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New Media: Challenges and Opportunities for Brahui Journalism in Balochistan

Dr. Babrak Niaz¹, Dr. Allauddin², Dr. Muhammad Fahim Baloch³, Dr. Abdul Razaque Chhachhar⁴

1Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies, University of Balochistan, Quetta.

2Ph.D. from Shanghai International Studies University, Shanghai, China.

3Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies, University of Balochistan, Quetta.

4Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Department of Media and Communication Studies, University of Sindh, Jamshoro.

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to shed light on Brahui Journalism its geneses and challenges it faces in the era of contemporary technological advancements. Globally new media is replacing the traditional way of communication. The reach and impact of new media are far stronger and longer-lasting than traditional media. Brahui language newspapers and magazines are facing hardships to use and adopt alternate media platforms. Lack of resources and less technological and IT skills are hurdles in this transition. The newspapers published in the Brahui language completely depend on government advertisements in the absence of a well-established private sector. The owners of the newspapers are bound to follow government policies in every aspect, therefore journalists want to switch to new media with the prime objective to highlight the contemporary social, political, cultural, and religious issues of Balochistan and to find better revenue-generating opportunities to decrease dependency on government advertisements.



1. Introduction

The Brahui language is one of the oldest languages of the Indian subcontinent. The 2013 edition of Ethnologue reports that there are some 4.2 million Brahui language speakers, 4 million live in Pakistan, mainly in the province of Balochistan (Ahmed 2018). Brahui is one of the most spoken languages in Balochistan and it has great influence in most of the districts of Balochistan. The prominent Brahui literary personalities include Muhammad Hussain Anqa, Noor

Muhammad Parwana, Babu Abdul Karim Shorish, and prominent nationalist leaders who were also active in the field of journalism (Naghma, 2005).

The first-ever newspaper of Brahui language appeared with the publication of Deen Por Kan Garah Monthly “Al-Haq” and Maulana Muhammad Umar Deenpori is considered as the pioneer of Brahui Journalism. Maulana Muhammad Umar aimed to develop a sense of awareness among women regarding the religious issue, therefore most of the articles published in the Monthly newspaper were religious. The publication of Maulana newspaper continued till

1930 (Ahmed, 1978) Brahui language is also spoken in Afghanistan, Iran, and in some parts of Turkmenistan. While Mastung, Kalat, Khuzdar, Lasbella, and Noshki are the hub of the Brauhi language. Communication in these parts is still dependent on a traditional way. This gives birth to the well-established reality that, in promoting a language and its literature, the print media has a great role. Though Brahui journalism does not progress professionally, it is not possible to disregard the role of Brahui journals, weekly newspapers and quarterlies published reports in promoting its language and literature (Naghma,200).

2. Concept of New media

“New media” is a concept intended to include the advent in the later part of the 20th century of digital, computerized, or networked information and communication technologies. In reality, New Media refers to a broad variety of improvements in media output, distribution and use (Manovich,2002). There are more shifts in technology in term of advancement; they are also literary, traditional and cultural. Digital, interactivity, hypertextuality, dispersal and virtuality are main concepts in the discourses regarding new media. Most “new media” technologies are digital, and often have features that can be manipulated, networked, compact, compressed, interactive and unbiased (Rafaeli,1988). The Internet, websites, digital machines, video games, CD-ROMs, DVDs, and cell phones are examples (Schmid,1997).

Not even two decades ago, then, the world of the “old media”- talking, manuscript writing, printing, broadcasting – became the world of “new media” those carried by the internet (Marshall, 2011).

New media is not TV shows, feature films, magazines, books, or the writing of papers New media are communication technologies which enables or encourage user-to- user interactivity and user-to-information interactivity. As the Internet substitutes the “one-to-many” model of conventional mass communication with the possibility of a “many-to-many” network of communication. Centerpieces of digital media are photos, text, and sound. Thus the digital media with integration in technology changes the paradigm of mass communication and fundamentally transforms the way we connect and communicate with each other in a globalized world.

Till the 1980s, media relied primarily on analogue broadcast models for print and film, such as TV and radio models. The last twenty-five years have seen the rapid transformation of digital technologies, such as the Internet and video games, into products that are expected upon use. But these examples are but a small depiction of new media. Using Modern Technologies, as indicated by the introduction of modern television and online newspapers, transformed the existing 'traditional' media. Implementing technology such as image editing software such as Adobe Photoshop and digital publishing tools has altered even conventional media types such as the printing press. (Ronald,1984).

3. Studies

According to the study of Andrew L. Shapiro (1999) “the advent of emerging digital technology implies a potentially radical change in who regulates knowledge, experience, and resources.” that while the “new media” can move in one direction, economic and social forces are pushing back in the opposite direction. “We are witnessing the emergence of a global integrated network of audio, video and electronic text communications that will blur the distinction between interpersonal and mass communication and between public and private communication,” according to Neuman, he believes that digital media would alter the sense of geographic distance, allow for an immense increase in contact length, provide the possibility of increasing communication speed, provide opportunities for interactive communication and, eventually, allow for modes of communication previously separate to overlap and interconnect (Andrew & Shapiro 1999).

In “What is new media?” Vin Crosbie defines three channels of communication. “He saw interpersonal media as ‘one-to-one,’ ‘mass media as ‘one-to-many,’ and finally digital media as ‘many-to-many’ media. New media is made up of combinations of print and / or electronic media. Multimedia is an important subset of new media that includes text, sound, graphics, and audiovisual programming, and therefore terrifies the media (Vin, 2006).

4. Role of new Media in a Globalized world.

The emergence of digital media has contributed to greater contact between people to people around the world. Blogs, websites, images, and other user-generated media are the different platforms where people can express themselves. New technological

advances in the media has contributed to globalization. Globalization is commonly defined as “more than extending activities beyond national boundaries (Kellner & Pierce,2007).” Globalization by electronic communication shortens the distance between people around the world, and considers this wonderful development as the “death of distance.” “New media” substantially breaks the link between physical location and social position, making physical location significantly less important to our social ties (Rantanen,2005).

“Virtual communities” are being created, transcending geographical borders, removing social constraints. Globalized communities are self-defined networks that mimic what we are currently doing in real life. “In virtual communities, people use words on screens to exchange pleasantries and debate, participate in intelligent conversation, conduct business, make plans, discuss, gossip, fight, fall in love, and build a little high art and a lot of idle talk.” Sherry Turkle claims that “making the device into a second self, finding a soul in the system, will replace human relationships (Flew & McElhinney, 2002).”

According to Castelles (1996) New media have the potential to bind like-minded people around the world, because technology is a culture and without its technological resources it cannot be understood.’ However, that is still different from saying that technological progress instigates social changes, which recalls Marshall McLuhan's theses (Marshall & Hill, 1964).

5. Earliest Brahui Language publications

Brahui language publications are as old as 1923, it was during the British rule when ‘Al Haq’ was launched. At that time the Britishers were of the opinion not to allow locals to participate or practice journalism in this part of the world. They were of the opinion that if the locals were allowed to enter into the field of journalism they will show resistance through the press and develop sense of awareness about their rights which can lead to a revolt.

6. Monthly “Mohalim” Sariyab

In 1950, Maulana Abdul Baqi Durkhani launched Monthly “Mohalim” from Sariab, Quetta. Monthly “Mohalim” Sariyab was published in Urdu but priority was given to Brahui and Balochi write-ups. It covered national and foreign news with great interest. Prominent and influential Baloch journalist Abdul

Rehman worked as its editor. The then dictator Ayub Khan’s implementation of the Press Ordinance the shutdown of this magazine in 1961 (Ahmed,1978).

7. Monthly “Mubaligh” Mastung

In 1950 Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Durkhani launched Monthly “Mubaligh” from Mastung, its language was Urdu but gave special place to Brahui language content. The publication was closed in 1961, due to the financial crisis. It reappeared in 1980 as the Weekly newspaper; but was unable to survive and print consistently and was closed in 1990 forever (Naghma,2005).

8. Contemporary Brahui language Newspapers, Magazines and Researches Journals published from Balochistan.

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| 1. | Daily Talar Noshki (Completely in Brahui) |
| 2. | Weekly Talar Noshki (Completely in Brahui) |
| 3. | Monthly Istar (Completely in Brahui) |
| 4. | Monthly Maher (Completely in Brahui) |
| 5. | Weekly Ilum |
| 6. | Weekly Paro (Completely in Brahui) |
| 7. | Fortnightly The Tuk (Journal of Brahui Literary society) |
| 8. | Annual Alberz (Brahui Research Journal, University of Balochistan, Quetta) |
| 9. | Arboi (Urdu, Brahui) |
| 10. | Mahlum (Urdu, Brahui) |
| 11. | Chiltan (Urdu, Brahui) |
| 12. | Watan (Urdu, Brahui) |
| 13. | Asyab (Urdu, Brahui) |
| 14. | Groshuk (Urdu, Brahui) |
| 15. | Bezme Balochistan (Urdu, Brahui) |
| 16. | Nawaye Bolan (Urdu, Brahui) |
| 17. | Brahui TV (channel) |
| 18. | Nishist (Blog) |
| 19. | Talar (Online) |

9. Challenges to Brahui Journalism and Journalists

8.1 Freedom of Expression

Pakistan remain one of the most threatening country in the world with regards to life threats for journalists in recent years. The Committee to Protect Journalists ranked Pakistan as the fourth riskiest nation in 2014 for columnists, while Reporters without Borders placed Pakistan 158th out of 167 archived nations in its World Press Opportunity Index the very year. According to Committee to Protect Journalists two writers slaughtered in Pakistan in 2016. Strikingly these two columnists who lost their lives in the line of obligation were from Balochistan. Steve Butler, CPJ's Asia program facilitator says that "Baluchistan, buried in an extended clash, is an especially hazardous spot for columnists" (Daniel, 2015).

Pakistani writers and media laborers are under consistent dangers from various boycott outfits. The wellbeing of journalists and media professionals are prime worry for editorial bodies and organization. The savagery's against columnists drives them to self-restriction and it has restricted the points and topographical access secured by media (International Federation of Journalists, 2013)

Balochistan is largest province of the country and less privilege when it comes to freedom of expression. Government uses different tactics to stop journalists from working in challenging environment. A veteran Baloch Journalist Mr. Siddique Baloch (late) said "There is no such journalism in Balochistan, Newspapers and Journalists are working on Payroll" (Interview with Author, 2014). Balochistan is considered as conflict zone and there are different conflicting issues, from religious to ethnic issues. Therefore, working conditions for journalists and newspapers are very dangerous. Journalist's works under stress and depression due to different pressure groups in Balochistan (Sarina,2018). Government role in this regard seems very passive for not providing ideal working environment for journalists and newspapers.

The news coverage and journalists work not easier in Balochistan the contentions in Balochistan have effected every individual's life. Day to day environments in Balochistan is intense for writers and it gets much more troublesome when it is polished with enthusiasm of opportunity of articulation.

10. Nepotism in Advertisement Distribution

Advertisements are the backbone of any media outlet. Government use advertisements as a tool to control newspapers and their owners. Local language newspapers are totally dependent on advertisements and if any newspaper disobey or disagree with the government's policies they stand deprived of advertisements. Therefore, quality of journalisms compromises and journalists are bound to follow the policy. Newspapers published from Balochistan do not meet quality journalism. They run newspaper offices for the sake revenue and they earn quite well by obeying government orders (Akbar, 2020).

11. Circulation issues

Another important factor is that all local newspapers faces circulation issues. Balochistan being the largest province of Pakistan with scattered population. It is very hard for the newspapers to reach to the remote areas of the province (Intermedia,2010).

12. Dummy Newspapers

Most of the newspapers published from Balochistan are dummies. These newspapers circulation is limited to concerned offices and quarters and are published for the sake record of Directorate of Public Relations, Government of Balochistan. These newspapers have nothing to do with journalism, they work as dummy newspapers merely seeking advertisements.

13. Opportunities in New Media platform for Brahui journalism

An efficient functioning democracy requires free and assorted news media well equipped for keeping individuals educated, considering incredible entertainers answerable and empowering open conversation of open issues. Existing exploration proposes that quality news coverage can expand levels of political information, cooperation and commitment, and can besides help diminish defilement and urge chose authorities to speak to their constituents all the more successfully (Shelanski,2006).

The opportunity, decent variety and capacity of news media to empower majority rules system rely upon the institutional structure of individual countries' media conditions. Today, these media conditions are changing to a limited extent due to mechanical and

market advancements generally connected with the rise of computerized media. This report audits proof put together exploration with respect to the opportunities and difficulties these improvements speak to for news media and their function in vote based system in various settings (Strömbäck & Aelst,2017). New media provides opportunity to new talented of youth of Balochistan. Young energetic Brahui journalists can join alternative media with single click.

14. Quality Journalism

New media platform is utilized by globally by the scholars. Vibrant educated people use it for dissemination of their own opinion. The conventional media is out of reach of common man, it is in the grip of elite class and is used for commercial purposes only (Sjøvaag & Stavelin,2016).

National level television programs hosts are switching to new media. They have realized the importance of new media and ultimately all the news organization will switch to new media.

15. Global Reach

The online media transformation has changed and will keep on changing news-casting and news associations. Web-based media as an amazing asset has been acknowledged to a great extent across Media industry, its significance is not discussed anymore. Consequently, the media has effectively grasped online media innovation and computerized move to enlarge and growing their range and introduction (Newman, 2011). New media audience is not specific; the quality contents attract viewers from all over the globe. Naturally Balochistan is rich in political awareness, youth and new media platform can give an outstanding boost to their opinion to reach across the globe.

Many newspapers were among the first to see the potential of the internet, few have been truly innovative in their reaction to the latter's triumph. While many newspapers are reaching more readers than ever before online (Price, 2015).

16. Global Connections with Global Journalist organizations

There are 4.57 Billion active internet users in the world and it comprises of 59% of the global population. Globally the digital population is

increasing tremendously, more and more people are relying on internet and new media recently as never before (Clement, Jul24, 2020). There are 76.38 Million internet users in Pakistan it has increased by 11 Million (17%) in January 2020, while 88 Million social media users (Digital Pakistan,2020).

There is a strong presumption by many that first satellite TV in the 1990s and now the internet in the new millennium has begun to strongly globalize people's identities (Straubhaar)

There is a great room available for Brahui youth to excel their journalistic skills and make global contact with international Journalistic organizations. Conventional media on the other hand do not entertain or facilitates youth. Freelance journalists or bloggers face hardships and threats from different pressure groups, connection and working relations with international organizations can give them confidence to work without fear by polishing their existing skills.

17. Discussion

Brahui is the third largest spoken language of Balochistan and culturally it has diverse distinct characteristics. Despite fewer resources and opportunities, Baloch youth is trying to create space for their existence and livelihood. Brahui journalism is struggling for its survival in Balochistan, there very few newspapers and magazines published in the Brahui language. There are different reasons for fighting for its survival but one of the prime reasons is the non-availability of proper financial resources. Secondly, news organizations are reluctant to allow youth. The culture of nepotism has made things worse, only those newspapers can survive that follow the directives of government and pressure groups. Freedom of speech is next to none in Balochistan, organization pressure and stress of pressure groups force journalists to quit the field of journalism.

Apart from these issues journalism field is shrinking all over the world. Alternate media is the media of the future, it has diversity, impact, access, and reach. The regional press in Balochistan will slowly but surely switch to new media platforms. It can be online newspapers, online magazines, blogs, YouTube channels, or any other platform. There is a dearth of technical skills in the youth of Balochistan. Social activists, educated youth must come forward to give those required skills to Baloch youth.

18. Findings.

1. Brahui journalism is in dire need of financial resources, culture of nepotism has made things worse for Brahui journalism.
2. Lack of development opportunities in the province has great impact on overall media industry of Balochistan, regional press is the prime victim of it.
3. Extortion from different pressure groups forced youth to quit the field of journalism.
4. Media literacy and Technological skills are lacking in youth.
5. There is wide space available for regional press to improve in term of contents and facilitations.
6. The existing regional press especially the Brahui press is providing lesser opportunities for youth to do internships in Brahui press.
7. The current regional or Brahui press is focusing more on literature rather than journalism.
8. Only few newspapers have online editions of the newspapers.

19. Recommendations

1. It is an era of technology and only those news organizations will survive that cope with the challenges within time. Brahui journalism needs to switch to technology at its earliest.
2. By switching to new media or new technology better venues of income could be explored without being victim of nepotism.
3. Freedom of speech can be practiced and upheld with new media without any fear of government policies and pressure groups as it could be operated from anywhere.
4. Media literacy is very necessary for Baloch youth and there is a shortage of young Baloch media literate in the field.
5. Brahui journalism needs to focused more on political, economic and social contents rather than focusing more on literature.
6. Brahui journalism needs serious attention for circulation of its publications. It needs to produce online versions of the newspapers and other publications.

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