

## Mobile News Gathering: Media Entrepreneurship and Participation of Marginalized Communities in News Gathering Structure



*Authors*

<sup>1</sup> **Romesh Chaturvedi \***, <sup>2</sup> **Shruti Mehrotra**

**Address For correspondence:**

<sup>1</sup> Senior Lecturer, Electronic Media, Amity School of Communication, Amity University, Lucknow, India

<sup>2</sup> Senior Lecturer, Advertising and PR, Amity School of Communication, Amity University, Lucknow, India

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### **Abstract:**

Our research study attempts to analyze media entrepreneurship scenario in India with the aim to propose an action path of desired social change. Innovation can be done in the application of new media technology to focus on participation of the excluded. The current news gathering structure ignores marginalized section and their representation is only as victims. With the use of news gathering through mobile we aim to focus on inclusion of marginalized section in the news gathering structure of mainstream news. Mobile reporters will be from marginalized section and they will be used in our action research study. Simple and easy to execute news gathering will be possible with the help of special software designed for this purpose. This will help in empowerment of marginalized communities of our society and democratization of communication. This action research study will be significant in proposing cost effective model of news gathering which will ensure participation of marginalized section of the society. Our aim is to practice media entrepreneurship for bringing about social change with the aim to include participation of marginalized section of society in the information gathering & dissemination process of mainstream news. This practice will help in highlight the news which is of their concern & need. This study can be used as a media entrepreneurship development initiative that aims to use new media technology for the participation of marginalized segments.

**Key Words:** Mobile news gathering, Media entrepreneurship, marginalize communities, Action Research, democratization, social change, new media technology

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[chaturvedi\\_romi@yahoo.com](mailto:chaturvedi_romi@yahoo.com) \* Corresponding Author Email-Id

## **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship is a major driver of innovation, competitiveness and development. Advances in digital technology are creating a elementary shift in the media industry, revolutionizing not only media organizations themselves, but also transforming how content is generated.

It's really more than the intersection of technology and social change – with traditional media scrambling for fresh ways to stay relevant. Individuals are conceiving, consuming and experiencing media differently than ever before. Technological advances continue to connect us at rates previously unfathomed, with the potential to change mass communication into mass participation. Most individuals have traditionally passive relationships with media – but it could be a real game-changer if that relationship shifts into one of active, critical engagement.

Innovations in technology makes it easier to gravitate towards what is actually needed, providing an increasingly sophisticated set of media filters designed to cut through the white noise – instead of being the white noise. As we move in this direction, opportunities to integrate truthful memes into the global dialogue will bubble up more often – along with an increase in participatory events reflecting those truths.

Technology is moving so rapidly it is outpacing our ability to understand it. The upside is that our increased ability to connect allows media to play a fundamental role in helping us understand both the benefits and inadvertent consequences of the rapid pace of advancing technology.

In today's changing media environment, entrepreneurial opportunities abound, as barriers to entry for new technologies and platforms fall. New venture opportunities span a wide spectrum of products, from mobile applications and web platforms to content provision across various media technologies, often with opportunities to bypass traditional media 'gatekeepers.' At the same time, the range of business models that can be used to monetize media content is diversifying, creating even greater opportunities for entrepreneurs to capitalize on the changing dynamics of the contemporary media sector.

Entrepreneurship ignoring society, society ignoring marginalized and marginalized ignoring innovation can lead nowhere but the combination of these three can do miracle. Here we conceptualize and tested an innovation based social entrepreneurship model including marginalized groups as active agents in the role of stakeholder, changer and beneficiaries.

### **Purpose of Study**

1. The dynamics of today's media environment and the ways in which technological change is both disrupting traditional strategic approaches and introducing new strategic opportunities
2. The basics of entrepreneurship, with an emphasis on the specialized context of the media and information sectors
3. Fundamentals of clear and effective communication and presentation of ideas and proposals to relevant stakeholders
4. The objective of this study is to analyze media entrepreneurship scenario in India with the aim to propose an action path of desired social change.
5. To find how innovation can be done in the application of new media technology to focus on participation of the excluded marginalized communities.
6. To explore the concept of the mobile news gathering as cost effective tool for the inclusion of marginalized section in the news gathering structure.
7. To explore how media entrepreneurship can be used as a tool of empowerment of marginalized communities of our society and democratization of communication.
8. What are the opportunities and challenges of media entrepreneurship for bringing about social change?
9. To focus on how media entrepreneurship will provide quick and inexpensive newsgathering from marginalize section where there are little or no dedicated links.

### **Literature Review**

Media entrepreneurship is “the creation and ownership of a small enterprise or organization whose activity adds at least one voice or innovation to the media marketplace (Hoag, 2005).” The basic notion is that entrepreneurs entering media markets cause media innovation and ensure a diversity of viewpoints, a key element in the “marketplace of ideas.” The question of whether and how media entrepreneurship might be different from entrepreneurship in general then presented itself. If the media sector might be more entrepreneurial than other industry sectors, what might account for it? By the same token, if media markets had consolidated to levels that threatened a truly innovative, independent marketplace of ideas, what might encourage even greater entry to act as a countervailing force to big media? One commonly cited barrier to entry for new entrants is financing. Whether a nascent

entrepreneur bootstraps or seeks outside financing, obtaining capital at critical points can be a challenge. Hoag (2005) sought to determine whether nascent media entrepreneurs face different challenges by benchmarking three common measures of financial performance: profitability, liquidity and capital structure (i.e., the relative dependence on debt versus equity financing). That study found that media entrepreneurs may indeed perform differently from other small and new firms.

Toward the ultimate purpose of studying media industry performance vis a vis innovation and ultimately democracy, we take a cue from entrepreneurship theory to focus on the new entrant and the small business owner. Numerous theoretical and operational definitions pervade the literature and most treat Schumpeter's view (1936) of the entrepreneur as innovator as the touchstone. Our theoretical conceptualization of media entrepreneurship is: the creation and ownership of a small enterprise or organization whose activity adds at least one voice or innovation to the media marketplace. The individual media entrepreneur or small partner entrepreneur groups are the central characters in that organization's formation, whether the Innovator (s) and/or the owner (s).

The final element of media entrepreneurship is that it counts both for-profit and non-commercial forms of media enterprise. The presupposition in entrepreneurship literature is that it occurs only in the commercial, for-profit realm. It is presumed that achieving personal wealth is the driver for the entrepreneur. In the case of media, that would be limiting; so much media and communication technology are the products of non-profits, non-commercial communities and even small government agencies.

Our definition was shaped by how entrepreneurship in media industries relates to the performance of the media, specifically how it brings more and different voices into the ideas marketplace and creates innovation – technologies that extend access, diverse content that engages citizens and processes with democratizing effects.

In fitting entrepreneurship into the scope of economic theory and research, Baumol has said the entrepreneur is “at once one of the most intriguing and one of the most elusive in the cast of characters that constitutes the subject of economic analysis (1993a, p. 2).” Entrepreneurship eludes economic analysis because the term embodies multiple meanings. As with any concept, its definition is shaped by the scholarly purpose. Entrepreneurship in media industries relates to the performance of the media, specifically how it brings more and different voices into the ideas marketplace and creates innovation – technologies that extend access, diverse content that engages citizens and processes with democratizing effects. There is need to create an alternative framework for communication interventions, that is truly people and participation oriented, and not only on paper. It must involve them in assessing the nature of the problem, defining priorities, formulating solutions and managing the processes of change.

### **Media Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

The interdisciplinary theory building effort in entrepreneurship scholarship reminds us a bit of our own communication discipline's ferment. Over the last two decades, its progress has been significant and its discourse ample (See Low and MacMillan, 1988; Bull and Willard, 1993; Bruyat and Julien, 2000; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). A great deal of entrepreneurship theory begins with Schumpeter's early writing on entrepreneurship and innovation (e.g., Baumol, 1993). After that, it is categorized broadly as either focusing on determinants of entrepreneurship or its consequences (Carree and Thurik, 2003) or "Sometimes entrepreneurship means what the actor is like; sometimes it means what the actor does (Koppl and Minniti, 2003, p. 81)."

We focus on a general theory of entrepreneurship that treats the actor *and* what she does -- at least what she does in the beginning. That is, how the media entrepreneur gets the idea for a media enterprise and then acts on it. To drive it home, how she comes to create and own "a small enterprise or organization whose activity adds at least one voice or innovation to the media marketplace." This is the "individual opportunity nexus" mentioned earlier (Shane, 2003; Shane and Eckhardt, 2003).

Shane defines entrepreneurship as "the interaction between individuals and those opportunities (2000)." The theory posits that a) entrepreneurial opportunities exist *ex ante*, b) there is a discovery process by which certain individuals perceive opportunity and c) under certain conditions, those individuals exploit the opportunity (Shane and Eckhardt, 2003). A host of factors determine whether and which individuals will perceive the opportunity: access to information, knowledge corridors, search and cognitive ability and social ties.

Likewise, acting on the opportunity may depend on access to capital, contracting solutions, social capital and certain other characteristics of the opportunity and the individual. There may be industry differences as well – in some industries more or less capital is available, there are greater or lower economies of scale, great or little power goes to first movers, there is more or less reliance on complementary assets (meaning the innovation is the competitive advantage, not access to established business practices), the industry or market itself is nascent, immature or mature, and patents give newcomers protection. Applying this comprehensive model to entrepreneurship in media industries could reveal pathways for encouraging new entry.

What causes innovation and growth - entrepreneurship. More and more this is the assertion of entrepreneurship theory and research. Recent scholarship has shown that new and small firm growth and a corresponding decline in conglomeration and concentration starting in the 1970s has shifted the source of economic growth and innovation toward the entrepreneurship and small business sector (Cooper, 2003; Carree and Thurik, 2003; Audretsch, 2002; Baumol, 1993). In fact, new firms have been shown as the main source of net job growth (Acs, Armington and Robb, 1999). Does the evidence support such a claim when applied to media industries? In particular, does it hold up when the term "innovation" is

translated into media industry performance concepts like *diversity* (in content and voices), *access* (to the media and communication networks for the public), *quality* (in both content and access technologies)

and new processes with democratizing effects. What can theory and research in entrepreneurship lend to the study of media economics? A good deal of media economics research approaches questions of media industry performance from the industrial organization perspective. The emerging entrepreneurship literature complements industrial organization approaches as they overlap regarding industry performance. In particular, one of the fundamental theories of entrepreneurship is that it causes innovation (Schumpeter, 1936). Entrepreneurship is a major component of the media industry and a promising area for scholarly study.

### **Mobile News Gathering**

Communication initiatives should make use of all media channels available, both modern and traditional, and there is merit in combining electronic media with other media that people already like, use and know how to control (Ramirez 2003). A mobile journalist, usually abbreviated as a “mojo”, can report from anywhere, armed only with a mobile phone – provided they have relevant software and a reliable 3G or wi-fi connection (Quinn 2010). The arrival in late 2007 of the mojo or mobile journalist – the reporter who uses only a mobile phone to gather and transmit news – is a significant development in the evolution of reporting tools. A mojo streams video live to the web, records audio interviews with the phone’s built-in recorder, takes still images, and writes text messages with fold-away keyboards before sending content wirelessly to the office. (Quinn 2010).

Ilicco Elia, head of Consumer Mobile for Reuters Media, said the mojo project was the start of a new way to tell stories. “Mobile phones allow journalists to swap their heavy camera equipment for a smaller device,” he said. (Elia 2008) News organisations that experiment now will be best placed to take advantage of the journalistic possibilities that ever advancing mobile technology allows” (Andrews 2008). The cheapest and easiest way to communicate information and news is through SMS text messaging. SMS allows 160 English characters to be sent per text message. The new technology will save time and speed up the newsgathering process in league of innovative journalism.

Research done in the field of mobile journalism emphasizes more on the use of smart phones for news gathering process. This concept is applicable in developed countries where penetration of 3G services and smart phones is high. But developing and underdeveloped countries cannot adopt this new technology.

In our study we will focus on inclusion of marginalized communities in mobile news gathering. Since this technology is penetrated in far areas the access to this source of news will be high. Mobile reporters from marginalized section will be engaged in cost effective news gathering process.

### **Marginalized Mobile Reporters**

Communication is a two way process, and true knowledge is more than information. Knowledge is the meaning that people make of information. And, for societies the world over making sense of information depends on their ability to discuss and debate it. Marginal communities do not exist in isolation from wider contexts of social, political, economic forces and unequal power structures that are barriers to social change. These constraints need to be taken into account. Information and communication can never substitute for structural changes. For social change to occur there must be opportunities for dialogue. Only when information helps people communicate, participate and allows them to make informed choices does that information become knowledge. (Panos 1998)

By offering marginalized groups an opportunity to express themselves, these media can help these communities promote their interests through alternative discourses (DeSouza & Williamson, 2006) This new initiative is constituted of a network of marginalized reporters who are trained to gather news about their own communities; stories which are otherwise left untold. By feeding this marginalized -produced content to national mainstream media. This initiative will link marginalized communities with a global audience. Through bridging these worlds, this model empowers communities to create real change on real issues affecting their lives.

These mobile reporters represent India's marginalized perspectives, including socio-economical & political. They are trained in different aspects of mobile journalism. Every day, these mobile reporters report on key issues such as caste, conflict, identity and education from their area.

India is the world's largest democracy; however, policies are often put in place without this information flowing to the poor majority. Most people don't know their rights; one reason many laws are not enforced is because the poor are excluded from the media. Simultaneously, the government and the mainstream media cannot easily access the knowledge and perspectives of the poor; perspectives which provide a window into what is actually happening in marginalized communities in India. If information flowed upwards, we could better tackle issues like rural corruption or gender inequality.

### **Action Research Methodology**

Action research is now a well-documented and well-accepted research methodology. Moreover, it is especially appropriate in new media research, where innovation and change are continual, and where processes and outcomes are usually not predictable. Our research study was divided into three phases:

1. Mobile news Gathering 2. Mobile news Compilation 3. Mobile news dissemination.

**I. Mobile News Gathering**

In first phase of the research mobile news gathering will be done in controlled news operations. Marginalized mobile reporter base developed through networking phase will be provided with mob reporter card after their registration is completed. These reporters are from marginalized group from rural Lucknow. Kit was provided to the mob reporters to sensitize them for proper reporting. The mobile reporters are not citizen journalist as they will be the part of the organizational setup and they will be the paid employees. Reporters will be responsible for the news accuracy of the news since they have to sign the undertaking at the time of registration. One unique number will be provided to them were mobile reporters can SMS the news. For our study we had 8948873963 as unique mobile number. For the pilot study we registered 10 marginalized mobile reporters. We selected rural Lucknow as our city of operation.

Each reporter was supposed to message minimum of five news item per day covering different beats. Total number of news gathered per day varied within 100-125 news items. News was gathered for the period of 7 days.

**Marginalized Mobile Reporters Profile**

<b>Reporter</b>	<b>Profile</b>	<b>Phone Number*</b>
Balak ram	Wage labour	800929*****
Meraj	Barber	800929*****
Sanuj	Farm labour	800929*****
Dayaram	Farmer	800929*****
Dharmendra	Unemployed semi-literate youth	800929*****
Milan	Farmer	800929*****
Gautam	Cobbler	
Santosh	Auto (three-wheeler) driver	800929*****
Nanhe	Rag-picker (slum resident)	800929*****



Bhola –	Riksha-puller	800929****
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\*We provide the sims to our registered marginalized mobile reporters

## **II. Mobile News Compilation**

In second phase of the research news gathered through SMS will be compiled on central server with the help of software. News will be categorized under the corresponding beat. News will be displayed in following format:

### **Software**

To make the mobile news gathering model cost effective and easy to use, we designed easy to use software. On the basis of our brief they developed the software which we have used in our action research. Our software is a unifying framework which bridges the gap between real time reporting and publishing the news online.

- Mobile reporters are register on the site and they are provided with a phone number where they need to send the message to.
- If some unregistered reporter sends a news feed, he/she is automatically messaged the link to the online registration form.
- Every time a reporter sends a message to us, our framework automatically categorizes the news feed under the corresponding genre & updates the system with the new message for Admin preview.
- The Admin can view all the messages sent to that particular number via the net (ie anytime + anywhere).
- The Admin can filter out spams etc and decide what's to be done with the news feed received.

### **News**

News gathered in Phase I were categorized broadly into three segments

1. **Related to exploitation-** likes..police’s hafta(cobbler),underpayment(daily wage labour),demand for bribe(auto driver)

2. **Voices to be heard** – likes...pathetic living condition (rag-picker/slum) resident),appropriate seeds(farmer),facilities from government(riksha-puller)
3. **Suggestion-** likes unemployed bonus(unemployed youth),working hour(farm Labour)

**III. Mobile News Dessimation**

**NEWS SELLING (MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION)**

In previous phases with the help of strong mobile reporter base and news compilation bulk news were collected. In this phase of research we discuss the potential buyers of mobile news gathered by marginalized reporters.

The proposed Revenue generation model - After the investment in initial setup, returns can be expected after the networking base grows strong. News channels, telecom operators, web portals, radio channels, print are the stakeholders who can be the buyers of the news gathered through mobile.

This news if disseminated through mainstream media can bring about social change as these highlight the concerns of marginalized communities which are waiting to be heard.

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>News format</b>
News Channels	As tickers/news capsule
Telecom operators	News content/alerts
Web portals	News content/RSS Feeds
Radio channels	News alerts
Print	Capsule news

**TABLE 2- NEWS BUYERS/REVENUE GENERATION**

Table 2 discusses the potential buyers and the news format in which they can use the news. Annual package or profit sharing deals can be done to monetize the returns.

**Significance of Study**

**Revolution in News Gathering Structure with the Inclusion of Marginalized Mobile Reporters**

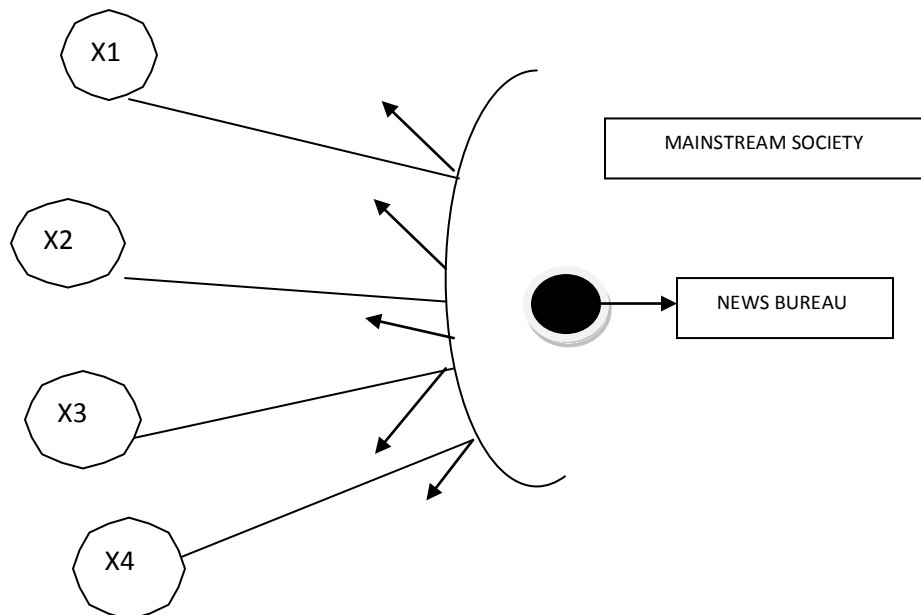
With the use of news gathering through mobile we aim to focus on inclusion of marginalized section in the news gathering structure of mainstream news. Our aim is to practice media entrepreneurship for bringing about social change with the aim to include participation of marginalized section of society in the information gathering & dissemination process of mainstream news. This practice will help in highlight the news which is of their concern & need. This study can be used as a media entrepreneurship development initiative that aims to use new media technology for the participation of marginalized segments.

**Social Significance**

Social significance of the study will lie in the fact that this model of news gathering is affordable, and marginalized section will have the ability to use this technology because of its cost effective nature. The study will be significant in proposing democratic media entrepreneurship model of mobile news gathering which will ensure active participation from marginalized section. The aim is to find how we can enable the democratization of news gathering process, having different opinion, choices, preferences, perspectives, understanding making an assortment of different voices which will ultimately strengthen our democratic spirit. The focus of this media entrepreneurship will be to provide quick and inexpensive newsgathering from marginalize section where there are little or no dedicated links.

**Media Entrepreneurship Model**

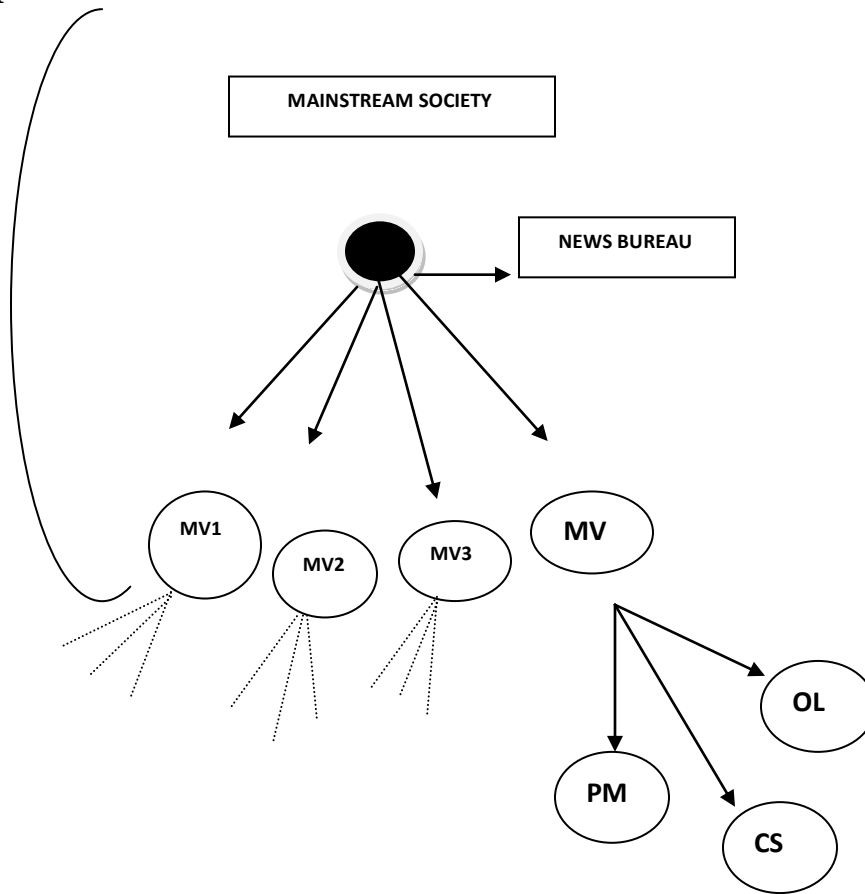
**STAGE I-**



In this stage there is no response from main stream society to the voices and concerns of marginalized groups (X1, X2, X3...Xn).These marginalized groups are:

1. Weak and scattered groups
2. No communication within as well as among groups
3. No access of main stream society for marginalized groups
4. Ignorance of main stream society
5. No participation in policy making via representation
6. Unheard voices

**STAGE II**



In stage II, Models showcase the well established set-up of information flow of mainstream society. In this established setup news bureau regulate the flow of information through different media vehicles like TV, newspaper etc. Policy makers, opinion leaders, civil society play an important role in decisive role in society.

MV- media vehicles ...MV1 (TV), MV2 (RADIO), MV3 (NEWSPAPERS)....MVn

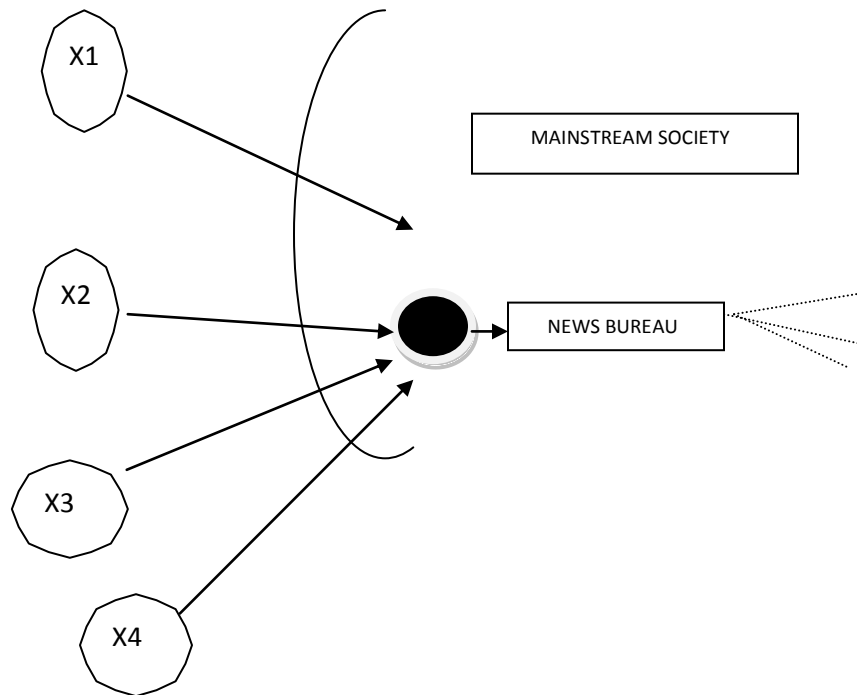
OL- opinion leaders

PC-policy makers

CS- civil society

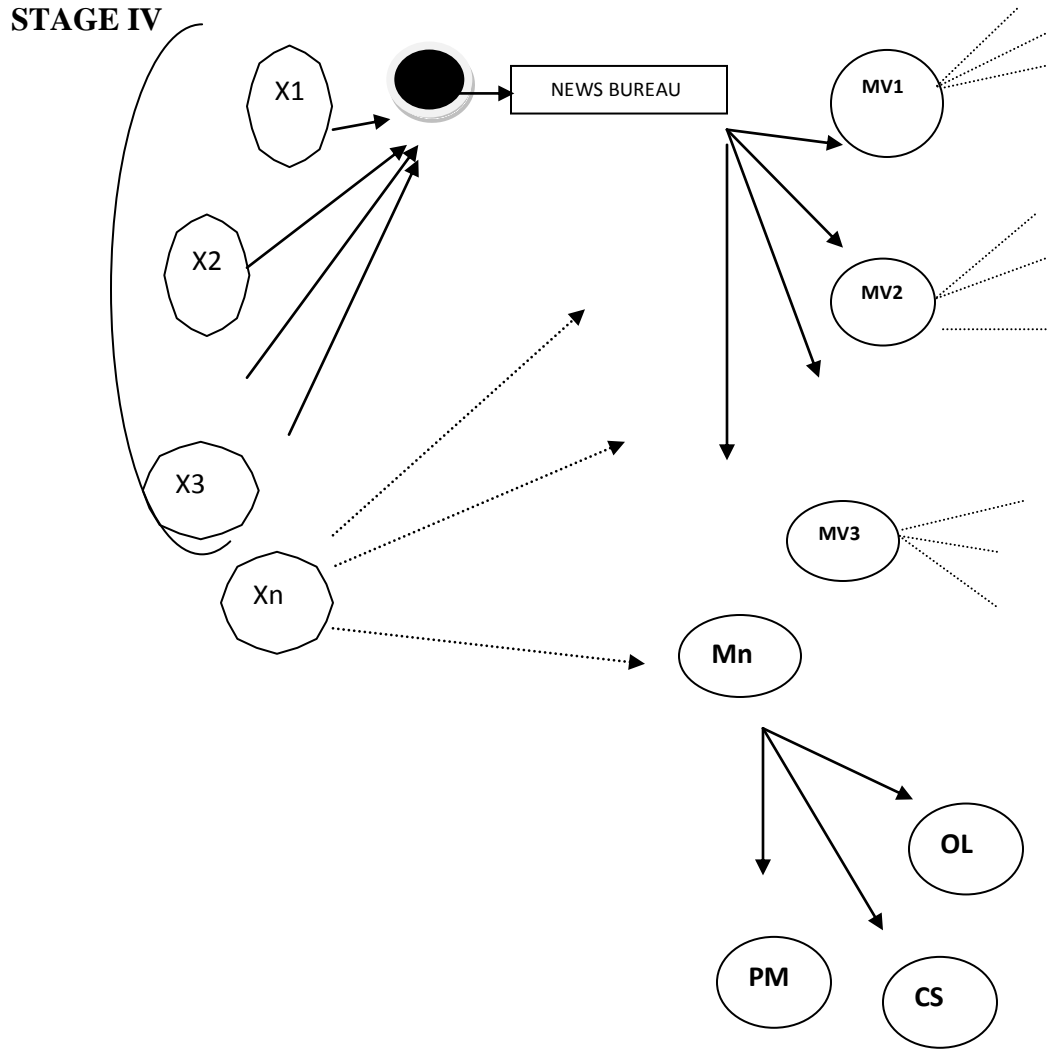
1. Interaction within and among group
2. Impact and influence on each other
3. Indirectly contributing in policy making

**STAGE III**



In this stage we are making a commercial communication link of marginalized groups with main stream society via easiest and cheapest modern tool (mobile) of communication.

1. Establishing a link between two worlds
2. Channelize their voices and concerns via established route
3. Making impact
4. Influencing policy matter
5. Direct participation
6. Enhancing democratic values and spirit
7. Since it will create a huge news pool, can commercially negotiate with market.
8. Cooperative like revenue sharing model.



In forth stage of the model we propose desired path of social change with the help of media entrepreneurship model. The projected final stage –

1. Inclusion of marginalized groups in main stream society.
2. Multi-channeled interactive communication.
3. Harmony in aspiration and fulfillment.
4. Strengthening the idea of democratic society and nation.

### **Limitations and Challenges**

1. Future research in this area will be needed to re-evaluate the functioning of the marginalized mobile news gathering media entrepreneurship model.
2. Building the marginalized mobile reporters base through networking will lay the foundation of this project.
3. Retaining the reporter base will be done by paying them for the used news.
4. This model will take time to establish in the market as it is for the first time that mobile news bureau for marginalized will be functional in the market.

### **Conclusion**

Mobile phones are portable, they are personal, and they as the most pervasive tool for communication between people today. They are intuitively and inherently social, expressive devices. Professional journalists, everyday citizens, and organized groups are capitalizing on the power of mobile technology to produce and consume media.

Our action research based study strengthen the point that mobile can be the cost effective way of news gathering. In first part of the research we developed the marginalized mobile reporter base through networking and gave them the basic training to report the news as and when happens. They were given unique number on which they message the news. In second part news received through SMS were categorized broadly into issues which highlighted the concerns of marginalized class. Person sitting on the desk was the gatekeeper who moderated the flow of news and checked news for any corrections. Now we have archival records of the news gathered through mobile. The news in bulk can be disseminated to the potential stakeholders like TV channels, telecom operators etc. Further research need to be conducted in order to check the viability of this media entrepreneurship model. Improvisation can be done in the functioning of software and building of marginalized mobile reporter base. The major limitation in this action research study was the availability of the fund. Finding suggests that mobile news gathering is a cost effective tool which can be used easily converged with traditional tools of news gathering. This model in a democratic manner involves participation from every layer of the society bringing in their expertise in having nose for news. Unlike citizen journalism, in this model mobile reporter will be the part of the organisation and will be accountable for the news gathered. The model needed to be developed within a relatively short time frame and within the constraints of the study resources. Throughout in the action research process, we could see how the mobile news gathering platform can be resourceful helpers to promote media entrepreneurship for social change. This model if developed can bring revolution by highlighting issues and concerns of marginalized communities which will lead to social change. It is cost effective in nature and it has its utility in the developing countries.

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