Community Radio:
Ready to launch
in Bangladesh

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BNNRC
Bangladesh NGOs Network for
Radio and Communication

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Ready to launch in Bangladesh

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1. Introduction

Bangladeshi media enjoys freedom. There is no censorship or restriction from Government or no pressure from power structure. But, interestingly, chief executives of the media are always feeling an '*invisible pressure*' from the owner, mostly of them are industrialist, in case of Bangladesh. This type of pressure is increasing day by day. One can call it '*self censorship*'.

In any commercial media, you will never find anything against the business house, especially, against the owner, though there is news-value. Experts believe, if the trend will continue then Bangladeshi people will face a tremendous information crisis and a chaotic system will arise, which will bring more complexity in the existing information delivery system.

In this context, what could be the solution? Some believes that a strong *community media* can play as a balancing role between the public and commercial media tier. To accomplish this we need to enact our draft *National Broadcasting Act 2003*.

2. The Bangladesh Broadcasting Act, 2003

In the proposed (draft) Broadcasting Act 2003, it is mentioned that: *To provide for the regulation of broadcasting services, including terrestrial, satellite and cable broadcasting, and to make provision for the establishment of an independent Authority for the purpose of overseeing broadcasting regulation with a view to promoting independent, pluralistic broadcasting in the public interest.*

The National Parliament (Jatiya Sangsad) does not yet pass it. An independent authority, called *Bangladesh Broadcasting Authority* will form and which is accountable to the Bangladesh National Parliament (Jatiya Sangsad).

The Authority shall be responsible for:

Developing and implementing a Broadcasting Frequency Plan to ensure orderly and optimal use of the broadcasting frequency spectrum;
Issuing licenses to provide broadcasting services to the public and ensuring that license conditions are respected; and
Overseeing the development of the Advertising Code and Program Code and the implementation of those Codes.
The Authority shall issue various types of broadcasting licenses to interested parties to run various types of media classified by tier like- public, private and community; and type like- radio or television, terrestrial, satellite or cable and scope like- national, regional or local, or number of subscribers.

It is clearly mentioned in the draft broadcasting act that **community broadcaster** means a broadcaster which is controlled by a non-profit entity and operates on a non-profit basis, carries programming serving a particular community including by reflecting the special interests and needs of that community, and is managed and operated primarily by members of that community.

By enacting Bangladesh Broadcasting Act 2003, non-profit entity can start community broadcasting by using radio, television and internet. In this context Bangladesh is very much ready to launch Community Radio (CR) in the rural areas.

3. Why Radio?

3.1 Importance of Radio

Among the various mediums, it is proved that Radio is the only one, which can reach to any one and in any parts of Bangladesh. It can reach people who live in areas with no phones and no electricity. Radio reaches people who can't read or write. It can be a main vehicle to distribute information, discuss issues and define our culture.

In Bangladesh, disseminating information is mostly depend on public media, which is also applicable for the radio. It has been failed to prove itself people-friendly over the time. For the reason, commercial

Syed Margub Murshed, former Secretary and Chairman, BTRC, giving speech in a National Consultation on Community Radio

"Community Radio has the capability to carry the positive impacts of ICT to the mass"

AHM Bazlur Rahman- S21BR

CEO, BNNRC & Member, Strategy Council of UN- Global Alliance for ICT & Development (UNGAID)

Q. How the Community Radio (CR) movement can be related to the ICT4D movement?

Ans. Alongside the CR movement, we have been working for last five years at the micro level to shorten the existing digital divide through using different ICT based solution tools like Internet, Computer, Solar Energy, TV etc. Our main goal is to find any sustainable working model by integrating the old and new generation of technologies. We need to remember that, for rural people, using ICT should not be seen as a special thing mainly came to reality as a charitable effort. On the contrary, we think it's ones right to have equal access to these technologies. We are trying to disseminate the rights of the people ensured by the government effectively, using local dialects and in a much more presentable way. For this rea-son, CR and ICT4D movement is interconnected. For example, if a CR station is established in a certain region, we can there use the Internet to collect and accumulate important news and information and then broadcast them using the radio. We call it "Radio Browsing".

Q. What are the things the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) needs to do legalize CR?

Ans. We think, if the GoB can pass the Bangladesh Broadcasting Act 2003 (which is at a draft stage) in the parliament, any legal obstacle related to CR establishment will be annulled automatically. The Ministry of Information prepared the draft of this act with the help of a foreign mission in 2003. We think it's a very effective draft where the broadcasting sector of Bangladesh has been classified in to 3 categories: Public, Private and Community broadcasting. Alongside passing this act in the parliament (which may take long time), we also strongly recommend the piloting of CR in Bangladesh, as it will give us invaluable applied knowledge about CR functionalities and management.

Q. What kind of roles the NGOs will play in terms of providing CR or ICT based service in the remote areas?

Ans. In Bangladesh, the NGOs can play an important role for providing the ICT based services in the remote parts of the country. Rural Knowledge Centers (RKC) can be established by the NGOs where Computer, Phone, Lamination Machine, Digital Camera, Internet etc. will be available. The village people can use these facilities according to their localized demands. That's how any NGO can integrate its current programs with the different applications of ICT. Eventually, the goal will be to hand over the ownership of these RKCs to the community people and the NGOs can help to train their human resources and help them financially in this regard.

Similarly, any CR will run under the local community management. We envision that, no NGO will have the ownership of any CR station. Eventually by managing the CR and the local RKC and by receiving positive externalities from these sources, the lifestyle of the people in the remotest regions can be changed for a better one.

Q. What kind of role CR can play in the Telecenters we are developing in Bangladesh?

Ans. One of the main things the Telecenters are doing is to decrease the digital divide between the urban and rural people, and eventually help to improve the life standard at the villages and under developed areas. CR is the only viable medium in order to achieve this goal. Using this, we can broadcast the important information very cheaply and effectively. We have 10 RKCs in the coastal regions of Bangladesh and our goal is to develop CR with each one of it so that we can broadcast the important information for those regions. We believe, the mass will get the benefit of the telecenters of other forms of ICTs when the CRs in different regions will be able to function effectively.

Courtesy: Computer Jagat

media gain popularity over the public media gradually. This trend indicates voiceless people will face more difficulty to get information in near future.

To ensure people's participation we need community broadcasting. Because, only community broadcasting can ensure community involvement in every steps of the broadcasting. They are involving in program designing, production and in post production stages. It is sustainable also. Community Media services help increase awareness about all local issues, exponentially.

3.2 Importance of Community Radio

Community Radio is radio for the people and by the people. The main objective of such a radio station is to enhance democratic process at a local level by giving voice to the voiceless. Also such an outlet helps in increasing diversity of content and information at the local level in order to promote culture. It also encourages participation, sharing information and innovation.

That's why, Community Radio is a concept that uses this powerful media and brings it to the people. It focuses on the use of appropriate communication and information tools to support decision-making and encourage dialogue between citizens and public authorities thereby enhancing democratic governance. Bangladesh, most importantly the rural communities in Bangladesh, can be benefited from such a media.

Community Radio already proved that this media can be the right place for the local people by broadcasting local happenings and news; localized news on health; local agricultural news and weather updates; local commodity prices; folk songs, myths, stories. Commercial media broadcasters would never air these types of content. They have their larger audiences to think about, and also think about making money.

Radio experts and communicators working on community radio have urged in the last World Congress on Communication for Development (WCCD), held at Rome on the month of October, to give community radio its rightful place as a development tool in the communications debate.

Managing director at Communication for Social Change Consortium (CSCC), James Deane, said: "We have seen monumental changes taking place because of community radio interventions in various parts of the world – Nepal, Philippines, Latin America and now in parts of Africa. In fact some of these go far deeper and have a bigger impact than many other communication strategies and I feel that the evidence of efficacy of radio cannot be questioned."

4. National Media Survey 2005

National Media Survey (NMS) 2005 is the fourth national survey of its kind undertaken in Bangladesh. The first media survey was conducted in 1995 and the second and third national survey was conducted in 1998 and 2002 respectively.

The importance of media research in order to determine the reach of various media vehicles and gauge media habits among different target segments of population is well established by now in the fields of communication and marketing in Bangladesh.

4.1 Status of use of radio

The ownership & reach of radio seemed to be declining. Only 32% people own radio and among this 32%, only 27.3% radios are in working order. This was perhaps because of the rapid increase in the opportunity to watch TV in the country and the failure of the public radio to attract people.

22.5% people listen radio. Radio listener-ship declined significantly in urban areas. As in the past, radio reach remained higher among males (30%) compared to females (16%).

Dhaka is the most popular radio station in the country, which has 31.3% listenership.

4.2 Status of use of Television

Almost 41% households own Television. Although there was a wide variation between Urban (78%) and Rural (27%) areas. 26% households own Black & White TVs whereas 15% were found color.

Nearly 10.4% households had cable / dish connections. So, 25% households had satellite penetration among the total TV owning households.

The survey results indicate a persistent increase in viewer-ship of TV over the years. Viewer-ship of TV in the year 2004 was about 64%, which was one and half times higher than that in 1998 (42%) and two times higher than the viewer-ship in 1995 (31%).

The TV reach in urban is 87.9%, rural 55.5%.

4.3 Status of use of Newspaper

The habit of newspaper reading (24.5%) remained almost the same for the last two years nationally.

Readership of Newspaper was significantly higher among male (37%) than female (12%) and higher in 15-19 age groups (36%) and among higher SEC people (77%).

4.4 Status of use of Internet

Internet using tendency is increasing day by day. Though its still in the infantry level with 1.2 % and limiting only in urban areas but showing its potentiality.

Internet using frequency is also not in a regular basis. Large proportion of internet using people use in a irregular basis in a week or a month. Major use of internet still limited in sending or receiving e-mails. Some others use for getting news or searching jobs.

4.5 Any Media Reach

By Region (%)

Media	Nation	Urban	Rural	Metro
Any Media	71.5	91.6	64.1	94.3
Not Any	28.5	8.4	35.9	5.7
Total	100	100	100	100

By Division (%)

Media	Dha	Ctg	Raj	Khu	Syl	Bar
Any Media	74	75.5	67	66.7	68.6	74.8
Not Any	26	24.5	33	33.3	31.4	25.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

By Sex (%)

Media	Male	Female
Any Media	79.4	63.7
Not Any	20.6	36.3
Total	100	100

5. Enabling Environment

We can divide our broadcasting facilities into two segments. The Public Service Broadcasters like Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Radio Bangladesh (Bangladesh Betar) and the Commercial Broadcaster like Satellite TV Channel and Commercial FM Radio.

BTV operates one national terrestrial channel that extends to over almost 100% of the country as state monopoly They are airing almost 15 hours of program. Beside this BTV also air 24 hours program under the banner of BTV World. On the other hand there are 9 satellites TV Cannel are operating in Bangladesh by the corporate owners for urban communities. These are NTV, Channel I, ATN Bangla, STVus, Channel S, Baishaki, Channel 1, RTV, Bangla Vision. More are preparing to come up. Government is very much media friendly since 1991. Same type of trend we are seeing in the case of radio. There are at least 4 Commercial FM Radio station is now operating in Bangladesh beside government owned Bangladesh Betar. BBC and VOA also operate FM Radio.

In regulatory terms, BTV and Bangladesh Betar are part of the Ministry of Information, from whom they get their direction and funding directly, ensuring firm government control over their operations.

The satellite operators have a letter of 'no-objection' from the Ministry of Information, which effective states that the Minister does not object to their being licensed, and then the required frequencies are allocated by Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC). The cable service providers have permission to operate from the Ministry of Information, for which they have to pay a fee.

There are a number of problems with the existing situation, which any broadcasting law needs to address. First, there is no statutory, or even clearly established, process for obtaining a license to broadcast via the various mechanisms. This has led to politicization of the system, with favors being allocated on political grounds, as well as to a very ad hoc approach to licensing being awarded. There is no longer-term plan for broadcasting, and there is no plan for the use of the broadcasting frequency spectrum in the public interest.

Second, there are no conditions for the grant of a license, and no system by which to develop and apply such conditions. This deprives the decision-makers of a clear, public interest driven means by which to assess competing license applications or even to assess individual applications. For example, in many countries one of the criteria for assessing applications is the contribution the proposed service would make to promoting local production and to diversity.

These are both important regulatory goals and the latter, in particular, is key to ensuring the development of the local broadcast sector. There is no clear way of promoting these goals in the current regulatory environment in Bangladesh.

Third, there is no system for regulating the content of broadcasting and, in particular, for ensuring that it meets certain minimum standards both in relation to regular programming and advertisements. During the mission, several individuals complained of excessively sexual material on TV, as well as material which degraded disabled people. The current system can deal with such complaints only in extreme cases, and in heavy-handed ways, such as by banning certain program.

Fourth, all decisions in this area are made by the Ministry of Information rather than an autonomous body. This is not only clearly contrary to international standards, including the guarantee of freedom of expression, but it also makes it very difficult to implement

"If we can integrate Community Radio and ICT, the socio-economic development will be much faster"

Kamrul Hasan Manju
Executive Director
Massline Media Center

Q. You have worked to develop Community Radio (CR) facility in different parts of Bangladesh. In a whole, did you have any specific set of goals for community development?

Ans. We are involved in the CR movement in Bangladesh for last 10 years. We wanted to establish a CR station in Patuakhali region with the help of DANIDA, a Danish donor agency. Our initial goal behind establishing this CR station was to use it to prevent damages caused by different natural disasters. The region we chose was very under developed and prone to natural disasters at a regular basis. Our second goal was to ensure effective communication, between the GoB and the people. If the people have the tool to broadcast the news about their own problems, it can be more effective. But as the GoB does not have any regulations or policies regarding the licensing of CR stations, it has been stuck at the proposal level. But GoB has lately showed interest in this matter and also prepared the draft act.

Q. ICT is recognized as a major tool for socio-economic development in modern times. How are you thinking of incorporating this ICT with your own development based agenda?

Ans. We now have plans to integrate ICT with our development programs. As a first step, we are planning to increase the awareness level of the people in general about ICT and its applications. We need to have better human resources for this purpose and also the Bengali interface for better ICT based communication. We have rural advocacy centers in 64 districts and information in 21 districts. Right now, we are providing information using traditional ways. But wherever we have electricity connections, our plan is to utilize ICT on those places.

At the end I want to say, if we can integrate Community Radio and ICT, the socio-economic development will be much faster.

Courtesy: Computer Jagat

important regulatory goals. The licensing process is widely alleged to be politically driven and any content-related sanctions are bound to attract similar allegations.

6. Role of NGOs/CBOs

Bangladesh is a land of only 55 thousand kilometer but have a huge population of 160 million. A good number of the population has no education or proper education. They are not aware of the causes of the major social issues, like environmental hazard, health issues like arsenic or economic issues like poverty etc. Community Radio could be a solution in all of the sectors in Bangladesh and NGOs can play major roles to transform the situation into a positive one for the poor people of Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh NGOs activities and programs have already earned reputation working for the socioeconomic development of the poor people, their project areas are limited and well defined. The objectives and target groups are specific to reach in to the goal, they have to win the total confidence of the local community. NGOs have to inform the people about their projects and activities. Rather they have to ensure peoples participation in implementing the projects.

NGOs can help the voiceless people to gain their voices in the present situation where, information have transformed as the commodity with commercial value, usually without social responsibility. In Bangladesh, we found corporate business houses came forward to establish their own communication channel, as the part of economic power gaining fighting.

Through the process state monopoly on the media machine has been decreasing. But poor people can not get the benefits of this media pluralism. Under this situation, a number of NGOs/CBOs are trying to start up community media, with the help from the community and work for their interest. They are trying to establish independent broadcasting station at the community level which will dedicatedly serve non-commercially. This type of communication medium could be the source of information for the poor people of Bangladesh.

Sources said community radio, which has been playing an important role in transmitting local information, e–learning, entertainment, disaster management and mass awareness on different issues in most of the countries of the world, could be turned into a major means of transmitting information in Bangladesh during natural disasters in the coastal areas.

Center for Development Communication (CDC) organized a 3 days seminar on communication, new technology and development with the support of WACC in 1999. Massline Media Centre (MMC) took initiative to open up the Community Radio in Bangladesh. MMC is still fighting for community radio.

Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) a national coordinating organization dedicated for promoting Radio, Community Radio, Citizen Band Radio and Amateur Radio as the means of holistic development since 2000. BNNRC now trying to utilize existing local contents, infrastructure & human resources of NGOs/CBOs to nationwide through Tele-Centers/ Rural Knowledge Centers (RKC) etc. as initial bases like backbone for Community Radio at rural areas.

7. Policy Advocacy Plan for Community Radio

Bangladesh have a draft broadcasting law. There are three types of broadcasting has been proposed in the draft broadcasting law. These are: Public Service Broadcasting, Commercial Broadcasting and Community Broadcasting. To establish community radio, we need to talk with government officials along with civil society leaders. Civil Society could be work as the pressure group. This process could be funded and patronized by NGOs.

Community radio will give us the opportunity to disseminate grassroots based experience which will turn into a social change movement among the rural community. Community Radio will help to build strong leadership, accountability among the local government and political leaders. It will help people to get access into the media and build community networking. It will help to establish a two way communication between the recipient and the givers. Resource could be mobilize through the process will happen more effectively.

Latest, in the month of March 2006, a roundtable on 'Community Radio' was organized jointly by Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communications (BNNRC), Voices for Interactive Choice and Empowerment (VOICE), Mass-Line Media Centre (MMC), FOCUS and Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) in association with UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF in Dhaka.

Policy recommendations include:

Greater awareness is needed of the educational and developmental potential of community radio among policymakers, regulators, non-government and community service organizations.

Legislative reform should take account of the specific characteristics of community radio and provide for its support within the policy and regulatory framework.

Assistance is needed to enable existing community radio stations to adapt to new digital production technologies and to increase their access to the Internet.

Strategic links should be encouraged between community radio and tele-centre/ Rural knowledge Center (RKC) development as well as other opportunities to cluster community media resources.

Online and technology based learning centers should incorporate creative production facilities and access to local radio distribution as well as the Internet.

Support for community radio development should be provided through intermediary bodies at national and regional level through training, guidance and mentoring.

8. Ready to launch

In the last five year's, BNNRC and other NGOs not only initiated and continued advocacy with policy makers but also have started to prepare themselves to run Community Radio broadcasting if it is permitted.

The elements of this preparation is to make local content , place selection, build up a plan for skill human resource and sustainability for the operation of Community Radio for long term.

Many Rural Knowledge Centers in the remote areas in Bangladesh are now ready to launch, like this, is being run by BNNRC Network NGOs with the participation of the local community

"The Government needs to give permission to a Community Radio based pilot project in line with its development related policies"

Faheem Hussain
Researcher,
Department of
Engineering & Public
Policy, Carnegie
Mellon University,
USA,
faheem@cmu.edu

Q. Why your present research concentration is on Community Radio (CR)?

Ans. Last year, I came to Bangladesh to look into the feasibility of different technological interventions in BRAC's (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee/ www.brac.net) In-Service Teacher Training Program. My results showed the radio based applications as the most cost-effective one from a Bangladeshi perspective. But on the same time, I found out, there is no public guideline or policy for using radio as a educational tool. Moreover, I found that the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) was reluctant to recognize the role of Community Radio. These scenarios made me interested to do more concentrated study on the feasibility of CR in Bangladesh.

Q. How relevant is the proliferation of CR in Bangladesh, in terms of its socio-economic backdrop?

Ans. It's very relevant, especially in terms of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the important aspects of the GoB backed poverty reduction plans. For example, CR can help us in rural education, agricultural extensions, disaster management, sustainable health care etc. Also, the synergy between the Radio and the Cellular Phone is yet to explored in Bangladesh. I strongly believe, if we successfully tie these two up, the sky is the limit as far as achieving the socio-economic development is concerned. The simple reason behind it: even in the remotest part of our country, the people of cell phones with FM receivers. All we need to do is to provide effective content and utilize the one-to-one and one-to-many communication aptly.

Q. What are the obstacles you have identified in terms of CR establishment in Bangladesh?

Ans. Firstly, the people of Bangladesh, who are the core of this CR movement, are yet to be motivated, educated and informed about the advantages they will have once CR is there. So, the demand for CR is not coming that heavily from the micro level.

Secondly, Bangladesh is yet to have a National Broadcasting Act, which will recognize the CR movement. Because of this legal issue, many CR related projects are stalled.

Thirdly, Radio in Bangladesh is loosing its listeners, not because it's an outdated medium, but mainly because Bangladesh Betar (the state incumbent broadcaster) is not that successful to be a part of the socio-economic development as it should have.

Q. So, what needs to be done right away?

Ans. The Government needs to give permission to a Community Radio based pilot project in line with its development related policies.

Courtesy: Computer Jagat

Young Power in Social Action(YPSA), the network member of Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication(BNNRC) built up a Cable Radio Station in sitakund of Chittagong. At present, there is no permission for Community Radio, for this they produce local content there and cable casting those thing by experimentally. SPEED Trust from Barisal, DUS from Noakhali, COAST from Bhola, Sankalpa from Barguna also produce local content in this way. Mass line Media Centre (MMC) and VOICE made local content also.

It means these types of organizations are fully ready to start Community Radio with the close collaboration with the respective community if the Government gives them permission.

9. Conclusion

One can hope that a positive environment for community radio will be created before the end of the year 2006, especially in the tenure of Care -Taker Government of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC) and BRAC University (BU)-IED in association with Department of Engineering & Public Policy, Carnegie Mellon University, USA are interested in doing so.

With this objective in mind, we have decided to organize a daylong strategic dialogue on **"Piloting Community Radio in Bangladesh"** during the time of Caretaker Government. Our main and immediate objectives are the following: To obtain support and approval of the Ministry of Information to run the proposed pilot projects. To start pilot community radio initiatives in order to achieve different development goals and in selected regions. To explore the idea of campus based

FM radio in universities. To fast track the legislative process of enacting the "Bangladesh Broadcasting Act, 2003" by Government of Bangladesh (GoB) which will provide a policy framework for Community Broadcasting.

Ahmed Swapan Mahmud
Executive Director
VOICE

Q. Why community media, in context of Bangladesh, is important in the era of globalization?

Media has certainly an important role in all aspects to promote and establish the democratic norms and values in the society – particularly, facilitate the freedom of expression, access to knowledge. However, the corporate globalization that creates economic, social and cultural hegemony makes a great trouble to the life and livelihood of people particularly in the south.

Community media has a long history and heritage while people exercise and control their own way of life through different means of communications which are now in great threat due to the extreme control of corporate media. Bangladesh society has its different values system along with the diversities that are common to other societies. In many countries including the South Asian countries have community radio. But globalization takes away the own way of communication systems that must be resisted for the betterment of the community people so that they have the greater access to knowledge and express freely views and opinion in its full vibrant.

Q. What are the obstacles to establish community radio in Bangladesh?
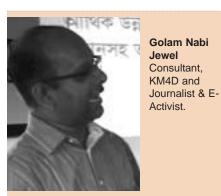
Community radio is the best form of community media where people can exercise their own problems and prospects, produce their own programmes and broadcast. Community radio has its potentiality in Bangladesh while most of people are illiterate, live below poverty line and live in the rural areas. The NGOs and civil society groups for a long time have been advocating establishing community radio through seminar, dialogue, national consultation where high government officials attended and opined in favour of the community radio. Unfortunately, since there is no broadcasting law enacted yet, this is one of the major obstacles for the community radio.

Q. How community media can be strengthen while corporate media controls the whole way of life?

Community media and the corporate media have an inner struggle. Corporate is for profit and community is for people. Community media—the community radio can be a major tool to fight the corporate media. Major responsibility of the civil society groups, community people, NGOs and activists are to fight for community radio. Once it is established, the people can exercise way of life through this means for their own betterment. It can be a major tool to resist the corporate giants at local levels, the globalization and neo-liberal economic hegemony. Free discussion among the communities can be ensured through community media that facilitates creativity, cultural strength and people's life as their own.

Q. How can we resist the hegemony of corporate media and establish the commons for establishing a fairer world in terms of knowledge promotion and freedom of expression at community level?

Community media can establish micro-macro linkage, promote and disseminate knowledge that is useful for the community, facilitate the right to access to knowledge and freedom of expression. Establishing the commons is a major struggle for the global community who are deprived from the mainstream development aspects—social, economic, cultural and political arena of life. Participation in decision making process and gaining lasting political power is indispensable to establish a democratic society— just and equitable society. If people can exercise their life through their own, means freely where there are no impositions either from the state machine or form the influential, the atmosphere in life will be quite congenial. People, as the source of energy and strength of all norms and values, can fight against all deprivations—against the corporate giants, TNCs, international financial institutions, WTO and TNCs that promote neo-liberal hegemony, global capitalism and imperialism against the people's interest.

Golam Nabi Jewel Consultant, KM4D and Journalist & E-Activist.

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Golam Nabi Jewel has started writing since March 1987. As a Independent Writer he is contributing ICT4D write-ups in national dailies, weeklies and monthly ICT magazines. He is writing ICT4D related popular column ONLINE in Daily JaiJaiDin since 2001.

He has **Sixteen years of experience** working in programs of organizations dealing **with behavior change communication and publications**. As a program manager in the field of communication, particularly health communication he has been involved in communication strategy development, designing and implementation of communication program activities including overseeing communication programs and developing materials. He has experience in developing and maintaining media resource & documentation center, preparing bibliography & directory and newsletter writing, editing & publishing.

At present as a Independent Consultant he is working with GOB, NGOs, I-NGOs and UN offices. His clients include Bangladesh Shishu (Children) Academy, BNNRC, SUPRO, BCCP, SCF-Sweden Denmark; SCF-UK; SCF-USA; The Asia Foundation; Plan International Bangladesh; The Swiss Red Cross; DASCOH; Interlife-Bangladesh; and UNICEF; UNFPA; etc.

He translated and edited e-gov related document *Road Map for E-Government In The Developing World: 10 Questions E-Government Leaders Should Ask Themselves,* which is published by The Asia Foundation. Beside these he has written another 19 books on health, communication and ICT issues.

He has formal and advanced on the job training on Media planning, message & BCC material development, campaign strategy development, writing and editing and television program production.

Golam Nabi Jewel, born in 1969 at Khepupara Upazila, Patuakhali District of Bangladesh. In his personal life, he is married and have one daughter.

Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication(BNNRC) is a national networking body working for building a democratic society based on the principles of free flow of information, equitable and affordable access to Information, Communication Technology (ICT) for remote and marginalized population.

BNNRC is registered with the Ministry of Law, Parliamentary and Justice Affairs, as a trust and NGO Affairs Bureau, Office of the Prime Minister, Government of Bangladesh according to the foreign donation (Voluntary Activities) regulation ordinance 1978 as an organization on Information, Communication and Technology for Development (ICT4D) established in 2000 as per Article 19 charter of UN bill of rights.

Currently, with congenial support from Cordaid (a Netherlands based funding partner) BNNRC is implementing a project **Promoting Appropriate Technologies and Policies to Uphold the value "ICT as Basic Human Right".**

BNNRC now strive for following core interventions to achieve PRSP, WSIS action plan and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

- Awareness on correlations of ICT, poverty alleviation and Institutionalization of Democray

(Right to Information);

- Establishment of ICT Resource Center and Promotion of Radio Listeners Club as primary ICT catalyst in remote rural areas;

- Advocacy and Campaign for Bridging the Digital Divide/ Information Divide and open up Airwaves for the Community Radio-Voices for the voiceless;

- Establishment of Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services (RACES) for Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction;

- Establishment of people's rights in tele-communication.

BNNRC has been undertaking pioneer approaches to integrate ICT for Development (ICT4D), related policy advocacy for good governance, people's rights, global/ country commons and poverty alleviation with community development work at the grassroots through its networking members in Bangladesh. BNNRC's outreach extends to local national and international forums.

BNNRC is affiliated with

- Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP),

- World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC),

- World Association for Christian

Communication (WACC),

- Developing Countries Farm Radio Network (DCFRN),

- Freedom of Information Advocate Network (FOIA),

- Commonwealth Human Right Network (CHRN),

- One World (TV, Radio, Net),

- One World South Asia (OWSA),

- Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE).

We update our web site regularly with details of our recent activities. best practices, publication and other materials related to promoting ICT as basic human right. We appreciate your visit to our web site and strengthening the movement we are striving for.

Contact us at:
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