

# SOCIAL MEDIA IN AFGHANISTANA GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

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*1.Afghan Girl is a 1984 photographic portrait by journalist, Steve McCurry which appeared on the June 1985 cover of national geographic2.Buddha sculpture in Afghanistan*

## INTRODUCTION

The media in Afghanistan includes printing, broadcasting and Digital.It is mainly in Dari and Pashto, the official languages of the country. Radio, the main source of entertainment and news, is losing audiences to TV.The broadcasting market is crowded with three dozen TV channels broadcasting terrestrially from Kabul alone. Over 170 FM radio stations operate across the country. Some 61 per cent of

households own a TV set.

Hundreds of press titles publish under a wide range of ownerships - from the government, provincial political-military powers and private owners to foreign and NGO sponsors.Private Moby Group operates some leading stations, including Tool (Sunrise) TV and Arman FM.Much of the output on private TVs consists of imported Turkish and Indian music

shows and serials, and programmes modeled on Western formats. Tolo TV is the most popular national station.

## **History of media in Afghanistan**

Afghanistan has over a hundred year long history in Journalism but the route of Journalism is still unstable and unclear. With the arrival of first printing press (Lithography printing) to Afghanistan from India in 1873, publications started in the country. For the first time, in 1873, Saed Jamaludin Afghan requested that Emir Shir Ali Khan supported publications. With this, the first issue of ShamsulNehar was printed. ShamsulNehar was a periodical and seems that between 40-48 issues were published.

On January 11/1906, the second periodical, Seraj-ul-Akhbar, was printed. Seraj-ul-Akhbar was critical of the friendship between Afghanistan and the United Kingdom and was against the idea of colonialism. After the only and first issue, its publication was stopped. The newspaper resumed in 1911 by Mahmud Tarzi, known as "Father of Afghan Journalism". Mahmud Tarzi was the editor and owner of Saraj-ul-Akhbar. In 1919, under King Amanullah Khan, seraj-ul-Akhbar was replaced by Aman-e-Afghan, serving as key organ of the government. At the same time some other smaller private journals appeared under different ministries. Along with these developments, radio broadcasting began for the first time

in 1925, which greatly added to mass media.

One author, Amin Tarzi in an article in 2006 to RFE/RL described Afghanistan's independent media history as this. Afghanistan's first experiment with an independent media sector began in the late 1940s and was restricted solely to newspapers. Prime Minister Shah Mahmud allowed relatively open elections and the establishment of what has come to be known as the "Liberal Parliament." The new legislature soon passed a press law that led to the launching of several newspapers -- most of which were in opposition to the monarchy, the prime minister, or both. Conservative religious figures and their supporters in the government were the most frequent targets of attack. The experiment ended abruptly in 1953 when Mohammad Daud Khan became prime minister and ordered the closure of independent newspapers.

The country's second major experiment with independent media began with the promulgation of the 1964 Afghan Constitution by King Mohammad Zahir. That document ushered in what is commonly referred to as Afghanistan's "decade of democracy." The constitution decreed that "every Afghan has the right to express his thoughts in speech, in writing, in pictures, and by other means, in accordance with the provisions of the law." The 1964 constitution further states that every Afghan has the right

to print and publish ideas in accordance with the law.

The government soon promulgated the 1965 press law to regulate the media sector. That reiterated the constitutional



*Mahmud tarzi father of journalism of Afghanistan*

guarantees, but it also forbade obscenity and any "matter implying defamation of the principles of Islam or defamatory to the King." While broadcast media remained the prerogative of the state, the number of independent newspapers mushroomed. The next media shake-up came in 1973, after Mohammad Daud led a coup d'etat that ended the country's monarchical system. The result was nearly three decades of intense strictures on a free media, culminating in the hard-line Taliban regime's crack-down until it was ousted by international military intervention in late 2001.

The 1964 Constitution of Afghanistan and the Press Law (1965) insisted on free press, within the boundaries of respect to Islam and

behaving appropriately. The press was editorially independent from the government but it was instructed to safeguard the interests of the state and constitutional monarchy, Islam and public order. Afghan journalism widely progressed and developed from 1950s through to the 1970s, though it remained limited. When the government was overthrown in July 1973 coup and 19 newspapers were shut down and media came under severe restriction, ending a period of relative freedom. The first color television broadcasting appeared in 1978 during Sardar Muhammad Daoud Khan's era. Then media fell into the control of Soviet influences during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

The media has mainly been very limited under the Taliban Regime, including the banning of television in 1996, seen as "morally corrupt", and music, banned under their law. During the era, Taliban destroyed the television sets and studios. Also, anyone who got caught with a television or listening to music was subjected to imprisonment and punishment. During this era, most media operated from other countries. Majority of the Afghans listened to BBC Persian operating from London and Pakistan. In early 2002, a relatively free diverse media emerged. The participants of the national Jirga (gathering) held in 2002 about the constitution of Afghanistan, declared articles about the media too and recommended a committee to further develop a law

for media. In the last ten years, a lot of media emerged but the quality is still a question. Also, the media is still controlled by the Mujahideen's and warlords.



*Central control panel at Radio Kabul transmitter in the 1950s.*

## **SOCIAL MEDIA AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Social media is becoming an intrinsic part of urban life in Afghanistan and Afghan youth are increasingly using social websites and weblogs on the internet for wider communication and debates on all kinds of social and political issues. Majority of young generation they are engaged with social media, they are connected with other youth in country, and also connected with the world, they are aware of what is going on in the world regarding to different aspects.

### **A BRIEF HISTORY**

Samira Hamidi was initially reluctant to join Facebook. In 2009, she explains, it was "very unusual" for an Afghan woman to have an account. She was eventually talked into it by friends she met while studying law at York University. Now 35 and working as a consultant on Afghan women's rights campaigns, she has more than

1,000 Facebook friends and 4,000 Twitter followers, and says almost everyone she knows is on it: "When I hear that someone doesn't have an account I look at them very strangely and say 'How can you live without Facebook?'"

### **Social activities**

Young people in Afghanistan participated in a series of activities comprised of trainings, cultural events, media development and advocacy campaigns as part of the annual Afghan Youth Voices Festival. Through social media they are conducting various social activities; especially girls. One of the live examples is Kabul Girl Bike Riders. Through a social media workshop at the Festival, six female trainees created a Facebook page called Kabul with the aim of raising awareness of harassment and violence toward girls, which prevents them from public participation in cultural and recreational activities.



A group of Afghan girls riding bicycle, Kabul bike rider's media group

## International competitions

Afghanistan's Girl Robotics Team just won the Entrepreneur Challenge at Europe's largest robotics festival, the Robotics festival in Tallinn, Estonia. At Robotics, the team faced off against 3700 other competitors and 1600 robots in a series of competitions, including robot basketball games, races, and mazes. The winning robot, presented by three members of the Afghan team, used solar energy to work on small-scale farms, And that's not the first international robotics award the twelve girls from Herat have bagged. In July, they took home a silver medal for courage in the FIRST Global Challenge in Washington, D.C. For any group of teenagers, those would be an impressive set of achievements, but these six girls come from a country where two-thirds of girls never make it to school at all, According to Human rights watch.



Afghan Girls' Robotics Team Wins First Place In European Competition

## Sports

National Cricket Team of Afghanistan is representing the coun-

try in international cricket matches, which makes us more proud of our players. Some people views this sport something new, but cricket has been played in Afghanistan since the mid 19th century, but it is only in recent years that the national team has becomes successful and shinning one. The long-war has affected every sector in Afghanistan, including sports. Afghanistan Ranked 19th in International T-20 cricket as of 7 January 2017 ahead of full members Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. In the same year we won our first Intercontinental Cup, beating Scotland in the final. Cricket team also won the Asia Vs Caribbean T-20 Championship and beat T&T, Bangladesh and Barbados



Afghanistan 1 point below India in the latest ICC T20 10 top teams

## Youth organizations

Now Afghanistan is member of various youth organizations which they are working for empowering afghan youth, one of those organizations is AIESEC AFGHANISTAN,

Aiesec Afghanistan conducting different developmental programmes for afghan youth awareness some of them are, Afghanistan youth to business forum, Afghanistan youthspeak forum. Through AIESEC global exchange program many afghan youth they are going for cultural exchange to different countries.



*Afghanistan youth business forum in Kabul*

**Afghanistan in International and National Media**

In international media, stories from Afghanistan are about insecurity, corruption, drug trafficking, extreme violence against women, human rights abusers/violators, warlords, weak government, and so forth that gives a negative picture of Afghanistan. To explore the range and themes of the stories, I set up two Google alerts "Afghanistan news" and "stories from Afghanistan". Every day, I received more than ten alerts; all about the ongoing war in Afghanistan, corruption, drug trafficking, violation of women's rights, and weak government. Besides, the majority of my fellow classmates would only know

these stories about Afghanistan. This trend of covering news is not only common in international media, but is similar in local Afghan media. This trend has given a very negative picture of Afghanistan in the world. The majority of Afghans living in Europe, in the United States or in the west in general have faced strange reactions when people around them understood that he or she is from Afghanistan. Afghanistan is known in the west as a country of drug traffickers, corruption, terrorists, insecure, and uneducated people. An image is given of Afghan women as very oppressed and always wearing blue baroques. All of these problems and traditions originated with neighbors of the country. This negative picture of Afghanistan in the world is also disappointing to Afghans when they see the reaction of people towards them.

Though stories about drugs, weak government, insecurity, violence against women, etc, are extensively covered by international media, very little focus has been given to the needs of improving the support of education and health in Afghanistan. Media is the only source in world that gives a picture of the country, so they can say whatever they want and people perceive the situation only from the media. Also, a story would become more famous when it is negative or saddening rather than positive or good news. Afghanistan's rebuilding process is poorly covered by both national and international media.

Some people in Afghanistan are fed up with news about deaths, air bombardments by international forces, house raiding, corruption, weak governing and so forth. When I was working with media in Afghanistan, I heard most of the time from local people that "you media people have nothing else than bad news" or "why



*1. Women they are freely doing protest to gain women rights year 2015*

*2. Taliban beating women in public year 1996*

the positive news from the media too. Covering the news stories about progress would sometimes be considered as propaganda from the government and international community.

The two picture shows the situation of media in international level



don't you cover the rebuilding to give hope to people to know their country is going on a positive direction". There is a general lack of knowledge about the progress in the country to both national and international ordinary people.

On the other hand, covering stories about positive news and progress is generally unnoticed too and has no impact. Though, the demand for positive news is high, it will remain not very interesting to the public. Now, since the international community has been in the country for the last ten years, people all over the world also would want to hear about the achievements of their own contributions to the rebuilding. However, there is a risk in covering

## **AFGHAN MEDIA CHARACTERS**

In the past decade, both national and international journalists have paid a high price for their activities in Afghanistan. Committee to Protect Journalist (CPJ) ranked Afghanistan tenth in the world for the high number of journalists killed in Afghanistan. There is short histories about the struggle of afghan journalists and foreign for a better media group in Afghanistan ,afghan society always remember them as heroes.

Zakia Zaki : An Afghan journalist for the Afghan Radio Peace station north of Kabul. Zaki was the first Afghani journalist to speak out against the Taliban after the US forces initiated war in Afghanistan (2001-

2014). Zakia Zaki was known for being independent and an activist in her community. While she was the founder of the Afghan Peace Radio station, the 35-year-old woman was also the headmistress at a local school. She had six children-four sons and two daughters-and two of her children were present at the time of her murder. Zaki was founder and an active journalist at the Afghan Peace Radio (Sada-i-Sulh) in Jabal Seraj. Zaki was killed in her home outside of Kabul in April 2007. Before her murder, Zakia Zaki had received threats to shut down her radio station and on her life. On June 4, 2007, around midnight, three men armed with handguns and rifles entered Zaki's family home and shot her 7 times in the head and the chest while she slept and then fled. Two of her six children were in the room but left unharmed. Zaki's 8-month-old son was in bed with her but it was her 7 or 8-year-old son who called her husband and informed him of Zaki's death.

Zakia Zaki was one of the few female journalists to speak out during the Taliban's reign. Koichiro Matsuura, director-general of UNESCO, said, "These crimes are all the more shocking because they not only undermine the basic human right of freedom of expression, but also the right of women to exercise a profession that is vital for the reconstruction of Afghanistan."



*Zakia zaki*  
*Anja Niedringhaus with afghan women*

**Anja Niedringhaus** (12 October 1965 - 4 April 2014) was a German photojournalist who worked for the Associated Press (AP). She was the only woman on a team of 11 AP photographers that won the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Photography for coverage of the Iraq War. Niedringhaus had covered Afghanistan for several years before she was killed on Friday, 4 April 2014, while covering the presidential election after an Afghan policeman opened fire at the car she was waiting in at a checkpoint, part of an election convoy. In 2001, Niedringhaus pho-



tographed the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks in New York City and then traveled to Afghanistan, where she spent three months covering the fall of the Taliban. In 2002, she joined Associated Press, for whom she has worked in Iraq,

media firm Pressistan, which he founded to support visiting foreign correspondents. He was used to covering tragedies with gravitas and depth, and he also sought out every opportunity to show another side of his country, from ball



Afghanistan, the Gaza strip, Israel, Turkey and . On 23 October 2005, she received the IWMF Courage in Journalism Award from American broadcaster Bob Schieffer at a ceremony in New York.

### **Sardar Ahmad**

Sardar Ahmad's last tweet was a typical celebration of the small joys of Afghan life, a picture of dried fruits and nuts piled high in a Kabul shop, ready to celebrate a Persian New Year that for him and his family never came. A gregarious 40-year-old star of Afghanistan's booming media scene, Ahmad had an eye for both a story and a joke that helped him juggle two jobs as senior correspondent for Agence France-Press and head of

Sardar Ahmad: a courageous journalist who delivered exceptional coverage

### **DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA Television in Afghanistan**

The Altai survey indicates that television ownership, contrary to radio set ownership, has been growing slowly over time. The survey results showed that in 2010, almost half (47%) of Afghans have a TV set at home. Household expenditures also show a higher amount dedicated to television purchases: in 2005, a color TV set cost \$70 on average; five years later, the average TV-equipped household spent \$113 on its last set (less than half the average household

income ,of \$252). A total of 82% of the population has had their current television set for three years or longer. A third of TV owners have two sets or more, and almost a third have a DVD player.

### **Content of TV broadcasts:**

One of the highest expectations voiced by the public across the country was that media should promote a sense of national unity, rather than trying to further divide people of different political, ethnic or religious groups. This goal is difficult to attain, given the ethnic, religious and tribal tensions in Afghanistan, in part reflected in the diversity of media actors currently in the country.

Difficult as it may be, though, it is not impossible. One of the main ways to pursue this goal is through the public broadcaster (RTA). To this end, it would be necessary to build on RTA's relative success and significantly enhance its audience share through a lineup of more attractive programs, designed with the goal of promoting a sense of national unity.

Programs focusing on positive achievements, showing the results of the nation-building effort, testimonials of conflict resolution and well-administered justice, examples of successful (and not corrupt) business ventures and clever promotion of Afghan history, culture and identity (see below) can contribute to fostering a sense of national unity - especially if these programs are not directly linked to foreign intervention or assistance but

are the product of a few Afghan figures to whom the public can, without distinction of cultural background.

### **Radio**

Radio is second in the emergence of mass media in Afghanistan. For the first time, radio broadcasted in 1925 in Afghanistan. With the 30 per cent literate population, radios are the most popular mediums in Afghanistan. In addition to the literacy, with the lack of electricity, people cannot have access to TV channels in most parts of the country. Besides, newspapers and magazines are also only limited to urban areas that can read. Poverty is another reason that people choose to have radios than TV. Some fundamentalists also choose radio because they believe TV is haram (forbidden).

Every year, several radio mediums distribute free radios to their audience in rural areas advocating for their mediums and assisting people to have access to receive information and news. Among them are Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, BBC, Bayan (previously named Sada-e-Azadi, ISAF military supported radio) and some more. In addition to the radio mediums that distribute radios, international military and international organizations based in Afghanistan also distribute radios across the country. Though radio is the first medium that shares a huge number of audiences, only limited numbers of radio channels have broadcasts relatively in the majority parts of the country.

## Print media/Publications

According to the Altai research, only 13% of Afghans read the press, and those who do read are apparently doing so less and less. Illiteracy is obviously the main factor hindering print media consumption. Access to the press is far less problematic for the younger generation than for older adults. Young people read the press twice as often, although illiteracy is still the second most important factor preventing access to the press among youth. Poor and or not in time distribution is another commonly cited factor hindering press consumption. Repetition of news, printing not many new news stories and copying news from news agencies and some famous radio WebPages is another factor.

Conclusions :

Afghanistan has started a new era in media and communication After 2001. Situation of media and freedom of speech in Afghanistan is better than last decades. In recent time in afghan media, journalist at least more than 50 percent are women Now afghan media covers ,women rights, education, social problems. The recent media now in Afghanistan was, in the result of struggle has taken by social activist, journalists, even in the price of their life. In last decades many journalist they lost their life ,for freedom of speech ,equality, and all. Afghan people ,specially youths ,they want change in Afghanistan ,they have done many activities for that, afghan

bike riders media group, and participating afghan robotic girls in Europe competition is the example for that. Afghan society now more powerful by media, they can their voice against injustice ,and in equality.

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