

Development on-air: women's radio production in Afghanistan

Sarah Kamal (1)

This case study investigates the launch of a women's radio station in Herat, Afghanistan, in October 2003. It follows four women journalists' struggles in balancing the demands of a highly conservative culture on the one hand, and the gender objectives of their Canadian journalism trainers on the other. By discussing how the radio station was forced to accede to the male-centric norms in Afghan radio production to avoid being labelled unprofessional, the study concludes that gender and media development must be conceptualised more carefully to present an effective challenge to gender inequality.

Media development takes on many different forms in different areas of the world. When gender concerns become a central component of media development practice, contentious issues often surface. In the West, feminist critiques of media have often focused on how patriarchal norms are maintained by the media, and how women's participation in the "serious" business of news journalism can be marginalized or trivialized. In media development, however, the reverse is usually true. Rather than being a force for sustaining difference, the media are deliberately employed by media development organizations as a vehicle for challenging unequal gender relations. Women's rights and social justice are promoted in media content, and women's participation is often a precondition for funding for media projects. As I will argue in this article, however, it is debatable whether the objectives of some gender and media development interventions are attainable.

To present my case, I will discuss how, within the conservative but changing norms of post-Taliban Afghan society, a group of Afghan women (2) became the founding members of Radio Sahar (Radio Dawn), the first independent women's radio station in Herat, Afghanistan, with the support of a Canadian media development organization. I will first contextualize the Afghan media reconstruction process and the launch of Radio Sahar. I will then discuss how the four Afghan women journalists conceptualized their audience, and how concepts of good and legitimate radio under which the women worked influenced their ability to reach their broadcasting and development objectives. I will then conclude with some lessons learned from this project.

Media development context

Afghanistan presents a relatively extreme case for gender and media development. The media reconstruction process has been rapid and far-reaching, transforming a country that had been under the virtual media blackout (3) of the Taliban regime to having around 50 radio stations (4), 6 TV stations, several hundred publications, and 5 news agencies (Ishaq 2006). Afghan women, meanwhile, have shifted from extreme mobility constraints and public invisibility during the Taliban regime to worldwide attention and political power (5) in the reconstruction process.

Between 2002 and 2006, a Canada-based media development organization, called the Institute for Media, Policy, and Civil Society (IMPACS) (6), worked to re-introduce Afghan women's voices into the public domain and increase the media's role in supporting Afghan women's participation in reconstruction and peacebuilding. Through funding from the Canadian International Development Agency and other sources, IMPACS hired veteran journalists and trainers from Canada and the United Kingdom to train Afghan women as journalists, radio hosts, and managers of community-based independent radio stations. In increasing the number of well-trained female journalists and technicians in Afghanistan, IMPACS hoped to promote strong reporting on gender issues as well as ensuring women's control over some editorial processes and broadcasts. It was envisaged that this would highlight gender issues, and contribute to some degree of critical mass in visible female leadership in the mass media, as an example to younger women and the rest of Afghan society. IMPACS also supported the launch of four women's radio stations that were to be run, managed, and licensed through women. IMPACS' principles and methodology included ensuring community involvement in its radio stations through partnering with a local civil society organization that would be responsible and hold the license for the station, and establishing a board of directors composed of active gender and civil society activists in the region to oversee the operations of the radio station.

After supporting the launch of a women's radio station in Mazar-e-Sharif in northern Afghanistan, IMPACS decided to press for another women's station based in Herat, in the west. At the time, Herat was ruled by Ismail Khan, a notoriously conservative warlord. As governor of Herat, Ismail Khan was especially famous for his conservative attitudes on women's issues, often lecturing at great length on the need for women to observe strict dress codes. While the radio station had officially been granted a license from the Ministry of Information and Culture in Kabul, Ismail Khan's power base in the west was very strong and the central government had very little power to enforce its policies in Herat. As a result, during the process of setting up the radio station, there was much concern when Ismail Khan chose not to offer any written guarantee that the operation would receive his sanction. Ismail Khan was, however, a strong advocate for women's education. Through classifying the women's radio station as a tool for women's instruction and culture, and inviting the Canadian ambassador to Afghanistan (7) to the radio station's launch, Radio Sahar was able to receive Ismail Khan's last minute support.

Radio Sahar was launched in October, 2003 (8). I was a volunteer for IMPACS in Herat in the weeks preceding the launch, and became acting station manager for the first two weeks of Radio Sahar's operations. This allowed me to provide support to Seddiqeh, Shamila, Zohreh, and Leila, as the founding members of the radio station, in establishing their administrative structures. The observations I present below are based on my experience working at the radio station, and two subsequent follow-up visits I conducted within the first four months of its launch.

The radio production environment

The red "ON AIR" sign is lit in the radio station's hallway. I am in the control room, sitting with Leila in one corner as she practices a short speech. Seddiqeh is at the far end of the room at the mixing board, regulating the live feed from Shamila who is dimly visible on the other side of the glass partition, reading into a microphone in the studio. The gas capsules ran out two weeks ago so everyone is wrapped in several layers of clothing. As usual a power outage has left the room dark except for a few dim lamps powered by the same generator feeding the radio equipment.

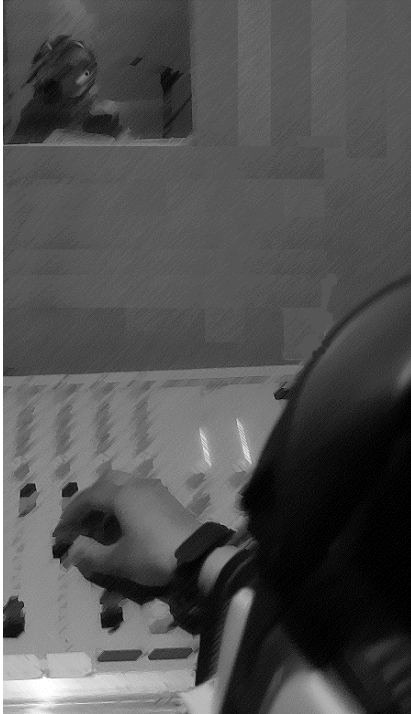
Radio host Shamila finishes introducing a song that technician Seddiqeh fades in. Seddiqeh cuts the feed from the microphone and nods to Shamila that she is now off the air. Shamila tramps into the control room, banging the flimsy studio door behind her, and the women convene to continue planning their next day's schedule, sitting cross-legged on the floor.

"We have 4 minutes," Seddiqeh announces as she hunts for a pencil. "Where's the weekly schedule?"

"I've got it," says Leila, and flips around a paper she is holding so we can all see. "Tomorrow we have 'The Best Elements of Islam,' 'A Bright Tomorrow,' 'Women and Society,' and 'Request Music.'"

"I've spoken with the professor, and he's willing to come again tomorrow [to lecture for the 'Best Elements' show]," says Seddiqeh, to murmurs of approval from the rest. She flips through a stack of CDs in a drawer behind her. "Has anyone listened to 'A Bright Tomorrow' number 4 to find out what it's about?" There is a slight pause. "Has anyone even seen it?" she asks, lifting paper and burqas off chairs to find the misplaced CD. (9)

The muddled production/planning environment I describe above was fairly typical of the live-to-air broadcast at Radio Sahar. In what I privately characterized as the "subsistence scheduling" chaos of the radio station, there was very little time for decision-making.



Technician Zohreh and host Shamila at Radio Sahar

The women would use the time available to them during the playing of songs or pre-packaged programmes to plan for the next day (and on all-too-frequent bad days, for the next half hour) of radio broadcasts. The designated host would pre-script introductions to shows when she could and practice excerpts of poetry to declaim on the air, while the designated ‘helpers’ would call and invite guests to lecture or participate in occasional roundtables.

During their non-stop eight-hour schedule, the women were live to air for six hours and able to plan and programme for two. They took turns praying during pre-taped shows. They had very little time to prepare programmes, and hence tended to rely on music and pre-packaged programming (10) to ease their heavy workload.

Despite the fairly haphazard and last-minute nature of the women’s planning, the radio station’s broadcasts were quite professional and followed a fairly standard daily 6-hour format. The broadcast began with the station’s theme music and station slogan, followed by a narrated listing of the programmes for the day. A pre-recorded reciting of a selected Koranic verse followed, then the pre-packaged and live programmes of the day were broadcast, interspersed with music and occasional “person on the street” taped interviews. At the end of the broadcast, the host thanked the audience for listening and the station’s theme music played for a few seconds until the ON AIR sign switched off.

Radio Sahar’s intended and unintended audiences

The women radio producers are sitting in a circle, trying to decide on the pre-taped programming they will air tomorrow. Beautiful 25-year-old Shamila,

immaculately dressed and made up as always, draws what my Canadian colleague calls her "intense" eyebrows together in a frown.

"Throw all the [a current affairs show] CDs aside. That stuff is too political. Women don't want to hear that at home."(11)

Ang (1991), speaking from a Western perspective, theorizes that public broadcasters define and in effect construct the final desired audience for their programming. Radio Sahar was mandated with producing and broadcasting material of interest to women and the larger community, but had limited resources for determining the way its audience, and especially women, listened to the radio. The few audience research reports that existed in Afghanistan were generally only available in English and to those who could find the small, essentially invisible research community in Afghanistan.

The four founding members of the radio station, as urban, high school graduate, dollar-earning radio professionals, comprised a tiny elite in the 80% rural, 80% illiterate, overwhelmingly 'housewife' Afghan female population. Their ability to understand the needs and perspectives of the Afghan women around the nation they aimed to serve was limited by their restricted mobility and experience. Given lack of information on their listeners, the women conceptualized their target audience in different ways.

For all her education and family wealth and freedom to hold a job, Shamila had lived in a kind of gilded cage. She often seemed to draw on memories of her own days as a bored housewife in voting on the station's programming, projecting her own dislike for "too political" current affairs programming onto the audience, perhaps designing radio shows to suit and serve the version of herself that she believed existed on the other side of the radio divide. Zohreh would report on feedback she received from her friends and relatives on the radio station, injecting the variously enthusiastic, querulous, and disdainful voices of the radio station's actual audience into production decisions. She also reported that "people say we have a much more fresh, interesting format" than the local radio competition, who was both an adversary against whom the women developed an oppositional programming stance, and a knowing listener before whose phantom ear they quailed on their less technically proficient days. Shamila at one point also complained that the station was broadcasting as though its "audience [were] all really conservative mullahs." Her impatience stemmed from her disgust over what she perceived to be the station's self-censorship: the women were playing minimal music and avoiding controversial topics to avoid criticism from local male political and religious leaders they believed to be monitoring their station. The fear that Ismail Khan would shut them down early in their broadcasting lives was a major factor in the women's programming and broadcasting processes.

While they generally only referred to women as their audience during production decisions, Radio Sahar's radio journalists were aware of and played to the larger community within reach of their airwaves. Their material had to be filtered to conform to the expectations of their Western funders, and their urban, educated, usually male critics. The intended final audience of self-as-other or dimly understood "illiterate women" was

often confounded with the competition, with local power interests, and “conservative mullahs.” While designated for ‘women audiences,’ the programming that resulted was often in reality developed with a much more complex and contradictory group of listeners in mind, as well as reflecting their own priorities and interests.

In one instance which illustrates the journalists’ assumptions regarding donor expectations, I realized that while I had presented myself to the women as a researcher, collaborator, and friend, my cordial relationship with IMPACS was an important component of the identity they read in me:

I idly glance over the next day’s schedule. “What’s that?” I ask Zohreh, pointing to a barely legible scrawl listed in the second programming spot.

“Not yet – don’t tell her about that yet. It’s too soon,” mutters Shamila warningly, not looking at me.

Zohreh tells me anyway, her eyes reflecting her honest, somewhat habitually pained expression, “It’s a program on the deeds and life of the Prophet Mohammad that we’ve started up.” She looks at me steadily.

“Oh.” There seems to be an expectant pause, and I register their suddenly watchful faces, mildly confused. “Well, good,” I say. The tension eases. (12)

I realized later that the subtext for this encounter stemmed from the women’s awareness of my secularism. If it had not been clear from my more relaxed style of dress or my independent travel, the women observed my ignorance of Koranic verses, lack of prayer, and close relationship with Western organizations and identified my secular bias (despite my half-Iranian background) easily. Some of the team members responded by shielding their heavily religion-inspired programming, I believe in large part because they were worried that I would transmit that information to their also clearly secular Western donors, who would in turn cut off their funding. Their worries were unfounded: IMPACS hoped the radio station would operate independently and serve the female community’s interests, religious interests included. However, I found this episode interesting for highlighting the importance of religious programming to the women, as they were willing to engage in somewhat furtive and, in their minds, risky behaviour to ensure its broadcast.

Conceptions of good and bad programming

According to the women, poetry, traditional music, and lectures by local professors and high-ranking figures of “authority” constituted good programming. Their weekly schedule, while still flexible and subject to last-minute scheduling problems, included established slots for pre-packaged children’s shows and educational programming for women produced by IMPACS’ radio production unit in Kabul and other media development organizations in Afghanistan. Their broadcasts were creative, featuring lectures on dental hygiene by a dentist, prayer verses interspersed with music, literature readings, request music shows, and an “increase your knowledge” segment filled with

general knowledge and unusual facts.

Bad programming seemed to fall into one of three broad categories:

- illegal;
- legal but unacceptable to local power interests; and
- programming the women themselves felt was inappropriate.

Illegal media content was set out in Afghanistan's most recent press law as "matters contrary to principles of Islam and offensive to other religions and sects" and "matters leading to dishonoring and defamation of individuals."⁽¹³⁾ During my one-month observation of the radio station, I did not observe any clashes between the women's programming and the legal boundaries around appropriate radio content defined by the Afghan government.

Legal content that was likely to incur the wrath of local interests, according to the women at the radio station, included "playing too much music" (more than two songs an hour, they feared, would be labelled as corrupting and lead to the station being shut down), and criticizing the local militia. The women discussed these restrictions as social constraints to which they acceded consciously as external to them as producers. The exact nature of these constraints was sometimes a contentious issue in their meetings: for example, the "two songs an hour" restriction was not based on any solid evidence that, say, three or four songs an hour would upset members of the community. In fact, their competitor often played up to four times that much music. However, believing that they were subject to heightened scrutiny and potential censure as a women's radio station, the women producers chose to proceed with care and focus on women's "safe" educational programming for the bulk of their content.

The third category of the women's own programming tastes was linked to the choices and assumptions women brought to the production room themselves through their lives, histories, and worldviews outside of the radio studio.

We twist and turn through the uneven dirt side streets, our taxi manoeuvring around potholes and ditches carefully. Leila lives with her husband and two daughters far away from the radio station compound, and I am on my way to visit her family. The neighbourhood I am entering presents a dramatic shift from the clearly wealthy, upper-class urban settings of the other women's homes: although Leila lives within the city limits, her home is in the "provincial," under-developed area of town. She's a handsome woman, but something about her clothing or large, coarse, loofah-rough hands mark her as unsophisticated, backward, slow. Likewise, her house, though well-appointed, clean, and also signifying wealth, is derided by the other radio producers for being in the wrong part of town. (14)

Leila's rural background appeared to be a major factor in distinguishing her radio-hosting practices from the work of the other women. I believe it also accounted for the diminished value assigned to her contributions in the radio station. Radio Sahar broadcast in Dari and Pashto, the two official languages in Afghanistan, but tended to favour programming in Dari as the local population was pre-dominantly Dari-speaking.

Leila was the only Pashto-speaker (15) in the team, and was often marginalized during the team's job assignments – partially because of her own lack of motivation and confidence, and partially due to the attitudes of the other women, who felt her work was of poor quality. She was considered a poor radio host both by her colleagues and the community: when she was on the air, listeners phoned in and complained. The complaints revolved around her accent, grammar, and reading style, all of which the other, much more urbanized, women on the team also disliked and often tried to correct. In fact, while I sympathized with Leila's plight, my own urban upbringing and sense of what language "should be" resulted in lack of patience on my part towards Leila's radio hosting. For all of us, her voice-overs and narratives often sounded like "bad" radio.

Any material that sounded uneducated, uncouth, improper – or in a word, uncultured – was either conspicuously absent or weeded out as a matter of course by the women at Radio Sahar. Such a policy would be perhaps self-evident for a radio station interested in maintaining a degree of professionalism and quality and conscious of its status as a model for women in the region. *What* Leila said was not at issue so much as the *way* she said it. Indeed, Leila's rural, uncultured-sounding radio hosting was sufficiently outside the realm of what was considered appropriate for Afghan radio that well-meaning members of the urban audience felt compelled to call and register their dismay and displeasure.

On-air legitimacy

Schirato and Yell (2000) suggest that speech can be characterized as being transient, spontaneous, and employing paralanguage (or tone, pitch, rhythm, pace, volume, and other nonverbal vocal elements that nuance spoken texts). Writing on the other hand can be referenced, is permanent, and hides the processes (like first drafts and editing) that produce it. It seems that the "legitimate radio voice" idealized by the production unit inhabited a space between the two. Two important rules seemed to be in place for radio hosting duties: first, that everything said on the air had to be pre-prepared in a script, and second, that when the script was read it had to sound as though it was not being read. The unwritten code at the radio station seemed to be such that to be considered valid and "good," the radio voice had to sound cultured, effortlessly literate, and urban.

The 'legitimate radio voice' idealised by the journalists presents numerous implications in Afghanistan. First, its literacy requirements raise an effective barrier against the participation of illiterate people in the studio room. With illiterate people excluded from the radio production system at a basic and rather "common sense" structural level, the radio communications process in Afghanistan is confined to a "literate urban elite broadcasting to illiterate rural majority" dynamic, despite the fact that radio production technology has no literacy requirements in itself. Second, pre-scripting radio texts causes them to be generally more formal and distanced in tone than everyday spoken communications. Communication does not occur in a spontaneous and fluid moment of speech, but rather through a deliberate self-conscious writing process. Scripts tend to require, in both of Afghanistan's two official languages, the use of the formal language used for writing rather than the everyday cadence of colloquial speech. It is possible to write in the informal, spoken mode, but it is in some ways jarring and artificial to write and read a linguistic style that normally does not appear on paper. Third, reading from a

script adds a layer of separation between the radio hosts and their audience. Radio hosts do not so much speak to as read to their audience, changing the flavour of their encounter with the listener from social and conversational contact to a more formal, official speech delivery. IMPACS' decision to promote scripted radio and the journalists' preference for maintaining this made Radio Sahar's broadcasts resonate with literate culture rather than the oral culture more dominant in Afghanistan (16).

Lessons learned

The case I have presented here suggests some points of complication in the implementation of a gender and media development project:

1. Given the lack of information on Afghan women's radio listening habits and needs, the pre-packaged and in-house women's programming at Radio Sahar was designed for an imagined audience that was not representative of Afghan society.
2. Radio Sahar's concern over other, non-target audiences at times led to self-censorship and a bias towards urban-centric, political programming favoured by Western donors and radio station decision-makers.
3. IMPACS' training on Western standards of professional journalism and societal preferences for the urban and educated in Afghanistan pressed the radio station towards adopting a scripted and more formal radio voice over spontaneous conversational dialogue in its programming.

The formal and privileged content that emerged as a result of the above influences led to radio that was often distant from the everyday concerns of most Afghans. Within the context of a very poor, Muslim, overwhelmingly illiterate nation, what seemed to be entirely natural ideas of legitimacy and good journalism defeated (17) one of the main objectives of the radio station: that is, to produce educational, understandable, and relevant programming for its female audience.

In general, gender and media development initiatives may benefit from observing the following:

- A solid understanding of the needs and interests of the audience is fundamental for good communications, and unfortunately often overlooked in media development planning. In gender and media development, such understanding is even more important in navigating contentious gender concerns.
- Gender and media practitioners operating in cultures very different from their own must consult local expertise on issues such as relevant programming, appropriate levels of technology, and the needs of the society they have entered.
- Western standards of journalism should not be confused with universal best practice for communications. Short, punchy and fundamentally secular modes of expression do not necessarily translate well in developing contexts.
- The media, despite their large geographical reach, are as subject to social constraint as the society they inhabit, and gender and media development, like

most projects for social change, must be undertaken over the long term and in conjunction with other development approaches.

IMPACS aimed to promote Afghan women's ability to voice their points of view and perspective, and also to work towards some degree of critical mass of women directing media operations in a country that had for so long created barriers around women's public participation. In practice, however, the effectiveness of their work was difficult to determine.

Patricia Holland's (1996) study of women television newsreaders concludes that women involved in the "seriousness" of the news are not accorded the respect and credibility their male colleagues enjoy. Women are defined as being "outside both the political consensus and the masculine structure of language" and dismissed as such: "themselves trivialized, they [could] be blamed for trivializing" (198). The Afghan women journalists I observed occupy a similar space outside of the locus of power and communication structures. The logic involved in their production efforts was fairly simple: even if they had been able to counter external and internalized belief systems to produce programming that illiterate women would appreciate, accusations of "trivializing" or corrupting the respectable realm of radio production with uncultured content would quite likely have undermined their efforts.

In essence, the women journalists' education and professionalism created barriers between their broadcasts and their intended female audience. But more fundamentally, the very rules of the conservative system that they meant to challenge forced them to accede to male-centred norms to be taken seriously. As women, they in effect reproduced, legitimized, and broadcast the male-centric culture that circumscribed their own actions in the studio room. Media and gender development, then, involves more than setting up women's radio stations. While often a useful tool for promoting gender equality, the media as a system can maintain inequality and be resistant to change. Gender and media objectives should be conceptualized with local understanding and expertise, long-term vision for their interventions to be effective.

Sarah Kamal is a media specialist who has conducted independent research in Afghanistan since the summer of 2001. She is currently engaged in doctoral studies as a Trudeau Scholar at the London School of Economics, UK. Email: sarah@unitycode.org

Notes:

1. This study was supported by Oxfam International, MIT Wilson Awards and the Mellon-MIT Inter-University Program on Non-Governmental Organizations and Forced Migration. It is a revised and adapted account of research discussed in my 2005 Massachusetts Institute of Technology MSc. thesis entitled "Cultured Men, Uncultured Women: An Exploration of the Gendered Hierarchy of Taste Governing Afghan Radio".

2. Names and details have been altered to protect the identities of the people in this article.
3. Under the Taliban, TV was banned, printing presses destroyed, and the only legal broadcaster became the *Voice of Shari'at* (formerly Radio Afghanistan), which broadcast religious and Taliban announcements from Kabul. The Northern Alliance operated their own radio and TV in the region they controlled in northern Afghanistan.
4. Not included in this count are numerous small unofficial rural radio stations and print media which broadcast propaganda from US military bases around the country, billed as "a weapon in the war on terror" (Hammersley 2006).
5. While post-Taliban improvements in women's status have been far from even, one area of success has been women's inclusion in Parliament: Afghan women now represent 27% of the National Assembly and hold one sixth of the seats in the Upper House in Afghanistan, making Afghanistan a leading country globally in terms of female representation in the legislature (IRIN 2005).
6. The Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS) is a registered not-for-profit charitable organization committed to strengthening the voice and profile of civil society organizations in Canada and internationally. Their work has included projects that build local media capacity through the training of media practitioners by media practitioners, and supporting peace building and elections journalism in areas such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Guyana. See www.impacs.org. Please note that IMPACS filed for bankruptcy effective March 21, 2007, and at the time of writing the future status of the organization is unclear.
7. Canada had, at the time, the largest contingent of personnel serving in Afghanistan as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission.
8. See Sarah Kamal (2003) 'Unveiling Hidden Voices', International Press Institute Global Journalist Magazine, 4th Quarter, for an account of Radio Sahar's launch.
9. This event, which I have reconstituted as a "mental snapshot" from my journal entries and field data, occurred at Radio Sahar in October 2003. All quotations from this point forward are my English translations of Dari quotes from women at Radio Sahar.
10. Radio Sahar mixed in-house radio programming with pre-packaged shows developed and distributed by media development organizations. Radio Sahar was often expected to air pre-packaged shows produced by an essentially unrelated women's production unit in Kabul that was sponsored by IMPACS to produce radio programming by women for women. The themes in the pre-packaged shows were often influenced by Western IMPACS trainers and staff, for whom political coverage and the electoral process were of consuming importance. Further, the women's radio production unit in Kabul produced programming that was recorded on CDs and distributed to all the radio stations across the

country. As the Kabul radio programming unit had no control over final broadcasting decisions at radio stations, they were forced to produce for a split audience. While trying to serve their final female audience, they also adhered to local concepts of journalism or areas of interest that they felt would raise the likelihood of their programming being broadcast in the first place. Their material thus had to be filtered to please Western funders and urban, educated, usually male Afghan radio station managers to increase its chances for broadcast. The IMPACS Kabul radio production units' CDs had the highest possibility of being broadcast on IMPACS' women's radio stations. As indicated by Shamila's rejection of one of their political CDs, however, Radio Sahar often set aside the women's radio programming sent to them by IMPACS in Kabul as irrelevant or uninteresting for the women in Herat.

11. Mental snapshot, Radio Sahar, October 2003.

12. Mental snapshot, Radio Sahar, December 2003.

13. Chapter Eight "Prohibited Publications," Afghanistan Law on Mass Media, enacted April 2004.

14. Mental snapshot, Radio Sahar, December 2003.

15. Pashto is often considered more prevalent in rural Afghanistan than Dari, which is more usually associated with learning and literature.

16. According to Walter Ong (1988), people in primarily oral societies - or societies that are unfamiliar with writing - think and express themselves differently from literate societies in fundamental ways. Ong relates such differences to the need in oral societies for communication to be relevant and memorable whereas print societies can refer back to written texts and hence express themselves less redundantly and in a more linear manner.

17. See Sarah Kamal (2004) 'Disconnected from Discourse: Women's Radio Listening in Rural Samangan, Afghanistan', MIT Rosemary Rogers Paper #26, for a study of women's radio listening habits in rural areas and their difficulties in understanding radio broadcasts.

References

Ang, Ien. (1991) *Desperately Seeking the Audience*. London: Routledge.

Hammersley, B. (2006) 'Naray diaries - the radio station', http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/news/archives/2006/10/27/naray_diaries_the_radio_station.html (last checked by the author May 2007).

Holland, Patricia. (1996) 'When a Woman Reads the News' in Helen Baehr and Ann Gray (eds.) *Turning It On: A Reader in Women and Media*, New York: St. Martin's Press.

IRIN. (2005) 'UN OCHA IRIN, AFGHANISTAN: Election campaigning ends, voter education continues, 15 Sep 2005' www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=29038 (last checked by the author May 2007).

Ishaq, M. (2006) 'Professionalism Versus Responsibility', paper presented at the International Seminar on Public Interest and Broadcast Development, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, May 28, 2006.

Ong, Walter J. (1988) *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. New York: Methuen.

Schirato, Tony, and Susan Yell. (2000) *Communication and Culture: An Introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.