

POLITICAL TALK SHOWS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

A STUDY ON TV TALK SHOWS (POLITICAL) ARRANGED

BY BANGLADESHI TV CHANNELS

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Abstract

The study investigates the awareness level of public through TV talk shows (political) arranged by Bangladeshi TV channels. The study actually reveals the state of political consciousness of public and whether these talk shows are able to make people exercise politics properly to motivate them toward positive movements and bound government to exercise accurate power. The study also focused to the extent that whether these political talk shows can create impact on public and be able to create positive contribution on transforming the society as well as country. As sample, Dhaka University students and some selective samples have been surveyed since they represent whole Bangladesh as audience. The main purpose of the study is to measure the awareness level of people made by political talk shows. The study also has the objective to find out whether these political talk shows are able to create an authentic platform of communication between people and government. The study found that different channels present a particular topic in different ways which lead the viewer's towards ambiguity. These shows have little impact on public to create awareness. Approximately 80% people are watching TV talk shows. This number should be increased which will be needed to protect public interest.

Keywords: Political talk Shows, political consciousness, Gonojagoron moncho, Public interest, Public demand, TRP.

INTRODUCTION

"Talk is the heart of everyday existence, It is pervasive and central to human history, in every setting of human affairs, at all levels of society, in virtually every social context" (Zimmerman and Boden 1991:3). Television is a principle medium of mass communication, and talk is one of its most powerful tool. A talk show or chat show (as it is known in the UK) is a television program or radio program genre in which one person (or group of people) discusses various topics put forth by a talk show host. Political talk shows are concerned with special political issues which has public interest and impact and related to government and its power as well as other stakeholders also.

"As we watch, listen, and are entertained, TV talk shows are rewriting our cultural scripts, altering our perceptions, our social relationships, and our relationships to the natural world. TV talk shows offer us a world of blurred boundaries. Cultural distinctions between public and private, credible and incredible witnesses, truth and falseness, good and evil, sickness and irresponsibility, normal and abnormal, therapy and exploitation, intimate and stranger, fragmentation and community are manipulated and erased for our distraction and entertainment. "Quote taken on 5/28/98 from the web site of Dr. Vicki Abt, a sociology professor and TV talk show critic.

Now a days, talk shows are popular as it is cheap and most direct participation from audience. The number of TV channels have multiplied several times and having with programs of innumerable number of TV channels, Talk show have seen a manifold increase. Audience is sure to avail get in touch with one or other talk show on a single bout of pressing on the remote control. They are now vary familiar with various political talk shows arranged by these channels. Now most of the Talk shows evaluated as negative and organized in an artificial environment. These talk shows have more talks than solutions. Talk shows do not reflect public statements and demands as well as solutions. The main cause of increasing talk shows in all TV channels at present is that it is very to attract audience at a minimum cost. Middle aged males and politician watch these in place of serials.

So to determine whether these political talk shows are able to create awareness among people, the following question is emerged. *Are political talk shows are able to make awareness among public?* In this regard, we shall make effort to maintain objectivity in evaluating our results.

Political Talk shows: Emergence and Development

If we turn pages of world history, then it is seen that talk show was first introduced by American media personality J Franklin. His talk show telecast by Wiz TV got a tremendous popularity.

The first mainstream talk show was under way in Bangladesh on 3 August, 2001 under the auspices of Channel i with Zillur Rahman as presenter. During its inception, bdoja.com remarked "An young man with innovative ideas." This talk show gained much popularity that time. Late night talk show are largely popular in this country. Before this sort of talk show, talk shows were of dynamic tradition were telecast but without much popularity. And tabloid talk show (where guests are from common masses) enjoy high popularity in Europe.

Among all talk shows, it is true that the tritiyo matra opened a new vista but in the swim, this too could not prevent itself from being rust-affected. Frequent recent complaints about talk shows include:

- Artificial and biased by the owner of channels
- All channels wear the same costume.
- Repetition of same talks with same import.
- Much more encomium than explanation.
- Monotonous.

Much sensational/much talked of, in other words much popular, talk shows of the present time include:

Channel i - Tritiyo Matra
ATN News - News Hour Extra
Ekushey TV - Ekusher Rat
Channel 24 - Muktabak
RTV - RFL Goltable Boithak
NTV - Ei somoi
ATN Bangla - Onno dristi

These are but to name a few. The list is a bit longer. But there is of course a ground behind showing these names above. Let us see a list coming as guests to this program:

Akbar Ali Khan
Naimul Islam Khan
Manzurul Hasan Bulbul
Badiur Sujan
Arafat Rahman
Pias Karim
Asif Nazrul
Abed Khan

Saidur Rahman Khan

Mahfuzullah

Not to mention of the rest. But above stated 10 individuals have been seen to be repeatedly invited in various talk shows telecast in 2013. Audiences' complaint that same faces are repeatedly shown holds water here.

Research Objectives

The study is aimed at gaining an understanding of the political talk shows, whether these are able to create awareness among public in Bangladesh and motivate them toward positive movement and find the extent that whether these political talk shows can create impact on people and be able to create positive contribution on transforming the society as well as whole country. The study also has the objective to find out whether these political talk shows are able to create an authentic platform of communication between people and government. In brief the concrete objectives were:

1. The main objective of the study is to measure the awareness level on people made by political talk shows
2. To find the extent, that whether these political talk shows can create impact on people and be able to create positive contribution on transforming the society as well as whole country
3. To find out whether these political talk shows are able to create an authentic platform of communication between people and government.
4. To understand behavior pattern of audience adopting political talk shows.

Research Questions:

The research investigates the following questions:

- Why people watch talk shows?
- Are talk shows are politically biased?
- Were the talk shows on “Rana Plaza”, “Gonojagoron Moncho” able to make conscious among public
- Are talk shows able to help policy making at national level?
- Do they make conscious movement of DU students?
- Does talks show have positive impact on public and government?
- Does talk show make loyal platform between government and public for communication?

- Does the talk show able to explain accurately of constitutes, laws and other terms easily?
- Are people consent on views of TV talk shows?
- Are talk shows have impact on rural lives of people?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This is a quantitative research, in some cases qualitative approach has been applied. At first phase an exploratory research has been conducted to understand the nature of problem and its subcomponents. After analyzing all relevant data by excel and SPSS, a descriptive method has been applied to present the findings.

Sources of Data

To meet the research objectives both primary and secondary sources of data have been used. More emphasis is given on primary data to conduct the research program authentically.

A model questionnaire has been developed to elicit essential data. The Questionnaire is structured in nature and contain 17 questions in which 16 are close-ended questions and 1 is open-ended question. Data was also collected through: Informal interviews with political talk shows experts and media specialist, and Observation of political talk shows on various channel. Secondary sources included books, websites and articles on talk shows.

Population

All Dhaka University Students (Approximate 35000 students)

Sampling

Purposive sampling technique was used to select specific students who watch Talk shows regularly, at times and irregularly. Sample Size was 30 Students

Data Analysis Techniques:

Data was coded in Excel and SPSS software has been used to analyze data. Discriptive statistics like Mean, standard deviation, Correlations, Regressions and Frequency distributions. Different Graphs, Tables, Charts and others instruments are used to make presentable the research results (Findings).

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Frequency Distribution

Table 1. Gender (% of Male/Female Students)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	19	63.3	63.3	63.3
	female	11	36.7	36.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

From the above chart, it is shown that most male (63.3%) students watch political talk shows, where only 36.7% female students watch political talk shows.

Table 2. Frequency of Watching political Show (Watch or Not)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	24	80.0	80.0	80.0
	No	6	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

From the above table, it is shown that 80% students watch TV talk shows frequently. So it is very important to choose appropriate topic to debate in the talk shows.

Table 3. Amount of watching Talk Shows

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once a week	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
	3/4 days (week)	16	53.3	53.3	63.3
	Everyday	10	33.3	33.3	96.7
	Others	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

From the above table, it is shown that 54% students watch TV talk shows (3/4) days in a week. 33.3% students are watching TV talk shows regularly. So it can be said that political talk shows are important TV program than those of other programs in perspective of TRP.

Table 4. Why you watch Talk Show

		Frequency	Percent	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Others	13	43.3	43.3	43.3
	To be Entertained	12	40.0	40.0	83.3
	To pass leisure time	1	3.3	3.3	86.7
	To Know ongoing condition of country	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

In the above table, it is shown that 40% students are watching political talk shows to entertain themselves. Only 13.3% students are watching talk shows to know the ongoing condition of the country and only 4% students to pass their leisure time. 43% students are watching TV talk shows for various reasons. So it is significant to say that these political talk shows are arranged in such a way that it create laughter among public and they entertain themselves in that way.

Table 5. Do you think the explanation of constitution and laws discussed in talk show is valid

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	3	10.0	10.3	10.3
	In some cases	6	20.0	20.7	31.0
	most of time	19	63.3	65.5	96.6
	yes	2	3.3	3.4	100.0
	Total	29	96.7	100.0	
Missing	System	1	3.3		
Total		30	100.0		

From the above table, it is shown that 63.3% students admit that the explanation of constitution and laws discussed in the talk show is valid. The number is poor. So 36.7% think that this are not valid expressed in the talk shows.

Table 6. Do you agree/consent with on views discussed in TV talk shows

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	1	3.3	3.3	3.3
	sometimes	4	13.3	13.3	16.7
	in most cases	24	80.0	80.0	96.7
	all time	1	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

From the above chart, it is shown that 80% students are agreed with the views discussed in the talk shows and 13.3% students are agreed in sometimes. Only 3.3% students don't agree at all.

Table 7. TV talk show can help in national decision making

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Valid	no	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
	in some cases	1	3.3	3.3	16.7
	in most cases	18	60.0	60.0	76.7
	yes	7	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

From the above chart it is shown that only 23.3% students think that these talk shows can help in national decision making. 60% of the students think that his talk shows can help in national decision making in most cases. So it is clear that talk shows have a significant effect in government for national decision making.

Table 8. Do you agree that TV talk shows have Impact on rural lives of Bangladesh

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	very little	7	23.3	23.3	30.0
	in some cases	7	23.3	23.3	53.3
	yes	9	30.0	30.0	83.3
	of course	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total		30	100.0	100.0	

From the above chart it is shown that, only 30% students agreed that TV talk shows impact on rural lives of Bangladesh and 23.23% students thinks that these talk shows have very little impact on the development of rural lives.

Table 9. Do you think that the views on talk shows on gonojagorn moncho are exaggerate

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	2	6.5	6.7	6.7
	No	16	51.6	53.3	60.0
	Yes	11	35.5	36.7	96.7
	of course	1	3.2	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	96.8	100.0	

From the above chart it is clear that only (35.5+3.2)% or 39% students think that the views on the talk show on gonojagorn moncho are exaggerated. So 61% students think these talk shows on the topic are not exaggerated.

10. Do you think that Views of TV talk shows are political biased

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	8	26.7	26.7	26.7
	very little	16	53.3	53.3	80.0
	in most cases	2	6.7	6.7	86.7
	yes	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

From the above chart it is shown that only 27% students think that these political talk shows are not biased. So 73% students think that these political talk shows are politically biased in somehow.

Table 11. Do you think that TV talk shows have in the verdict of Besswojit Hotta

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no	2	6.7	6.7	6.7
	very little	11	36.7	36.7	43.3
	somewhat	8	26.7	26.7	70.0
	yes	4	13.3	13.3	83.3
	Of course	5	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

From the above chart it is shown that only (13.3+16.7)% or 30% students believe that TV talk shows have direct impact on the verdict of Besswojit Hotta and 27% students think somewhat.

Table 12. Do you think that Talk Shows have any positive impact on Rana plaza Collapse

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	1	3.2	3.3	3.3
	no	6	19.4	20.0	23.3
	somewhat	12	38.7	40.0	63.3
	yes	10	32.3	33.3	96.7
	of course	1	3.2	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	96.8	100.0	

From the above chart it is shown that only (32.3+3.2)% or 36% students believe that these talk shows have positive impact on Rana Plaza Collapse as after effect.

Table 13. Do you think that these talk shows are able to make loyal platform between government and public

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	2	6.5	6.7	6.7
	no	12	38.7	40.0	46.7
	yes	13	41.9	43.3	90.0
	of course	3	9.7	10.0	100.0
	Total	30	96.8	100.0	

From the above chart it is shown that only (6.5+38.7) % or 45.2% student's thinks that these talk shows are not able to make loyal platform for communication between government and public. On the other hand, (9.7+41.9) % or 51.6% students don't believe that these talk shows are able to make loyal platform for communication between government and public.

Table 14. Do you think that these talk shows make inspiration for conscious movement of DU students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	not at all	3	9.7	10.0	10.0
	no	11	35.5	36.7	46.7
	yes	15	48.4	50.0	96.7
	of course	1	3.2	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	96.8	100.0	

From the above chart it is shown that (35.5+9.7)% or 45.2% students think that this talk shows are not able to create inspiration for conscious movement and on the other hand (48.4+3.2)% or 52% students think that this talk shows are able to make conscious movement.

Table 15. Summary of the descriptive statistics and findings

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Amount of watching talk show	30	2	5	3.30	.702
Why you watch talk show	30	1	5	2.00	1.313
Eligibility of explanation of constitute and laws in talk show	30	1	4	2.62	.728
Consent on views of TV talk shows	30	1	4	2.83	.531
Talk show can help national decision making	30	1	4	2.93	.907
Impact on rural lives of TV talk shows	30	1	5	3.27	1.202
Views of TV talk show are political biased	30	1	4	2.07	.944
Impact of tv talk show in verdict of Beswjit	30	1	5	2.97	1.217
Positive impact of tv talk show on Rana Plaza	30	1	5	3.13	.900
Do you think the views on talk shows on Gonojagorn Moncho are exeggerae	30	1	4	2.37	.669
Talk show can make conscious movement of DU students	30	1	4	2.47	.730
Talk show can make loyal platform government and public by talk shows	30	1	4	2.57	.774
Valid N (listwise)	30				

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

After analyzing all relevant data and information and from the research results the following recommendations are necessary.

1. It is very good sign that 24 people (80%), (from 30) are watching TV talk shows. This number should be increased by arranging more talk shows which are much needed to protect public interest and will be able to make a effective platform of communication between government and public.
2. 40.3% people watch TV talk shows to be entertained, and 40% of people watch to pass their leisure time. So the talk shows must be able to make conscious among mass people besides entertaining them. It should be an authentic source of gaining knowledge.
3. The talk shows should be conducted in such a way / format that the national decisions can be made from them. Since 60% students believe so.
4. Political biasness should be removed from talk shows so that the authenticity of the channel can be increased.
5. Talk shows should not be in such a way that will not be the cause of pollutant of environment and does not breach peace in country.
6. There should be a good arrangement in watching TV talk shows in Dhaka University. Because 20% students think that there is no good arrangement for watching talk shows.
7. The talk shows should be able to make inspiration for conscious movements for DU students because 51% students think that these are fail to make inspiration for conscious movements.
8. The TV owners should support and make arrangement for conducting a talk show so that public interest can be reflected and public assumed that it is the common and authentic platform of communication channel between Government and public. So they should not arrange any articulated and artificial talk show to gain government favors.
9. The explanations and arguments in the talk show should be basis on accuracy, fair and validity so that it cannot violate the existing law and constitution.
10. Talk shows conducting on TV channels should not be based on political issues only, some issues and topics can be considered which may help rural lives and will be able to develop whole Bangladesh.
11. Topics or issues discussed in the talk shows should be arranged in such a ways which may help conscious and positive social change.

CONCLUSION

The paper has given an account of the awareness level of the public who are confronted with various political talk shows. It has revealed how much public aware, what they know, how they react, and why they involve with this talk shows. The study was an attempt to investigate the actual level of awareness of political talk shows and how much these shows act as a common and authentic platform of communication between public and government. It also revealed that different channels present a particular topic in different ways which lead the viewer's towards ambiguity. These shows have little impact on public to create awareness. The TV channels are producing such political talk shows program as it is cheap and to increase TRP. It is very good sign that 80% people are watching TV talk shows. This number should be increased by arranging more talk shows which will be much needed to protect public interest and will be able to make an effective platform of communication between government and public.

In the developed countries, research has been conducted on political talk shows to measure awareness level of public. But there was perhaps no research or any works are done on this topic in the area in Bangladesh. As a primary and early research, it has initiated just to explore the knowledge in this field. Hopefully the research results or outputs would provide a basis for further research on political talk shows and encourage future researchers. It would be also helpful for TV journalist, talk shows specialists and other stakeholders in their profession, since the paper gives some insights into the investigation and circumstances of political talk shows.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Despite our sincere effort to keep flawless in our survey, some limitations cannot be ruled out like, it is not possible to verify to what extent samples are representative. And if someone might have not expressed his/her heartfelt opinion, the same is also beyond scrutiny. However, we have made our sincere most endeavor to select in a neutral and proper way.

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