point for **Manuel Puppis**. He noted the two key ways in which media governance is presently understood: *governance of the media*, i.e. the ways in which the media are regulated, and *governance by the media*, i.e. the contribution of the media to society and its democratic processes.

Focusing his presentation specifically on 'governance of the media', Puppis argued that very often media governance is used as an empirical label to refer to changing polities, politics and policies. While several shifts in media regulation could be observed---viz. from national media policy to global media governance, from government to self- and coregulation, and from formal to informal decision-making in networks---Puppis argued for the term being treated as something more than just a label. It should be viewed as an analytical concept or a scientific perspective to develop new ways of analysing media policy and regulation. Governance does not necessarily imply a changing subject of analysis but makes available tools for analysis, of not just traditional statutory media regulation but all forms of rule-making. And from this view, governance is closely connected with an institutional way of thinking, since it is interested in the institutional structures in which regulation takes place and how these structures influence the different actors and organisations involved.





He further argued that using the governance concept, one can analyse the horizontal and vertical extension of government. The *horizontal extension* refers to analysing different forms of regulation and the *vertical extension* refers to different levels of regulation. The concept is also useful for analysing both public governance and corporate governance. While the former encompasses statutory regulation, co-regulation and self-regulation that concern all media organisations in a given industry and that applied

outside single organisations, the latter characterises self-organisation of single media organisations. A governance perspective thus allows one to see the interplay between statutory regulation and self-regulation, between the national, the regional and the global level and between supra-organisational and organisational rule systems.

Moving on to his second core proposition, Puppis suggested that media governance is not only a scientific perspective but may also constitute a normative demand on media policy and media regulation. Very often there are unexpressed normative assumptions and this perspective features some kind of ‘problem solving bias’, usually based on the functionalist assumption that governance is in the public interest. This ‘problem solving bias’ makes the governance perspective blind for seeing other motives of the actors involved, like gaining or maintaining power.

Summarising his presentation, he drew attention to the ability of ‘media governance’ for not only acting as a bridge between disciplines but also serving as a new analytical tool to study media regulation. But for it to prove as a useful concept, it is necessary a) to specify whether one understands governance as a changing perspective or as changing regulation or both; b) to disclose normative underpinnings; and c) to distinguish between public and corporate media governance.

Bringing in another perspective on Media Governance, **Marianne Franklin** located her argument around Internet Governance. Recognising that internet enclosed both, the social and the cultural---she recalled how the dot com boom of the early 90’s opened up a whole new space for ordinary people to discuss not only their personal lives but their views on larger political issues. For instance, the online expatriate discussion forums acted as transnational spaces to bring family and friends together, and many of these forums serving as platforms for pro-democracy movements within autocratic countries; the web thus became an important tool for political dissent. However soon the authorities became cautious of the ways in which online sites were



being used to critique the political system; these were spaces they could not control. And it is these particular spaces within which, Franklin pointed out, governance issues began to emerge.

Franklin was concerned that in talks about ‘governance’, we forget about this contested history of the medium. And also, we now tend to focus only on ‘the how’, and forget about ‘the who’. She favoured taking recourse to Foucault’s concept of ‘governmentality’, to understand how a whole new order and control came about in this sphere, on the ways in which we communicate, albeit in new constellations, and circumscribed by the governmentality ‘triangle’ of ‘sovereignty - discipline - government’. She emphasised that no matter what governance structures are put in place, communities are using all kinds of technological means possible or available to make contact in their own way. But this rich, polysemic, social and cultural picture, with its good and bad, is actually being deleted. We can see governmentality in the making as a living archive before our eyes. For instance in the securitisation apparatuses involved in organising credit card payments, or the setting of principles or laws by which certain content can or cannot be published.

She added that as a critical heuristic, it is handy to say governmentality is a form of domination, however it is not. For, Foucault also recognised that agents can effect change. So, on the one hand, one can say things have not changed: states are re-exerting control, re-exerting securities and mechanisms to control practices in online environments; new internet byways and highways are being built on the old colonial telecommunication pathways; and, even corporations that reinvented themselves in the 1990’s are actually the former imperial telecommunication entities. Nevertheless there are things that have changed, such as a change in transnational settings, in mood, if not in political terms, in how governmentality is manifest in new computer mediated settings for, considering that Foucault was only dealing with analogue sets of control, and thirdly, in claims to include the civil society in the multilateral institution building around the internet.

Following from this, Franklin drew attention to Foucault’s idea of panopticon as a mechanism of governmentality to say how the terms of debate and analyses have been appropriated by interests that have no concerns about ordinary people and their spaces on the web. They are looking to lock the world wide web in very particular ways with particular interests. The convergent media of the 21st century is controlled in ways one never imagined a decade ago.

She concluded by observing that while governmentality is not an idea good enough to stick on top of everything, it does allow an understanding of something that is in the making, and therefore the possibility of contesting it. Neither wanting to live in dungeon nor wanting to be traced and tagged in an electronic database, she referred to an advertisement of an Internet Service Provider with the caption ‘Nowhere just ceased to exist’.





The Chair opened the discussion by remarking that the three presentations provided a rich and diverse perspective on what media governance is all about. A question was posed to Franklin about how she distinguished between the analysis of governance and the social history of the organisation involved in the process. In response, she said that concepts have social histories and are socially embedded, and therefore one cannot separate a concept from its context; and moreover, we have to look not only at the history of the concept but also at the history of the

technologies involved. She pointed out the visible disconnect between UN's idea of governance and reality. The new forums are focusing much more on the internet when only 40% of the world has access to it, compared to radio which is accessed by 95 % of the population. Another question to her was whether she perceived a tension between socio-cultural diversity and computer mediated governance. Or is governmentality oppressive? To this Franklin responded that governmentality is indeed oppressive and dominant. However, as Foucault explained, power is also productive. And in that sense, there should be some room for a speaking, dissenting agency in this multilateral, multi stakeholder, transnational computer mediated scenario. As an additional comment to her arguments, Franklin said that there is a powerful state-centric narrative emerging about the internet and the neo-convergent media---and that this narrative claims we are always in control and know what is happening.

In a similar vein, Raboy was asked about the normative role and efforts of the exclusives clubs like G-8 in global governance. Referring to Monroe Price's lecture the previous evening, he advocated the principles of participation, accountability, representation and transparency for them. Adding to this discussion, Puppis sought to point out that 'governance' and 'governmentality' are two possible concepts for analysing the way society is shaped. Raboy was further asked if he sees anarchy as one of the models for internet governance. Disagreeing that the internet has an anarchic structure, he visualised a set model emerging on the Internet that would replace its hitherto 'chaotical' development.

Reflecting on the contested and complex interpretations of governance, the Chair Bishnu Mahapatra recalled that the emergence of this term had to struggle with generic terms---like 'development'---that have come to be associated with it---so much so that the failure of development is often seen as the failure of governance. He wondered at perspectives that view governance as something that supports neo-liberal economy, and thereby fail to see its normative and empirical side. Consequently, any talk on governance today is compelled to defend many other things in the context of the changing role of state, society, and international configurations. Echoing the unsettled character of 'governance', Raboy provided a thumbrule: who is speaking about governance, what are their connections with and interests in the power structure, and how they interact with other actors.

Session II **Conditionalities of Flows & Governance**

Chair: Arun Mehta (Radiophony)

‘Borders and Mobility in the Infosphere’

Stephen McDowell

Department of Communication, Florida State University

‘Presence and Design of Trust’

Caroline Nevejan

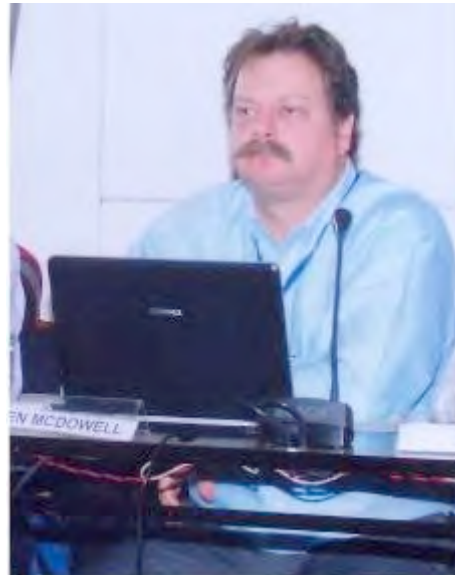
Free University of Amsterdam, and Dutch Council for Culture and the Arts

‘Mapping transnational networks on Internet governance’

Elena Pavan

University of Trento

Contrary to the ‘infosphere’ being portrayed as a space of unrestricted flows, **Stephen McDowell** set out to argue that it remains a tested border space, and that the strategy to manage the electronic media space intersects with government’s efforts to reinvent international borders. Various actors use bordering techniques– including but not restricted to the design and deployment of administrative technologies that partially reproduce bounded spheres of state authority and meaning--to support security, control online behaviour, and participate in global patterns of investment and production. Since borders continue to be created in a manner difficult to track and to conceptualise, McDowell sought the spatial constructivist approach to conceptualise the key tensions in the domains of *governance, technology and culture* that structure mobility/fixity in internet governance.



He emphasised that the conditions of mobility as much define sovereignty in the infosphere as physical borders have defined the sovereignty of nation-states. From the standpoint of *governance*, he saw borders as defining the terms and conditions of connections and interaction with countries. These may be directed at controlling content, protecting and promoting speech rights, shaping finance, electronic commerce, travel and tourism, and trade in goods and services. Given the multiple layers of technological applications, physical infrastructure and user content, nation states have realised the need for developing an inter-state strategy: a case in point being the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s programme of ‘Cultural Security’.

Secondly, the design, deployment and use of technology also intersects with the ways in which the infosphere is governed, as it re-institutes border-like characteristics on networks and in networked-based services. Unequal distribution of access to these networks and applications, as well as to the skills necessary to benefit from their use, remains a central element of the social and geographic mapping of network technology. Consequently technology choice has consequences in allowing certain interactions and media behaviours, while restricting others.

Cultural expectations and practices offer the third nodal point to consider the shaping of mobility and the importance of borders in the infosphere. McDowell drew attention to how cultural linkages line up with both, national groups and in parallel, with cross-national social and political connections, such as diasporas and transnational civil society groups. The development of internationalised domain names, as well as the expansion of sponsored global top level domain names, provides new opportunities for cultural practices, which like multichannel broadcasting in the past, may allow for the segmentation of the infosphere along the lines of cultural, linguistic, and geographic communities. He visualised networking technologies contributing more fundamentally to group formation, social networking, online communities like second life or gaming. And these old and new coalitions may not match national borders, and may present sub-national and challenges to modes of thinking about national communities

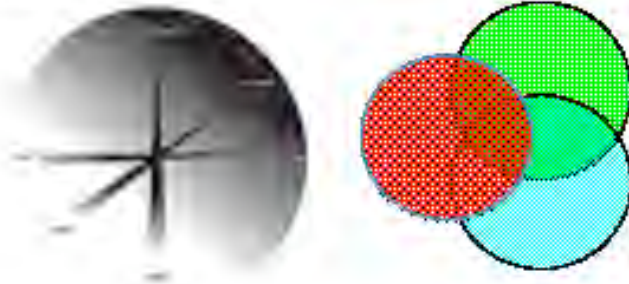


The transformations in the idea of governance with the coming of internet, also formed the core of **Caroline Nevejan's** presentation. Delineating the concept of governance as used in Political Science---a metaphoric term to think about power and how it is executed---she highlighted different players integral to the process and dynamic of media governance, including the *audience, media maker, policy makers and media companies*. For instance, today media audiences is the first player, and they not only want to be informed and entertained but also wish to produce their own expressions through different channels and media such as home videos or sharing of photos etc. While this new force of media production cannot be underestimated, media makers---viz. journalists, artists, designers and film makers---also form a major force in shaping, understanding and challenging notions of governance.

She drew attention to the extent to which many of us are surrounded by a cultural and media landscape, which has dramatically changed identity formation and interaction. Much the way in which 'Nature' has become less of a force of identification than television, advertisements and dress codes, Nevejan sees the public domain as a diminishing force overshadowed by the commercial domain. Because of the presence of this huge symbolic and commercial universe in the daily experience of people, individual human beings are now faced with the need to 'decode' the environment around them.

Recognising that this decoding is a force that cannot be underestimated when reflecting upon media governance, she brought into play two concepts to aide our understanding: namely 'Presence' and 'Trust'. Presence has changed dramatically with development of technology, and means a 'sense of survival and well being'. She put forward three typologies of Presence: Natural presence, which is distinct for survival and well-being, and embodies the ethical dimension of our lives; Mediated Presence, which contributes to the language and concepts that people share significantly, and thus affects how we look at ourselves; and, Witnessed Presence ("I can see you and you can see me") that functions as a catalyst for good as well as for bad.

moving towards well -being and survival



To this framework, Nevejan added two crucial qualifiers. First, that 'Presence' always entails a trade-off---precisely because of which, the 'design of trust' gains importance. Elaborating on the four dimensions of Trust---namely you/not you, do/not do, here/not here, now/not now---she underlined that Trust depends upon the kind of presence, the relationship with the party concerned, and the capability/possibility of social action. Second, that the concept of Presence tends to change dramatically with changes in the

ecology of the media. The exponential growth of the Internet and evolving digital technologies have deeply affected the way people collaborate with colleagues and competitors, as well as how they personally interact with friends and relatives at home and abroad.

Consequently, the way trust and truth are established is also changing: speed and scale are often beyond perception, and time and place are often not shared. The many editorial platforms and databases that facilitate this many-to-many communication flow, have reached such levels of complexity that not one person can act upon these anymore. Nevertheless, people have to orchestrate their social connections and practices in the technological jungle that surrounds them.

Analysing these issues within the landscape of media governance, she said that companies and organizations have to develop strategies for how to survive and use the new speed and scale of collecting and distributing of both material and immaterial goods. She noted that media makers are developing a tactical behaviour since early 1990's, which is different from strategic behaviour, and tries to find the crux in the media landscape. This resonates with the 'samizdat' competence of the audience, such that in the process both the audience and media maker inspire each other. She finds tremendous traction in invoking the notion of 'Samizdat' since it simultaneously described the underground press in Eastern Europe in the Soviet era and the social practice of establishing trust and truth amidst the propaganda-laid media-landscape. To substantiate the operationalisation of this notion today, she talked about how the outsourcing industries contextualise profits by deploying elaborate think tanks for cultural and political analysis of the particular country they are operating in.

All stakeholders thus look for reference points for survival, well being and trustworthiness, in material and immaterial infrastructures. In this context, she mentioned the UN's Creative Economy Report 2008 which argued that investing in creative industries creates profits for society and trustworthiness. This report became a starting point for agreements among European countries to organise the Media and Cultural infrastructure as 'Value Chain'. And what feeds into the value chain is the 'Cultural Citizenship', introduced to function as a narrative as well as a principle. This concept connects the media and cultural infrastructure to democratic rights, pays tribute to the complex local, national and global identities and provokes questions and debate on what constitutes and entails citizenship.

She concluded by saying that as a media policy maker her point of reference is how we can all move towards survival and well being, given that and identity and culture are fundamental to human rights.



Taking the case of internet governance to elaborate upon the meaning of global media governance, **Elena Pavan** called for an empirical turn. Such a turn must take cognisance of changes in the order of world politics, the role of the state and of the dynamics of social actors, since these have come to affect, amongst others, the production and dissemination of information.

In doing so, she sought to raise questions about how we may put together the varied narratives of different actors which influence the way policy domains are currently being shaped at the global stage. Such an approach, Pavan found, would help us both analytically and methodologically: the first in critically addressing the agency of actors, their contribution in the global political process, the way we re-conceive power and the manner in which global communication governance is structured. And the second, in finding out a consistent way to benchmark the multiplicity of agency, norms,

narratives and practices, given that the bottom-up shaping of policy is still influenced by (traditional) top-down perspectives.

To get a grip over the anatomy of multi-stakeholder forums at the IGF, Pavan adopted a relational approach to unravel the rapport between different actors. This would bring out how policy outcomes that are not necessarily binding may be read as a collective construction of meaning and discourses on social problems. Equally, when looking at practices of interaction between actors that do not necessarily result in policy outcomes, it helps highlighting the making of policy outcomes that are ‘soft’ albeit far from being ‘weak’. Substantiating the purchase of this, she reminded us that although telecommunication has always been regulated top-down by state actors, calling on civil society, private actors and government players to agree on one common understanding is anything but weak.

Within the wider ambit of what Pavan prefers to term ‘Global Communication Governance’ (GCC), the case of internet governance provides a twofold challenge. The first is Content uncertainty, which concerns the meanings of Internet governance and the nature of inter groups; and the second is Process uncertainty, or the preferred protocols and political arrangements to host, represent and effectively involve the vast constituency of stakeholders.

Viewing networks as entailing the organisational structures of both, the relationship between actors and the nature/terms of exchange, she proposed the complexity of Internet Governance landscape is best traced by analysing the different kind of networks. These include networks that put together social political actors, different understanding of issues, and different spaces in which these two dynamics are organised. This, in turn, calls for their mapping along two dimensions: the Space of Networks Development, which consist of online vs. offline, and the Types of Nodes which constitutes the themes/understandings vs. social actors.

IG transnational networks: a typology

		TYPE OF NETWORK NODES	
		Semantic	Social
SPACE OF NETWORK DEPLOYMENT	Online	Online thematic network	Mailing list networks
	Offline	Offline semantic networks	Offline collaboration networks

Online thematic network could be read in terms of diversity of interests represented online through connection between pluralities of resources. Insights on how multi-actor conversations offline are translated into conversational fluxes within the Web space and made accessible to all Internet users. It also gives insights on how multi-actor conversations offline are translated into conversational fluxes within the Web space and made accessible to all Internet users. And offline semantic networks depict conversational patterns along which different themes are brought into

the Internet Governance agenda. Echoing the sensibility with which she began, Pavan concluded by imploring the need for methodological precision in generalising her study for weighing the transformation in global media governance.

Zooming in on the core assumption of the three presentations, the chair, Arun Mehta, wondered whether analyses on the governance of any medium should begin by reflecting upon whether the medium is indeed governable or not. He raised doubts on whether the Internet can be governed by citing, inter alia, the problem of email spams. Referring to the concept of borders, he remarked that, besides natural borders on the internet like language, technology is redefining borders at a pace much faster than regulators are able to apprehend--thereby reiterating his argument of governability. He also made an observation on the non-democratic representation at the IGF, which was endorsed by the floor. But Mehta's comment on governability of the internet provoked many contents. Peng Hwa was categorical that the Internet "can indeed be governed, is being governed and should be governed"; and that spam was not an appropriate example of lack of governance, since it is being regulated, not by the government but by technology.

On being questioned whether he saw the web diluting nation states, McDowell found forums on the internet not directly confronting national borders but creating transcending spaces. However, he pointed out, that there are all kinds of cross-cutting pressures, which sometimes make regions important on the internet.

Recognising how the computer-mediated presence is reconfiguring the natural presence, such as in cyber bullying, Franklin sought Nevejan to elaborate on the concept of mediated vs. natural presence. Nevejan said that many mediated presences are indeed experienced as real because we can negotiate between purity and hybridity. Although we have resorted to think about ourselves in technological terms, and hence, have accepted the reality of mediated presence, Nevejan pointed out that this does not involve sharing of time, place and space; and albeit not consequently, physical presence continues to be needed to negotiate identities and discourse. Nevejan was further asked to comment on the equation of public domain vs. commercial domain and whether the former is on the revival and the latter is diminishing. In response, she was firm that the commercial domain is not diminishing but has a public presence, and has obtained a new reputation on a global scale.

Asked about the detrimental effects of the mechanism of search engine on the internet as a forum, Pavan reminded us that search engines involve a pre-selection of information, usually in

accordance with the functioning of that particular engine. And on the query to her vision of 'broader the definition internet governance, more the involvement of different actors', she clarified that the instrument of IGF widened opportunities for participation without being binding. She added it does not matter how much participation such forums instil, as policy formulation by traditional political actors is what this leads to. Responding to this comment Mehta reiterated his concerns about representation at the IGF since such forums continue to be dominated by large corporations and influential governments---who already had a forum like ITU. Ending on a more optimistic note, Franklin held the view that the IGF still carried the potential to evolve as a platform representing the multitude of stakeholders in a fair manner.

Session III *Regimes of Digital Technologies*

Chair: Vibodh Parthasarathi (CCMG)

'Spectrum Management in India: A Critique'

Rohit Prasad

Management Development Institute

'Government as 'Player' and 'Referee': Telecom-Internet-Media Policy in India'

Arun Mehta

Radiophony

Shifting attention from the global to national arena, **Rohit Prasad's** presentation began by enumerating the growing mobile subscriber base in India, currently the second largest in the world and growing annually at 90%. After outlining the market structure of this sector, the spread of technology, and variety of operators, Prasad gave a graphic presentation on the workings of the mobile industry, its infrastructure and the mechanism of spectrum allocation. Articulating the problem of spectrum management in terms of congestion and interference---"too many cattle grazing in the park"---Prasad benchmarked the two dominant policy approaches: the Commons Approach and the Licensed Approach.

Examining the latter, he elaborated the two kinds of licenses required by operators in India: a license for spectrum and that to provide mobile services using that spectrum. In investigating the efficacy of these two separate mechanisms, he sketched the trajectory of the policy options on spectrum in India. From 1995 to 2003 the policy approach was based on operators getting a license for mobile services, contingent to receiving a license for spectrum, which was operationalised through an auction process. This milieu got altered with the introduction of the Unified Access Service License (UASL), under which operators could get a license without spectrum being available, even though the only purpose of getting a license was to provide mobile services. Till 2006, there was enough competition with about six operators in each market and no more licenses were being issued, even though the incumbents needed more spectrum. India's average holding was about 6 MHz as opposed to world average of 20 Mhz. After 2006, the position reversed and the license-operators were accused of hoarding spectrum. Prasad felt that new licenses were issued only because GSM had emerged the winner in the format war, and the fresh entrants wanted GSM spectrum. At present, there are 10-11 licensed operators in a circle, some with spectrum and cell sites, others with spectrum in the process of building cell sites, and finally those waiting for spectrum. In this context he raised a question that if two technologies are competing, should a level playing field be defined as equal capacity or equal

access to resources, especially given that spectrum efficiency increases with spectrum allocation and that fragmentation of spectrum destroys its capacity.

Stages of Spectrum Policies in India

- ❖ The First Stage (1995-2003) : Auctioning startup spectrum with Subscriber Base Norms (SBN) for additional tranches
- ❖ The Second Stage (2003-2006) : De-linking License from Spectrum
 - Introduction of UAS license with fixed fees
 - Spectrum viewed as scarce
 - 3G viewed as extension of 2G, limit on operators
- ❖ Third Stage: Stricter Criterion for Allocation of Spectrum (2006-2008)
 - Spectrum viewed as abundant for incumbents
 - Many new UAS licenses issued
 - 3G viewed as different service

1 April 2009

Spectrum Committee on 7 Aug 2008

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In reviewing the three stages that the spectrum policy in India had undergone--- viz. auctioning, de-linking license from spectrum, and criterion for spectrum allocation, Prasad suggested the problem lay in the government arguing for less spectrum used by incumbents at a time when spectrum became more productive; hence, 2G was destroyed compared to 3G, even though it could be a major driver for development. The challenge, inferred Prasad, is to surmount spectrum being treated as a commodity/property.

Looking beyond one sector, **Arun Mehta** compared different sectors of the media industry, based on the parameters of directionality, richness and diversity of space, to spotlight the role of the regulator and its amenability to technological change.

Beginning with an analysis of the directionality of the media, he underlined that radio in India is largely a unidirectional media, although the use of telephones and mobiles as means for feedback has changed the scenario a bit. A more notable change however is the introduction of community radio, though a lot needs to be achieved by way of practice. Tight government control has meant that thus far radio has not proved a medium for meaningful political discourse, even though it has the widest reach. The case of television is not much better, as it also remains a one directional medium, with only a few people producing and disseminating content; yet, media activists failed to advocate Community TV. Regarding telecom, Mehta was emphatic that not only was spectrum being used extremely inefficiently, but an artificial shortage was created. The internet is clearly the winner as a multidirectional media, and at much less cost.



Mehta then moved on to how different media fared with respect to diversity and the number of players. In the case of radio, the All India Radio (government owned) has 229 broadcasting centres with transmitters, as opposed to 17 by private players who are not allowed to broadcast news and current affairs. Radio is thus a government dominated space. In television, the terrestrial space has a government monopoly, which is why the Doordarshan (government owned channel) 8 PM news is always number one on TRPs. The private players are operating only through satellite, and although there are a large number of channels now, most of them have incredibly similar content. The situation is different in the telecom sector, as every telecom user is



a content producer; with the introduction of digital technologies, service providers have realised that there is money to be made in content. The internet again takes the edge as a vibrant medium with no content monopoly.

Coming to the question of content filtering and regulation, Mehta argued that the government's approach is to heavily regulate those areas that it is

able to regulate. While this works well for the internet, it does not work for radio; and in the case of television, the government steps in on an ad hoc basis with a heavy hand. Telecom is also a contentious space, and there is both, formal and informal regulation and monitoring in this space. In contrast, internet remains a medium that is uncensored and unfiltered. Although there is a *government body* which can be approached in order to block sites that have malicious content, in practice this tool is sporadically used. On the key question of amenability to technological change, the presence of the government is most noticeable. The government, he argued, does not like any technological change that it has not cleared and mandated.

In winding up, Mehta reiterated that the internet is a vibrant public space, least restricted by policy and less dominated by government---perhaps which is why smart money is going there. However many people take the openness and freedom of internet for granted, which is a pity. The medium needs more support of civil society in staying unfettered and diverse. Secondly, the government has been killing all other media by severely reducing their revenue models. Precisely because he finds the reach of radio is the most, its heavy regulation has led to the poor facing a greater degree of censorship than the rich. And lastly, it is hard to make a sensible policy in an area where one has commercial interests; the government by maintaining a very strong presence in some sectors as a referee, a player and a role maker, is ruining the industry.

The discussion opened with Bishnu Mahapatra commenting that while both presentations explained well the question of what and how of policy options, they did not adequately handle the 'why' question. Or, how can our layered conception of understanding the state in 90s, help explain why it is acting the way it has?

Among the numerous responses triggered by this comment, Nevejan's experience in Holland suggested most politicians to be completely ignorant about the implication of technology on which they are legislating. She asked Mehta about the Indian experience of imparting knowledge to the policymakers about technology. In response, Mehta said that the government considers media outlets as troublemakers as they have the potential to create a more informed citizenry. He added that one would not have seen many players in TV if it was not for the total paradigm shift of technology from terrestrial to satellite. Further, trying to educate the government on technology is a complete waste of time, especially since it is often difficult to decipher in India who the real policymaker is.

Expressing disapproval to Mehta's argument that the state regulates only those areas it can effectively regulate, Krishna Reddy chose to point at other reasons to regulate these spaces than only technological considerations. Further, he found radio and TV unidirectional not because of technological issues but political economy reasons---i.e. because the market restricts that space for multidimensional dialogue. He closed by saying that it may be possible that in the near future the Internet is governed and corporatised in the same way as TV and Radio. Responding to these

remarks, Mehta reiterated that the pace of technological changes on the internet are breathtaking, and that the lawyers work a lot slower than the engineers do.

Venting his disappointment with the discourse on the relationship with the state, and the need for governance, Aditya Dev Sood referred to a study by his group, CKS, on the usage of mobile telephony in rural entrepreneurship. Involving an engagement with policymakers including TRAI, this experience illustrated that the government is not completely distanced, inured or insensitive, though the nature of the dialogue is complex.

Joining the debate, Prasad clarified that as presenters they may have conveyed unidirectional intentionality and policy on part of the state. Referring again to the oscillating spectrum policy in India and the marked shift before and after 2006, he cited several reasons: change in ideology of the government, regime change, or technology change. Above all, however, Prasad explained policy changes due to changes in the minister. Endorsing earlier comments about ignorance of policymakers towards technology, he amplified the fact that the government is not obliged to take TRAI's recommendation, and often reverses it.

Recalling that literature on why policies undergo a change is often dominated by a narrative of interest, Mohapatra contended that the empirical case of a change in minister goes against all methods that we think are responsible for changing policies; "it implies that there could sometimes be no method to this". As a concluding comment to these debates, Mahapatra emphasised that because people do not wish to secede but want to pay attention to government, it is important to be involved in the dynamic of governance---more so since these are processes that one is still learning about.

Session IV *Governance and the Broadcast Industry*

Chair: Hemant Joshi (JMI)

'European Public Service in Transition from PSB to PSM'

Minna Aslama

Research Fellow / Program Officer, Fordham University / University of Helsinki

'Tamasha of TV News'

Daya Thussu

Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Westminster, London, UK

'Possibilities & Limits of Self-Regulation of Indian Broadcast Content'

Peng Hwa

Dean, MICORE (Mudra Institute of Communication Research) and Professor and Director of the Singapore Internet Research Centre, Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Illustrating a specific engagement with the state, Minna Aslama presented a policy perspective on the decline of public service broadcasting (PSB), as also its transition to public service media (PSM) in the European landscape. She noted that the Council of Europe in 2008 recommended the use of PSM in place of PSB, since it is a technology neutral term and, as a corollary, offers a variety of services in diverse and new platforms.

She laid out the possible policy responses towards building an interface between public service broadcasting and new technology. These include *allow* - public broadcasters should be allowed to develop new services like new forms of Multimedia interactive content, niche channels etc; *oblige* – public broadcasters could also be obliged to provide new types of online services like online public service broadcasting; *restrict* - they could also be restricted from going for certain business models related to new media technologies; *protect* - they can also be protected in order to develop regional, terrestrial television platforms in the interest of the public; and lastly *encourage* - they could be encouraged in shaping themselves as public service media, by providing the additional aid. These approaches however are not in any way mutually exclusive.

DTTV: “To save PSB?”

Examples of policy arguments

- ✦ Combating the digital divide
- ✦ More rapid transitions to the information society
- ✦ A more cost-effective infrastructure and analogue switch-off
- ✦ Create competitive markets
- ✦ National regulation of digital broadcasting
- ✦ Regional broadcasting
- ✦ Mobile distribution

In this backdrop, Aslama located the key issues of policy concerns, discourses and trends circulating in Europe to save PSB from competitive markets: viz. combating the digital divide by more rapid transitions to the information society, creating a more cost-effective infrastructure, national regulation of digital broadcasting, and regional broadcasting and mobile distribution. Citing a few comparative examples of PSB/PSM in practice, she highlighted that the BBC in UK has a strong presence and a clearly defined mandate; Germany has a restricted mandate on the internet; and Norway has an ambivalent

regulatory approach over the online and mobile activities, including of mobile television.

This led Aslama to infer that Europe is home to “policies of inertia as opposed to policies of innovations”, as there is little direct support for innovative content. But she also reminded the floor that PSM are discussed widely not only in Europe but elsewhere, to combat and provide alternatives for media concentration and commercialisation. Ending on an optimistic and constructive note, she suggested the need to think and discuss about the ‘PSB to PSB remit’, and invoke Public Service Media as a new policy tool, to overcome the challenges of the mainstream market



In building a critique of private news channels in India, **Daya Thussu** deployed the term *Tamasha*---a form of folk theatre which is loud, vulgar and interesting---as a metaphor to illustrate the dwindling boundaries between news and entertainment. He began by giving an overview of the commercialisation of airwaves in India, which has contributed to the proliferation of news channels, dependent on advertising for over 70% of their revenues. With more than 56 news channels, India has the world’s most linguistically diverse and competitive

television news media. Although these get 11% of the total advertising revenue on TV, news channels account for only 4% of actual viewership.

Thussu attributed the popularity of news to the formula of three Cs – *Crime, Cricket and Cinema*---which constitute its principal programming package. Crime shows are highly popular, and this was evident in the high-pitched coverage of Mumbai terrorist attack, almost as a *tamasha of terrorism*. Cricket has also become a mini-industry in itself especially with the launch of the Indian Premier League. But what really dominates the news scene is Bollywood related news. Thussu termed the trend as Bollywoodisation of news, and drew its connections to a fast expanding Hindi Film Industry, both in terms of its material worth and market reach. New synergies and collaborations are being materialised between Bollywood and Hollywood, as also between news and entertainment industries.

News-entertainment synergies

News	Entertainment	US-link
• NDTV 24x7	NDTV Imagine	NBC
• CNN/IBN	TV 18	Viacom/Disney
• Zee News	Zee Cinema	AOL-Time Warner
• Star News	Star Gold	News Corp.
• Sahara Samay	Filmy/Firangi	HBO

Thussu concluded his presentation with a narrative on how this scenario is shaping the public discourse, by noting inter-related trends of privatisation of public sphere, and Bollywood as a means of diversion from real issues such as poverty and unemployment. Since news is not merely a media product but a vehicle for engagement in the democratic process, feeding off and into domestic politics and international relations, this ‘tamasha’ of TV news can act as a conduit for the corporate colonisation of consciousness. Entertainment, he said, is serving as an ideological tool to legitimise the neo liberal regime by replacing ‘what matters’ with ‘what does not’.

Staying with the television in India, **Peng Hwa Ang** shifted focus to the related but wider regulatory lacunae faced by the Broadcast Industry. Three enumerations of this were put forward: one, liberalisation has not been accompanied by necessary regulations; two, technological convergence has created uncertainties, such as films are more tightly regulated than television programmes; and three, there are continuing difficulties in passing necessary regulations, given the ‘Indian form of bad governance’.



Since the broadcasting landscape has grown from an all-government system to one filled with many private sector players, the regulatory regime which could cater to the former has had to undergo a major structural overhaul. The proposed solution to these regulatory absences in broadcasting sector, in particular news, is seen in the form of Self Regulation, such as the Self Regulatory Guidelines for the Broadcasting Sector (2008), and the Code of Ethics & Broadcasting Standards drawn up by the News Broadcasters Association. While making a case for regulatory

ground rules, he emphasised that the important thing is the quality of rules and not the model of rules.

Ang defined Self Regulation as a form of delegated regulation, wherein “industry regulates industry”. It thus signifies that the government trusts the industry to regulate itself. But self regulation, he argued, is feasible only when the matter in hand is not of major social consequence, i.e. it is of relatively minor social harm. Thus, while self regulation does not apply in matters of crime and murder, it is huge in advertising as its content is usually not seen as socially harmful.

For news, he suggested that self regulation is not a sustainable model in the long run. In making a case for this thesis, he drew attention to a few conditions that need to be in place for self-regulation to work successfully. These include a motivated industry, small number of large players, government regulatory backstop and maturity in the market. Analysing if these conditions are met in the Indian case, Ang highlighted that while the industry is motivated and wants to self regulate, it is characterised by the presence of a large number of small players. Also while the radio market has matured, the television industry has still some distance to cover. Concluding his presentation, he opined that since most factors for successful self-regulation are absent in India, one should be prepared for failure.

Two questions to Aslama initiated the discussion: what is meant by PSM as policy tool, and whether there is any tension in the content and technology sides in PSM policies. In response, she said that PSM can work towards content balancing and diversity by providing access to the information that is not given out by the commercial players, though building trust and independence should be the key. On the second, she said that the government and public broadcasters in Northern Europe were advocating the digital terrestrial television in a discursive way and digital terrestrial television infrastructure building has foreshadowed the content development to some extent---quite apart from the fact that there are very little resources for the development of original content. Commenting on the state of PSB, Raboy added that there is a lack of innovative thinking and strategy, as institutions have strong vested interest and feel threatened with innovations practices. Aslama responded that she does not think that PSB is threatened by new challenges and innovations; one instance being the EU’s interest in developing community media, which points at a better future for PSB.

Thussu was asked if his conception about news is same for the western countries and if he could suggest some mechanism to arrest the trend of Tamasha. Clarifying that ‘the west’ was difficult to uniformly grasp, he contrasted the American model of broadcasting which is commercially dependent, with a Public Broadcasting model like the BBC, considered to be a credible source of news across the world. Even under immense commercial pressures, the Public Service Broadcaster has the space for meaningful debates. Comparing this model with India, he said we have State Broadcasting as opposed to Public Broadcasting. Though India was the first country in the world to use satellite for education purposes and has the largest terrestrial set up, the system is now strongly dominated by commercial pressures.

The discussion then came to be focused on regulation. Mehta questioned the very need for regulation, citing the example of Internet which has not had any content regulation. Responding to this, Ang did not advocate for strict laws but for some system and understanding in place to ensure the media is not used for social harm. Puppis contributed to this discussion by underlining that not everything claimed as self regulation is in fact self regulation. Lidberg joined in to say that the R (regulation) word is problematic---for instance, Self regulation in Sweden/Australia is not working---and perhaps it needs to be replaced by something like Quality Check/assurance.

While agreeing to question the need for regulation, Nalini Mohanty conjectured that if the state is not desired to regulate and self regulation is a pretence, what are the alternative mechanisms for

the community to regulate media content. Ang called for an activism around the issue and for public intellectuals to come forward. Hemant Joshi, in the chair, sought to wind up the session by perceptibly observing that the move to self regulate in India is not a proactive one, but is a reaction to the Broadcasting Bill.

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December 10

Session I *Informatics in Institutional Reform*

Chair: Marc Raboy
McGill University

‘ICT & Governance: Issues for Marginal Economies’

Pradosh Nath
ICSSR Fellow, CCMG and Scientist, National Institute of Science Technology and Development Studies, New Delhi

Kicking-off the second day, **Pradosh Nath** began by outlining the extent of ICT penetration in India. Much to everyone’s surprise, on the global index of ICT access, India ranked 142 among 180 countries; and internally, an NCAER estimate revealed that out of 35 states, 17 states have e-readiness below the national average. An emergent question therefore is how does ICT matter for less developed economies and, more broadly, for the goals of development.

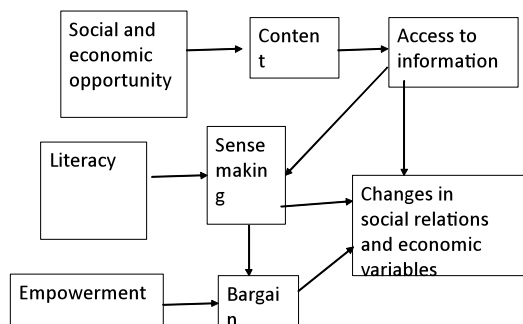
Attention was drawn to two genres of theory that throw light on this question. Both are a critique of the Product Cycle theory, which postulates that as innovations take place in developed countries, the manufacturing base shifts to low cost economies, making them industrialised in the process; eventually, this process reduces the gap between rich and poor countries. One critique to this is the Cumulative Causation theory by Myrdal, who had argued that in reality the gap widens because adopter-countries remain laggards as innovator-countries move to higher technological planes. Another critique was the theory of Circular Causation, which makes a distinction between fashion and functional products. Fashion goods create much scope for ICT application, which shifts the comparative advantage back to developed countries. Laggards can catch up only if they have adequate ICT infrastructure, such as in the case of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. A related critique is the theory on network technologies which also shows the gap to widen because countries that adopt network technologies develop fast, while the rest remain laggards. Rich countries are in position to also exploit ICT because it requires universal access as a condition for profitable use.

All this made Nath infer that ICT has an inherent bias against resource-poor segment of economy because accessing them requires few conditions including education, resources, hardware and software. Analysing how these theoretical approaches fit the case of India, he argued that they tend to make sweeping generalisation of economies, and assume a few corrective measures would help the laggard countries catch up. They do not contain a deep understanding of the structural aspect of underdevelopment, the centre-margin equation and the perpetuation of technological duality.

He went on to propose that economies like India comprise two segments. One is the advanced, high technology segment, engaged in producing ‘fashion goods’, and well connected with the global economy. He termed this as the ‘balloon economy’, as it produces little material wealth but

maximises waste generation, and is highly dependent on the media for selling a particular lifestyle associated with the products---a recent example being the Indian Premier League. The second is the laggard or the marginal segment of the economy, a low technology economy engaged in the production of functional goods. The terms of trade between these two segments, as accepted in general economic theory, is governed by the higher technology content products. The fashion economy is thus the centre of the economy, and the marginal segment is the redundant sector---since it does not play any role in the determination of economic variables. Its redundancy is reflected in poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, lack of access to health services, as also the denial of access to processes of resource mobilisation and allocation.

ICT and decentering for transformation



Governance of ICTisation, therefore, has to address a different set of problem than what is given by theories. A transformation of Indian economy will mean de-centering the economy and giving functional goods segment its due role in determination of economic variables. ICT can contribute in creating access to resources and undoing the process of denial, which requires three basic and simultaneous actions. First, creating economic and social opportunities, i.e., content for ICT access; second, enhancing literacy to improve cognitive ability or making sense of the content; and third, empowerment, or enhancing the bargaining power of marginalised people. Here Nath mentioned several ongoing government, non-governmental and corporate initiatives for creating access and connectivity--but not all of them take an integrated approach. Concluding his presentation Nath talked about undesirable fallouts of the ICTisation of an unequipped marginal

economy, such that it can fall prey to the fashion economy's dynamic of quick realisation of return on capital. It can also become victim to connectivity with world market, which may take control of the food supply and land market, pushing the marginal segment to face new vulnerability.

As the Chair, Raboy brought up the case of Kerela, which ranks very high on social indicators like education and health, even though its economic indicators are not high compared to other states. He posed a question whether ICT access in marginalised economies leads to, or helps in, social networking. Nath responded that while there are many success stories to prove the efficacy of ICT in marginalised economies, Kerala is a peculiar case since its social networking is dependent largely on foreign remittance, as a large part of its population works in the Middle East countries.

Asked whether he borrows from Gunder Frank's dependency theory, Nath drew attention to Gunder Frank's focus being on dependencies between developed and less developed countries---while his exploration addressed the internal mechanism of perpetuating this duality, the dependency dynamic and structure within a particular economy. He was further asked to elaborate on what his proposal of decentralisation of economy may hold media for governance. Making it clear that he had argued not for decentralisation but de-centering of economy, Nath

called for mechanisms of governance to create new structures such that it could create interdependence and limit the role of centre. ICT, he said, has to be governed in a way which, instead of promoting the fashion economy, promotes the material economy.

Session II *Enumerations of RTI*

Chair: Biswajit Das
(CCMG, JMI)

‘RTI and Governance’

Manish Sisodia
(*PARIVARTAN and KABIR*)

‘Social Audit and RTI in the context of NREGS

Alice Morris
(*UNNATI*)

The International Freedom of Information Index

A watchdog of transparency in practice

Johan Lidberg
(*School of Media Communication and Culture, Murdoch University*)

Manish Sisodia and Alice Morris shared their experiences as development professionals, in facilitating peoples’ access to tools of Right to Information and Social Audit for transparency and accountability in governance. Sisodia argued that despite being a modern democracy, the Indian state is perhaps more unresponsive today than its colonial counterpart. Morris also underlined the current political trends which includes new public management and receding role of the state in social sectors, a paradigm shift from conventional financial audits and verification to people’s audit, and increasing focus on compliance, quality management, quality services and relevance in the local context.

At present, RTI has been legally mandated in all states and social audits in seven states. Sisodia presented a video documentation of individuals who have used and benefited from the RTI Act in urban areas, such as for release of pension, access to urban basic services etc. and Morris highlighted their experiences of conducting social audits with village communities in Gujarat on the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. She gave details of the audit process, which entails a collaborative approach with the local institutions so as to build consensus amongst all stakeholders. One of the many challenges that come on the way includes ensuring the presence and participation of women and socially disadvantaged groups.



The speakers concluded that Right to Information is now becoming a movement towards strengthening democracy and is giving a sense of empowerment to the marginalised people. The ultimate goal is to make accountability a part of our culture.

Presenting a cross-national assessment of Freedom of Information (FOI) in practice, **Johan Lidberg** foregrounded this being guided by the principles of accountability, i.e. openness & transparency, trust in governors and governance (including corporate), and greater legitimacy of leadership especially in the wake of trust deficit precipitated by the current financial crisis. However, FOI is easy to promise and hard to deliver.

In the five countries chosen for this assessment--Sweden, USA, Australia, South Africa and Thailand--three journalists were assigned the task of making FOI requests; these were tracked on parameters of time taken for processing, cost involved, access and quality of information



provided and scope for the appeal. The three themes on which the requests were made included Prime Minister's/President's travel expenses for 2003 or 04, the export/import of armaments, and refugee/immigration issues. While these were scored on the scale from 0 to 4, the research also qualitatively looked into factors of 'the spin' - assessing attitudes of Ministers and chief public servants through a survey study, and 'the promise'- evaluation of regimes/Acts on the same parameters.

According to Lidberg, the research was unique in three aspects. It tracked and compared real FOI requests internationally, incorporated legal protection of media whistle blowers/shield laws for journalists in FOI regime, and laid the foundation for the International FOI Index. The results revealed that only Sweden showed consistency between 'promise' and 'spin',

while all other countries displayed gaps to various degrees. USA and SA scored close to 50% which is a slim pass, even though the SA Act applies to the private sector. Australia and Thailand failed, proving that their Acts were never meant to work. Overall, only two of the 12 FOI requests generated information, which shows that the systems are mostly dysfunctional, even in US and Australia who claim to be the 'exporters' of democracy.

Airing his thoughts on the future course to develop an FOI index to assess and rank all 68+ FOI countries in conjunction with participants from across the world, Lidberg platformed the idea of presenting the index as a resource website that would be backed by UNESCO. He ended by observing that despite the general gap between FOI promise and practice there is a need to look at the RTI as a win-win situation, since it can rebuild trust and legitimacy, and try to apply this method to the corporate sector.

Given the canvas of these presentations, the discussion predictably centered on the practices, strengths and limitations of RTI. One of the concerns was why the RTI does not apply to the private sector given the context of shrinking public sector operations and increasing public private partnerships. Sisodia highlighted that while the legislation in India does not apply to the private bodies, but one could indirectly question those bodies that get substantial financial assistance from the government. So for instance TRAI can be questioned unlike the private telecom operators. Lidberg pitched in that it is hard to apply laws on businesses as they fear losing advantage, although there are examples such as the South African Act which applies to companies that follow any form of apartheid.

Another question was about why the RTI movement seems to be oriented only against the formal apparatus of the state. Is it to do with the kind of issues that become the object of RTI or is it something intrinsic to the nature of all RTIs. Sisodia responded by highlighting their use of RTI for different fronts: for instance they managed to stall a World Bank project of water privatisation due to an RTI application filed their organisation. Morris highlighted that they work with both the state and community in orienting them and building trust. Their experience suggests that whenever they engaged with the state in a 'challenge approach', they had to face much retaliation. A public hearing process without the participation of state representatives has huge limitation because finally the action has to be taken at their level.

Another question was about whether progressive laws like RTI can be effective in the absence of a mechanism to make our society mature and capable. Viewing the law as only a means and not a solution to social change, Sisodia mentioned that while some people are involved in making progressive laws, some others are working towards changing attitudes in society. In a similar vein, Lidberg was asked to clarify on his comment 'laws are not as important as attitudes'. He responded that while there is no question for the need for well functioning laws, but often a lot of time and cost goes in reviewing laws when what is really needed is change in attitudes. Further asked about whether any redressal mechanisms were in place for countries that did not provide information, he said that penalties are rare, though he hoped that such a system is put in place.

Airing his concern about the power of information, Thussu remarked that there is enough information in the public domain to effect action, but the people who define policy in actual terms are outside limit of FOI. Responding to this, Lidberg pointed out the difference between information, and quality, unspun and independently accessed information, which FOI delivers. It makes accessible original documents close to where they were drafted. Morris also added that the RTI has given a structure to the process of obtaining both information and answers from the authorities.

Session III *Contexts of Advocacy*

Chair: Maitrayee Choudhuri (JNU)

'A Social Movement Theory Perspective on Media Reform'

Philip M. Napoli

(Graduate School of Business/Donald McGannon Communication Research Center, Fordham University)

Presented by *Minna Aslama*

'Are there Rights to Usability?'

Aditya Dev Sood

Center for Knowledge Societies

'Media Advocacy & the Marginalised'

Aarhi Pai

Centre for Advocacy and Research

The broad theme of social intervention and mobilization continued in the next session where on behalf of **Phil Napoli**, Minna Aslama made a presentation which delved into media reforms from a Social Movement Theory Perspective. Reviewing the academic literature on public interest media advocacy and activism entailed addressing a set of key questions: whether scholarship on the subject is as sparse as frequently asserted, what the key theoretical/methodological

approaches are, and what are the advocacy contexts (*time periods, nations, issues, technologies*) that have been studied and been neglected. The review revealed that much of the recent literature approaches media reform as a social movement, enclosing three theoretical perspectives: *framing processes* - how movement and goals are framed/communicated; *political opportunities* - role of political environment on opportunities for influence; and, *mobilizing structures* - impact of organizational structures and characteristics of actors.



On the first, the presentation reflected that multiple frames have been employed the world over for building (communicating) such movements in general: these include freedom of press/ freedom of expression, media democratization, right to free communication, cultural environment and media justice. There is little movement at this point in adopting a single unifying frame. A related debate is whether the priorities of this movement should be on reforming traditional media or development of alternative media. Another issue is of difficulty in obtaining media coverage, which is seen as essential to movement building, since the movement's complex issues do not resonate with the public. Talking about *political opportunities*, the windows of opportunity for influencing usually considered as new technology, discrediting of media content and major political crisis or upheaval. However, the high point of political opportunities was in the 1960s and 70s and the low point has been the 1980s and early 90s. On

mobilizing structures, the presenter underscored the complex organizational ecology for movement which has seen the rise and fall of many different sectors/organizations over time. Following this, the common organizational critiques were discussed such as the movement being reactive rather than pro-active, it being insufficiently radical, it not sufficiently representative of public's interests and lacking collaboration/cooperation among organizational actors.

In highlighting the linkage of the media reforms movement with other social movements, it becomes important to recognize that the former emerged from other social movements, such as the political opposition in South Korea, the anti-globalization movement in Canada, the civil rights movement in the U.S. and the consumer movement of Brazil. Forwarding Napoli's important thesis of the Media Reforms movement being seen as a meta-movement---as it is fundamental to the success other social movements---the presentation raised questions on whether media reform today is a free standing movement or subordinate to other movements; how important it is to pursue strategic relationships with other social movements; and, whether they care enough about media reform. Evidence suggested that media reform today seems better equipped to stand on its own, it has more resonance of issues with public and needs to rely less on mainstream media to reach the public. The presentation ended with a call for future research being encouraged outside of U.S./North America, possibly incorporating comparative works, as also taking on a more long-term canvas towards identifying the determinants of long-term success.



Based on the experience of his organization Center for Knowledge Societies, **Aditya Dev Sood** platformed the practice of ‘innovation consulting’: i.e. the business of creating new technologies that match with the expectations of the user, while also helping realize developmental goals. The process of innovation involves three levels of work. At the *understand level*, surveys are used to track the broad societal changes and the expectations of users in terms of physical form, colour and material finish of the product. This is followed by *development level* pertaining to ‘design development’ including product conceptualizing, defining features and functionality of the proposed products, designing interface in accordance to the prototype, and defining visual identity and life of the hard product. And finally, the *enhance level*, which includes validation of the product before launching it in the market, and verifying its usability.

Recognising that market forces do not operate always in the interest of the consumer, Sood advocated a sophisticated public and private partnership so as to contribute to societal changes. This was illustrated with an example of innovation in making mobile telephony cater to the illiterate segment of population. The design comprised of non-textual strategies, categorical schema, spatial and colour clues, learning by doing and proxy literate solutions. These kinds of innovations indicate farsightedness and inclusive thinking on the part of the corporation, and combine objectives of the market with those of social welfare. He cited another example of Liyaqat, a guerrilla farmer on the banks of the Ganga, who after adopting the mobile realized stronger social and business networks, reduced travelling costs and increased profits.

Sood concluded by making a few recommendations that included identifying different areas of services which can have innovations beneficial for rural adopters. On the policy front, he called for crafting mechanisms to synthesize decentralization and attribute recognition through awards and grants for research etc.

Aarthi Pai shared the experiences of the Centre for Advocacy & Research in using the mainstream media for advocacy on the inclusion of marginalized communities. She particularly focused on the ‘Indian Avahan Initiative’, a media advocacy programme that helped bring to media gaze issues of sex workers, men having sex with men, transgender people, drug users and HIV patients. One of the largest such programmes running in six states and 32 districts of India, CFAR worked with 5000 members of the media across national, state & district levels, in print and television, sensitizing them on issues of misrepresentation, stigmatization and criminalization faced by these communities. Through this initiative they also trained 400 media persons and got them to interact with these communities, although it took some time before the community began to trust the media persons and talk freely to them. Pai highlighted that as a result of these dialogues, the media has begun to



report a number of stories on their lives, helping the community gain visibility as citizens. She was hopeful that the government would also recognize them and provide them their due entitlements.

She concluded that is time that experiences such as these are used to ensure that vulnerable communities have access to media to talk about their experiences, which becomes then a mechanism for better legislation and policy.



The chair, Maitreyee Chaudhuri, noted that the presentations indicated the differences and overlaps between research emerging from the academic and corporate context. Referring to Pai's presentation, she showed concern over the danger of trivialization while talking about women and transgender communities. Often media coverage on women or the transgender communities is seen as quasi entertainment instead of the intended purpose of education.

Asked to elaborate on how they collaborated with the voiceless community in order to empower them, Pai admitted that this was an extremely difficult process, as these communities are extremely hostile to the media, law agencies and the government. She added that sometimes the community's interface with the media was traumatizing as their confidentiality was revealed. Discussion forums set up between groups of media persons and community members were an effective way to improve communication.

Taking from this, a second question was posed to Pai about how they convinced reporters to come to the sites and situations for days together given the limitation of time. She reiterated that it is a challenge to carry out any form of development communication work with the media. They worked hard to sensitize reporters, editors and policymakers both at state and national level, and sometimes involved political leadership in their programmes to make it worthy for media coverage. Another question to her was whether some media sections respond better than the others on such issues. In response, she said that one might believe that the English media is better than the others but that is not the case. The vernacular media is equally sensitive.

Sood was asked to elaborate on how mobile can be being used for education. He highlighted the example of a 2005 project called the Mobile Learning Lab, in which concrete ideas were generated on how mobile platforms could be effectively used in government and private sector schools. This research is available on their website and has also been used by a major mobile company.

Aslama was asked to clarify on Napoli's position on reforming traditional media versus development of alternate media. This study, she said was a meta research on research about advocacy and activism around media. While Napoli did not take a particular stand on this issue, she would herself advocate for both changing traditional media and working towards alternative media. To another question about the absence in the study about of media innovations in 80s and 80s, she clarified that the research particular focused on with grassroots and advocacy movements dealing with media reform addresses and which is why the innovation perspective is lacking.

Session IV Knowledge in the Information Age

Chair: T R Kem (CEC)

‘E-content: CEC’s Initiatives’

Pradeep Kaul

Research Fellow / Program Officer, Fordham University / University of Helsinki

‘Digital Content & Media for Inclusion’

Osama Manzar

Founder & Director, Digital Empowerment Foundation

‘Need to strengthen citizen journalism in India’

Nalini Ranjan Mohanty

Jagran Institute of Management and Mass Communication

The presentations in this session focused on state and non state initiatives in using digital technology for wider social goals.

Moving on to large-scale initiatives at e-education, the first initiatives being carried out by his organisation Consortium of Educational Commission (CEC). He began by saying that in order to improve India’s higher education enrolment rate, one requires a blend of conventional education and e-education. The first such educational experiment was the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) in 1975-1976, which broadcast programmes on education and development in six clusters of villages. SITE became a learning ground for using television for education, and to further this potential, the University Grants Commission set up the Consortium for Educational Communication (CEC) in 1993. It is an inter University Centre that acts as a national nodal agency to address the educational needs of the country by disseminating multimedia educational programmes through broadcast and non-broadcast modes. At present it has 17 Multimedia Research Centres (EMMRC) located in universities across the country, and a bank of more than 15,000 programmes on higher education

In 2004, an exclusive Satellite Higher Education Channel was launched called the ‘Vyas channel’ that runs 24 hour transmission covering about 48 subjects and is also available on the internet. In the same year, ‘EDUSAT’, a satellite dedicated to educational use was also launched. As of now, 68 Satellite interactive Terminals (SIT) have been installed at institutions of higher education across the country through which live transmission takes place and students can also ask live questions to experts. Special EDUSAT networks have also been set up for North East states and Uttar Pradesh. A complete learning management system has been developed comprising lectures and videos on demand, on-line interactive Courses, offline services such as CDs/DVDs, migratory teaching ends, teacher trainings for production of e-content and certificate e-courses.

Concluding his presentation, Kaul highlighted the many new proposals for e-education in pipeline such as setting up of virtual classrooms in colleges and institutions, launching Direct To Home channels, and setting up of an archival server to transfer the storage of educational programmes on tapes into digital domain. All these initiatives, he hopes, would help in improving the education scenario of the country.

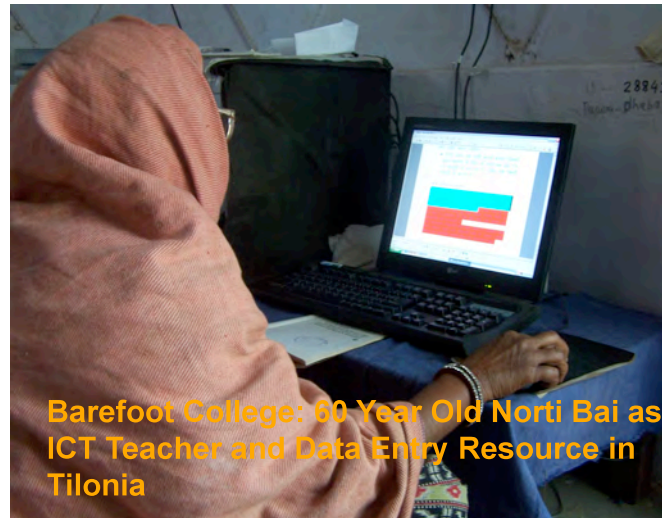
Osama Manzar explained how digital content and the new media are being used to empower rural India and create opportunities for inclusion. At the outset he said that villagers are often seen only as consumers and not providers. Products are seldom mapped according to their needs



because there is little attempt to incorporate knowledge of rural history, environment and culture. However, as experience has shown, if new media and technologies are adopted for rural entrepreneurship, the returns are both financial as well as social. He then narrated several such cases of successful social entrepreneurship. For instance, Toeholdindia, a group that makes Kola Puri chappals found a growing export market when they launched a website that enables people from all parts of the world to place online orders.

Another example is of the Tilonia village in Rajasthan, which has set up an IT-Enabled campus called the Barefoot College. Spread over eight acres, the college is managed entirely by the

community and runs an animation training centre, solar empowered night school for girls, a community radio, water treatment plants, water harvesting systems, solar panel and engineering trainings, workshops on soil and water testing,. The solar panels made here have lit up villages in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Bhutan. In addition, the campus has 15 broadband lines, and through a website the community is now exporting handicrafts globally, generating annual revenues of about Rs 60 Lakhs. Another such example is of innovative governance in Sagar, Madhya Pradesh where community radio, mobile and telephone are being used as tools for redressal of public grievances. The community also runs an ICT enabled animation training and job creation programme, and a toll free helpline on HIV/AIDS. Similar other examples include *e-sagu*, an IT based agriculture expert service, *Desicrew*, a rural BPO service, *Gyanpedia*, an initiative to aggregate digital content for children, created by children and teachers from rural India, and *Pratibadh*, a wall Newspaper run by 600 Rural Reporters in three states. Many of these initiatives have been supported and awarded by the Digital Empowerment Foundation and are an evidence of the fact that simple technologies when adopted creatively can have important social impacts.



The discussion opened with a few questions to Kaul. The first was whether the concept of a virtual university is viable and desirable. Another question was whether technology is being used an excuse for shedding away the traditional responsibilities of states especially in education sector. He responded that the idea of a virtual university is not to replace the traditional university; rather the approach is to merge some aspects of traditional university with the virtual one. The traditional models of education get impetus from new technologies. Another question was on why satellite is being used for broadcast instead of internet. In response, he said that satellite is the only answer for broadcasting in India, as it reaches the remotest of places. Work is ongoing to spread broadband and fibre cable, but this would take many more years to complete.

Further, Mohanty was asked about whether he was working towards developing any alternative media comprising Citizen Journalism, Development Journalism, and Public Interest Journalism. In response, he said that both the producers and consumers of alternative media have limited resources. He added that a group of his friends have tried to develop an alternative media. Earlier they believed that alternative media can only grow and prosperous in vernacular languages but

now they are also trying to put together a new platform in English language. This is because the consumer of this language is better equipped than the others and can be expected to make better contribution. He expressed his desire to see this kind of alternative media finally achieving the status of mainstream media.

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Wrapping Up Vibodh Parthasarathi (CCMG)

Chair: Biswajit Das (CCMG)

Recalling how the germ of this dialogue emerged when Biswajit Das returned from ICA '08 in May, Vibodh Parthasarathi thanked IDRC for their curiosity, and support. He also acknowledged the role played by Unnati, ICSSR & Pro Helvetia in enabling the presence of a diverse set of participants---not to forget, CEC and Taylor & Francis for helping everyone to decompress on both evenings.

While the two days demonstrated that 'Media Governance' has been gaining currency as an idea, and attracting systematic reflection and inquiry, Parthasarathi observed a wide consensus over the need to give attention towards delineating the territory of the field. He wondered how these variedly fructifying tendencies, while could help in re-organising existing research programmes and devising innovations in standing curriculum.

Participants who entered this dialogue with static notions of MG admitted to have gained a more dynamic conception, precisely on count of the 'cracks' and 'clashes' in/between concepts that were constructively exposed by various presenters. The Centre was encouraged by the floor to think in terms of hosting such a roundtable Bi/Annually--- preferably in different parts of India---so as to harness the momentum of this meet. In doing so, it was pointed out that such prospective dialogues must retain the emphasis of exploring the central problematic, rather than working towards a closure.

Rather than scaling up the participation &/or duration of the roundtable, it was suggested that future interactions could identify and address specific rubrics of the problematic for greater elaboration. While some participants impressed upon involving a wider breadth of stakeholders (especially, from regulatory & corporate bodies), others desired a more pointed exposure to issues concerning India; and, still others stressed soliciting presentations from graduate students--- perhaps by scheduling a one/half day 'pre-seminar' exclusively for them---so as to strengthen pedagogical advocacy on this nascent field.

Promising a detailed Report on the deliberations, Parthasarathi shared preliminary thoughts on disseminating the enriching presentations both, electronically and otherwise.