

An Experience with Ekushey Dupur

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By

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Abstract

I leant lots of things during my internship period. In my report I want to focus on the technical aspects of the live programs how a live program telecast, the difficulties of the live programs, and limitation of the live programs. At the end I going to analysis the thematically aspects. I am going to relate theories of media and cultural studies with the live programs. How these theories are practically related with the live programs in the electronic media. To continue a live program there are lots of limitation comes I also going to focus and elaborate those things.

Introduction

Ekushey television was the first private terrestrial channel in Bangladesh. Its official transformation began from on April 14, 2000. In a very short time it became one of the most popular TV channels in Bangladesh.

I got a great opportunity to do my internship at ETV. I was the part of the “Ekushey Dupur”, which used to get telecast at 12.30 in the afternoon. This program is often attributed to someone, for an example 19th October is the death anniversary the famous satirist Jonathan Swift, for which the program was dedicated to him. Sometimes current issues are also discussed with the guests and their opinion or stands about the issues are highlighted.

In the program different kinds of people come who are related to different professions. They talk about their professions and how they serve the society. The producer selects the guest list. The guest lists are prepared keeping the up or events in mind. Sometimes example on the Victory Day a freedom fighter will be brought to the show. Influential people of the society are often the guests in the show as well.

Technical Aspects

In my paper I will firstly discuss the technical knowledge I received as an Intern. Then I will look into the specific issues discussed in the show with the selected guests. I will argue that there are hidden propagandas behind the interviews taken and also in the stands the guests take. Finally I will talk about the limitation of my report in analyzing this live show, which is part of a broader agenda of the channel.

During my internship I gathered a lot of technical details about the telecast of up the live show. In a live show the Producer follows rules of three “P”. One “P” Stands for pre- production another production and other is post production. In the pre-production producer give the script to the presenter, the presenter read out the script and then she/he talks with the Guest about the topic. In the production work the producer check out the camera and the sound system, and finally in the post production work is producer make a question of the next episode and confirms the next episode’s guest. I learnt that in the Studio there are two sections; one part is called the “Stage” and another part is PCR (Program control room). There are also two divisions in the PCR one for the producer and other crew members, another part is the Sound Control Room.

In PCR there is one machine which is called “On line Switch Machine” This machine controls video footage. The video editor operates that “On line Switch Machine” By operating this machine the video editor decides which person will be shown in the live program. Behind the producer seat there is another seat for line producer who

take VT (Visual Tape) from server. In front of the producer's seat there are many television sets. One TV shows the presenter's face only while another shows the guest's face alone and the other capture the whole stage. There is another thing which is called "Wincue" or "Autocue" this thing prepared the script through the network. Among the lots of TV there is a TV which is called 10/g, which shows presenter's script. The presenter follows this script. There is another room which is called MCR (Master Control Room) from this room all live programs are linked up with the satellite.

In the Sound Control Room one person operates "Sound Consul". This machine helps to control sound system. There is another machine which is called "Trilosi". All Telephone lines are connected with Trilosi. One person receives all the phone calls, and then producer decides which calls are appropriate for the topic or the episode. The Trilosi sends this selected call to the Studio.

Both the producer and the presenter use a "Talkback" which is like a headphone. The presenter puts this head phone on for the producer to talk with him/her.

There are three cameras operate in the Studio marked as Cam 1, Cam 2, Cam 3. These cameras are controlled by the producer and operated by the cameramen. When the producer asks to "turn into Cam 1" the cameramen focus on camera one. Through his talkback he instructs the presenter to look at Cam 1 then.

The Sound Operator is in charge of Sound control system. He controls all the machines of the Sound Control Panel. There are several machines in the sound control room; one of the machines is called the “Compressor”, which controls all sounds. Another machine is called “Amplypower”, through which the producer, the presenter, and the cameramen communicate. No one can talk in the sound control panel. During the telecast of the show if the producer feels that volume should be increased or lower then through the Amplypower he asks the Sound operator to do so. The Audio Meter helps the sound operator to understand the present sound range of the program.

The Producer counts down the program announcing “4, 3, 2, 1... Stand by... Start”. The scroll that moves below during the telecast of the show is called the “Aston”. The producer announces its display by saying “Card in” and its removal saying “Card out”.

Difficulties Faced During the Show

Of one the main problem of a live program is that the producer can not control the duration of the show. The guests even the callers take up more time than expected, for which the show gets longer. Some of the callers say irrelevant things over the phone as it they have got a chance to chat with the guest. These interruption and unexpected talks hamper the design of the show.

Another difficulty of running a live program is that all the people involve in the show have to work in sync with each other. If any one makes any mistake the whole program gets affected. Therefore everyone has to remain alert and feels responsible throughout the show.

The other difficult part involves the audience. As the audience often asks irreverent or abusing questions, “Ekushey Dupur” fixes its callers from beforehand.

A list of paper get calls from the office its self and are required to ask specific questions that they had submitted the office earlier. This act often contradicts the authenticity of a live show; but this is the solution that the crew members of this show came up with to prevent the risk mention earlier.

Ekushey Dupur: Analysis of the Show

In this show especially from different fields came and spoke about different issues that were related to their fields.

While observing the show I also found Noam Chomsky's "The Propaganda Model" to be relevant and effective in my analysis. Though Chomsky talks about the five filters of media in regard with news, they were as important in case of this interview-based show.

The first episode I want to discuss had Dr. Reaz Ahmed, the head of the Dubai Zoo and animal specialist as the guest. In this episode Dr. Ahmed was asked how industrial development affected the animal planet and if population explosion had its role to play in the extinction of animals. He was also asked to elaborate on the role of animals in keeping the balance in our environment. Dr. Ahmed also shared his understanding of global warming and climate change and what the government and private organization can do to preserve our animals as well the environment.

This episode thus acted as an awareness raising episode dealing with the current concerns about the environment. Bringing the specialist of the field can attract more people to watch the show and people will listen to him with more seriousness because of his position and experience in this field.

Similar episode was aired to promote awareness about public health with the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of South Asia, Dr: M.M.Mohit. He first clarified the meaning of the term “Public Health” and discussed its condition in our country. Then he was asked to shed some light on the contribution of public health in health policy as well as their relationship with the economy of the country.

The viewers of this show were also given an understanding on micro credit when Nazmul Haq, the head of microfinance of Muslim aid, UK, was brought as a guest in this show, he spoke about the history of micro credit, and the difference between the micro credit programs offered by NGOs and the agricultural loans. He was also asked to share his views on the role of micro credit in removing poverty. The condition of micro credit in the economic development in rural agriculture and in creating market was also discussed by him. Finally the interest rates of micro credit programs were questioned.

In such episode the interview questions were aimed at getting out as much information as possible out of the guests. The guests in this process became source of information for the viewers to get detailed knowledge on the specific field. The interview would carefully choose informative questions to raise public awareness via the specialist brought to the show.

In the episode that was telecast in February the book fair was highlighted the most. The owner of “Ittadi” Publication House, Aditto Antor, came to the show to promote the books that they published. He was asked what kinds of books they published

most, whether they give more important to the writer of the books or the content as they decide to publish. He was also asked to share his opinion about piracy and the lack of monitoring mechanism to stop piracy. Mr. Antor was also asked if he believed that getting stalls in the book fair had to have some political power behind it.

Hasan Al Abdullah, a Bangladeshi poet, came to the show to talk about his poetry and to share his view about the elements of poetry and the importance of the translation. As he was brought during the month of February he was also asked to share his opinion about the book fair.

The Director General of Bangla Academy Dr. Samsur Rahman Khan discussed the position of Bangla in our country today. Why English is still used in our official documents and purposes was questioned during this episode. What role Bangla Academy is playing in this respect is the question Dr. Khan had to answer. The nationalist issue fifty nine years of language movement and forty years of our liberation war were also brought to this discussion. He was also asked if he felt that Bangla should be the official language to be used in our administrative jobs.

The convener of “Loko Nattay Dol”, Ali Sikandar Ahmed was the guest on this show in celebration of thirty years of “Loko Nattay Dol”. He discussed the history of their establishment and stories of their stage dramas. Which plays are being performed on the occasion of their Thirty years of celebration was also shared by Mr. Ahmed. What

humanitarian activities their group is involved with and what failures they have faced so far were also discussed during the show.

The Chairperson of the Department of English and Humanities, Professor Firdous Azim came to the show to talk about the international conference that was going to be in held in BRAC University. The conference was called “Cultural Transformations: Development Initiatives and Social Movements”. She shared the relevance the conference as it was a multi-disciplinary conference bringing different dimension of culture the society and different art forms. As it was a conference open to all she invited interested people to attend they could get out of it. She also spoke about the Inter-Asia Cultural Studies Society (IACSS), which was the organization that initiate that conference and also about its other projects.

Thus the different episodes of “Ekushey Dupur” promoted different things by bringing people from various fields. Public awareness, the book fair and people’s attachment with the month of February and promotion of different events were the main issues highlighted in this show during the course of my internship. These episodes gave me knowledge of a wide variety of issues and helped me to understand how these issues were highlighted through media.

About the shows that promote other events Jennifer Akin in her easy “Media Strategies’ writes, “Attracting media attention to events that are not automatic media

priorities requires "pitching," or marketing, a story to a journalist". (Media Strategies, Jennifer Akin, March 2005.

The episodes that highlighted other events needed information about those events from before hand. Either press conference or leaflets about those events would provide this background to the reporters. Then the questions were formed in such a way that the highlights of the events got focused during the shows.

William Bernbach and American advertising creative director once claimed. "All of us who professionally use the mass media are the shapers of society. We can vulgarize that society. We can brutalize it. Or we can help lift it onto a higher level." -William Bernbach

His statement emphasis the power such shows in influence people. The episodes on public awareness and nationalistic issues have to power to effects people's thoughts.

As I have mentioned before The Propaganda Model written by "Noam Chomsky" can be applied to this show the first filter he talks about, "Ownership of the Media" has its role to play in any show channel telecast. The show I worked for brought all the guests according to the producer's choice. He made the guests list and also held the power to change any question that was to be asked to the guests. Nothing could be shown in the show without his approval. The presence of the producer can remind one of Foucault's concepts of the "Panopticon" as a follower of cultural studies. The producer's

“gaze” becomes the over powering for the crew members as well as the guest as everyone is being watched by the producer.

The second filter “The Advertising License to do Business” was evident during the commercial breaks. In every fifteen minute there was a break for advertisement, which would earn the money to continue the show.

The third filter “Sourcing” had its rule to play as well. There was no debate about the guest’s view and the guests were accepted as the authentic source for the information shared during the show.

Fourth filter “Flak” can be applied to the channel its self, which was banned for a while due to telecasting news and views that were thought inappropriate by the government. Here the fifth filter “Anticommunism” also comes into play. As the show can not highlight anything against the government or the capitalist system it can not promote any communist or rebellious views either. So the producer as well as the crew members had to be very careful the content shown in the episodes.

Conclusion

In my three month's experience I got the chance to be a part of only a few episode of a particular show. Therefore I could not get any greater idea about how other shows worked, but I tried to analyze "Ekushey Dupor" with my understanding of media. Then again, being an intern I was not aware of all the decisions taken by the higher officials. These were some of the limitations of my experience which are reflected in my report as well.

However the opportunity to work in this show helped me a lot to apply the understanding of media and Cultural Studies that I got as a student. Therefore I believe that my report exposes some of the thoughts that go behind the making of such shows. If I get the chance I would like to work with the media more and explored more about it.

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