

**Report of a Two Day Training Program
On
Civic Education for Women Journalists**



**March 25-26, 2013
Itahari, Sunsari**

Organized by



**Media Advocacy Group
(MAG)**

Supported by



**Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES)
Nepal**

Introduction:

Civic Education is considered as one essential tool to strengthen democracy in a country. It is a process of making responsible citizens towards their duties as citizens of a particular country. Civic education enables citizens as how to pursue civic values and norms in their everyday life. It is also a process where citizens learn to claim their rights and also become aware about their duties and to respect others' rights at a same time. Civic Education informs them as to what areas of the political and governance processes they can participate in and what they can do to influence political outcomes and thereby improve the quality of governance at the local and national level.

If civic journalism is done with these points in mind it can have positive impact in our society. The core learning of civic education is values and principles of transparency, participation, responsiveness, accountability, empowerment, equity, and so on. Communication and access to information is one of the integral aspects of learning.

Media and Journalism play an important role in determining the proper functioning of laws, rules regulations, practices and norms of a state. Both strengthen individual and community to participate in policy development processes and its implementation. Any form of media can act as a bridge between the government and a civil society. If we see the latest trend of the relationship between media and civil societies, people are making their views towards state by reading headlines of the print media and breaking news of television and radios. So, media should be responsible and accountable towards their work.

Two day training on Civic Education for female journalists of eastern development region was organized by Media Advocacy Group (MAG) with the support of Friedrich Ebert *Stiftung* (FES) Nepal, on 25-26 March 2014. The training was focused on raising the interest of female journalists for civic journalism and its importance. The purpose of the training is to increase the participation of women journalists in the sector of civic journalism.

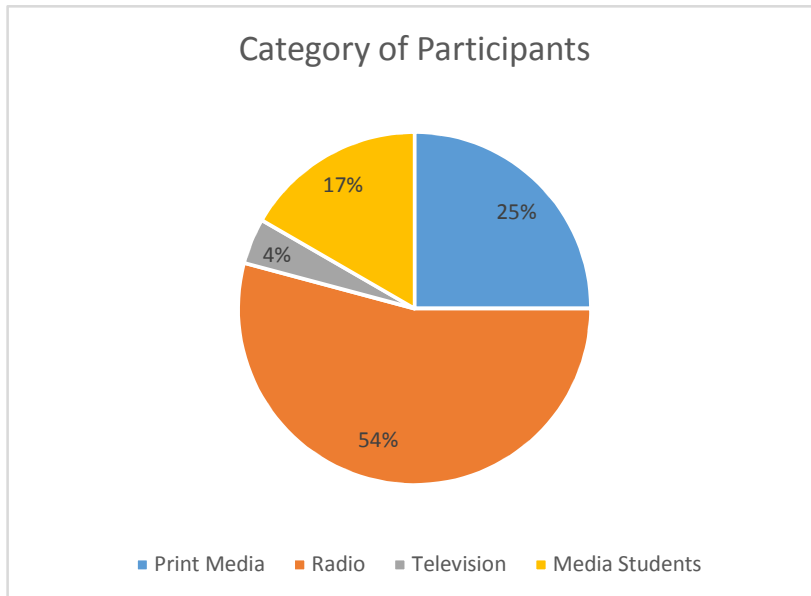
Objectives of the training:

- To increase the female participation in civic journalism.
- To create wider scope and usage of civic education in the media.

- To contribute for accountable and responsible media towards people and the state.

Participants

There were 25 participants from *Sunsari, Morang, Jhapa, Ilam and Dhankuta districts* of eastern development region of Nepal. All the participants were female journalists as targeted.



The big numbers of the participants were from radios 54% of the total participants. 25% participants from print media and 17 % were students from journalism colleges. The participants from television were covered 4% of the total participants.

Day One

Opening and welcome notes:



A short opening session was held to inform about the programme to the local Media and concerned stakeholders. Local Media and civil society members were invited in the opening session. The objectives, nature of programme,

and brief introduction of the organizer Media Advocacy Group (MAG) and the support organization Fredrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) was presented in the session. The chief guest of the session was Hon.Mr. Kashiraj Dahal, chairperson of Administrative Court, chaired by Babita Basnet, president of MAG and the session was facilitated by Bishnu pokhrel, programme Manager of MAG.

Mr. Arjun Upreti, the local coordinator of the training, welcomed to the guests and participants. In his welcome remarks, he shared his experiences about civic journalism. Highlighting the importance of the training, he said civic journalism is not only career it gives you satisfaction too.

Mr. Yam Pradhan, a senior local Journalist, in his greeting speech said encouragingly to the new comer media personals that, he has visited 16 districts of eastern Nepal in his professional journalist life and also remember his professional past that was without modern technology. He closed his speech by saying they have the experiences that they used to write news in a paper by pen and send it to media house with the bus drivers however, new generations has great support of technologies.

Ms. Samira Poudel, Gender Coordinator from FES Nepal, in her speech said, Journalism is not only for job it is for the people to be wakeful. Introducing FES, She said, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung FES was founded in 1925 as a political legacy of Germany's first democratically elected president, Friedrich Ebert, who died in that year. FES is working in 100 countries and civic education is one of the working themes of it. Quoting to Nelson Mandela, she said, civic education is the education to change the world. There is huge gap between wisdom and knowledge. A person's wisdom is important to be a good citizen. She said we should always respect the nature and cultures.



Dr. Mahendra Bista in his speech said, journalism is to change the nation, to inform the people. He said as a journalist, we always need to question ourselves and review our works and duties. We have to regulate ourselves to maintain the ethics.

Mr. Kashi Raj Dahal, in his speech, said life is a learning process. He remembered his past and said, he also had started his career by journalism. He shared his experience that a 1400 pages hand written report he has prepared and said new comer has supports of modern technologies. Inspiringly he said, to be a journalist is not for earn more, but contribute to the state. Acknowledging Amartya Sen, he said Amartya Sen used to say that no one will die by hunger where Medias are strong enough. Media can control corruptions, stop hunger, and promote accountability.

He said political progress in the process of constitution building. First, destination of constitution building is not cleared which is necessary. Second, experts should prepare the technical draft of the constitution. And third, the mass people should accept it.

Ms. Babita Basnet, she welcomed to all the participants and guests in the programme and expressed her happiness to be in eastern region of Nepal. She also expressed her happiness that the participants are from the actual target groups who are young generation and newly entered women journalists. She acknowledged Mr. Kashiraj Dahal's presence as a trainer in the programme and said that 'it is a great opportunity for the participants to get an expert like him as a resource person. His knowledge and experiences are valuable. Similarly, Dr. Bista's practical knowledge on journalism and academic background also makes the programme fruit full. She mentioned about the two books on civic education, one was written by Bajhang king Jaya Prithvi Bahadur Sing, and the other was written by Laxmi Prasad Devkota . She ended her speech by hoping something important and new prospect the participants will learn from the two day's training.

Training Session

Session- I

Subject: Conceptual Clarity on Civic Education

Facilitator: Babita Basnet

Method: Presentation, discussion

The first session was taken by Babita Basnet on Introduction of Civic Education. It was the entry session and covered the general topics on Civic Education.

Main coverage of the session

Introduction of Civic Education: civic education is a part of education which teaches about rights and responsibilities. It is a compulsory to strengthen democracy and the major objective is to promote unity in the country. No formal education and age limitation for Civic Education. It is related to civic activities and also tied to group rights.

Importance of Civic Education: Civic education helps a person to feel his responsibilities as a citizen. Similarly, it helps to respect to others and also make a person strong by educating to sacrifices for own country. It also teaches that not what state have gave to me, but what I gave to the state. Additionally, it teaches the value and reorganizations of public life and also teaches to be accountable to the state.

Some importance subjects of Civic Education: Civic Education covers the issues like take part in election, respect of laws, political knowledge, contribution for state, respect of others' rights, update on information, responsible to family. Additionally, civic education covers civil and political rights, socio, economic and cultural rights, gender and regional rights. Not limited to these, the subjects of civic education are contemporary issues like constituent assembly, right to self-determination, federalism and so on in Nepalese context.

Some challenges of Civic Education: the followings are the challenges of civic education; priority of individual rights than group rights, frustration and negative thinking over politics on youths. Feeling of revenge to each other's and lack of reconciliation are other challenges of civic education.

Session-II

Topic: Civic Education: Principles & Theories in Global perspective and Nepali Context

Facilitator: Kashi Raj Dahal

Method: Discussion

The second session was taken by Kashi Raj Dahal and the session was related to global and Nepali perspective of civic education. The session was more technical session and covered technical and theoretical subjects on civic education.

Main coverage of the session

Rights and Duties: Mr. Kashi Raj Dahal started his session by asking the simple questions related to civic education and simply discussed with participants in familiar way. He said where



Rights are claimed it automatically tied to duties and also creates obligations. How to ensure rights is important in democracy. If there are duties there is the process of remedy.

He presented some practical and contemporary examples related to journalism.

Nationalism and State Building: state building is not only related to physical infrastructure but also by its culture. There are so many bureaucrats who have hold citizenship and cards of foreign countries. He questioned to participants, are they nationalist? As another example he said our forefathers earned money by selling shoes and spent it to established schools in the village, but now we are doing business in the name of school. He linked it to civic education and it's important and said, because of lack of the civic education these types of bad cultures are establishing in our country which is being challenge for state building.

Session- III

Session topic: Civic Journalism: Principles, Practice and Ethics

Facilitator: Dr. Mahendra Bista

Method: Discussion and Question Answer

Dr. Bista started his session by the questioning differences between civic journalism and citizen journalism and discussed with the participants. He facilitated long mind mapping discussion with the participants and asked to tell their views and understandings. They all seemed confuse. They were actively participated in discussions but felt confuse themselves while trying to answer.

After the discussion he concluded with the theme that civic journalism and citizen journalism seems same however, there are differences. He made clear the difference that in civic journalism news making, editing, and broadcasting all do by a professional journalist. While in citizen journalism these all exercise carried out by citizen themselves. Further he said citizen journalism is actually called journalism without editing however, in civic journalism editing is necessary. Both are citizen focused journalism however, in civic journalism a reporter catch the problems of citizens and search the solutions.

He added, civic reporting is that, where we collect information from citizens and also quote them and include their voices. It is a participatory journalism because, citizen also involve in the process of news publishing and broadcasting. When news starts to covered citizen benefits than it goes to civic journalism. Mainly citizen journalism exercise is being in alternative Media.

Giving the example of FM radios he said, if the listeners of a radio programme are farmers, we have to look for the problems of the farmers, and try to look for solutions, that is civic journalism. Civic journalism exercise is being through mainstream media. It is a participatory journalism where citizens participate in different ways. It is also called democratic exercise in journalism.

Session-IV

Topic: Constitution, Rule of Law, Citizens' Rights and Responsibilities

Facilitator: Kashi Raj Dahal

Method: Discussion

Main coverage of the session

Basic element of democracy: Mr Dahal started his session by asking the question to the participants what democracy is and he described through discussions. Mainly he covered the following topics in the session.

- 1. Decisive power of people:** it is one of the basic elements of democracy. In democracy people are the supreme. Rulers always should respect the people. In democracy only people's representatives can govern them.

Meaning of monarchy: Monarchy is a system that governs by the King. The king comes to govern not by the election but by his kinship.

Meaning of democracy: Democracy is a system where people's rights are ensured. There should be acceptance of the people's supremacy. King can be present in democracy but there is people supremacy by its law and constitution.

Meaning of republic: in republic system a son of a citizen in the position of president of a state. The president should be through the election process not by his kinship.

2. Ensure of Human Rights: under this topic, basically he elaborated the following human rights.

- a. **Right to life:** right to life is a major element of human rights. It means state should ensure a citizen's life by law and also in practice.
 - b. **Right to speak and writing:** in democracy citizens have the rights to speak in public issues and also can write his views.
 - c. **Press freedom:** it means in the basis of broadcasting and publication, a media shouldn't be banned. There is a legal system to regulate media. Press freedom is not irresponsible media but regulated by the laws and policies of the state.
 - d. **Political, social, economic, and cultural rights:** it means a person has the rights to participate in active political process. Take part in election and to be elected within a political process. Similarly, there should be ensure the social norms and values, there should respect the all good cultures. And citizens have the rights to earn by participating economic activities.
- 3. Periodic election:** as another basic element of democracy he discussed about periodic election which means an election within a certain period. Under this topic, he discussed the following sub topics.
- a. **Election systems:** first past the post, proportional representation, and mixed system these are the three main election systems developed in democracy.
 - b. **Free, fair, and accessible election;** in democracy, not only election is sufficient but it should be free, fair, and accessible. It should be ensured by establishing authority to complete the election which should have freedom from government

control. Similarly, election should be fair in its all process. Transparency of election process is necessary. And election should be accessible for all citizens.

Voter list preparation/registration, other election process, and also the polling locations should be accessible to all citizens.

2. **Separation of power:** it is a political theory where the power of a legislative, executive and judiciary. It should clear by law. At the same time check and balance between these three is necessary. No one should have the super power.
3. **Free and strong judiciary:** Judiciary of a democratic country should be strong. It should be strong by constitution and laws. No interferences from the legislative and executive are acceptable in judiciary of a democratic country.
4. **Accountability:** all authoritarian should be accountable in their works and authority. There should be punishment mechanisms for wrong doers and corrupted.
5. **Transparency:** transparency in all authority should be promoted. People's rights to know should be ensured. All public concerns information should be provided by its mechanisms.
6. **Competitive multi-party system:** multi-party system is also a basic element of modern democracy. Party registration and parties rights to compete through election should be ensured by the constitution of a country.

Governance system: There are mainly three governance systems these are parliamentary system, presidential system, and mixed system.

Parliamentary system: in this system prime minister is authoritarian. He holds the whole power of state and government.

Presidential system: where the president of the country holds the whole power of the. President is head of the state and also holds the power of government in this system.

Mixed System: it is a hybrid system of parliamentary and presidential system. There is power sharing between head of the state and head of the government. How president and prime minister elect is important in this system. One of the unsolved issues in previous Constituent Assembly was the governance system. Different political parties have different views on it.

Federalism: power sharing and power division is important in democracy. The term is very popular in contemporary Nepal and different views are in discussion. Sometimes it is creating

confusion within the citizen. The actual meaning of federalism is power division of a state. To make it clear he gave an example of property division within a family system in our context.

Day- Two

Recap Session

A short recap session of the previous day was held before start the formal session of the second day. The session facilitated by Babita Basnet. The questions; what they remembered on the subjects that covered yesterday? And another question was how they are feeling about this training? participants shared their experiences and prospective about the program.

Technical Session-One

Topic: Election, Right to Information and its cross-cutting linkages with Media and other legal issues.

Facilitator: Kashi Raj Dahal

Method: Discussion

Mr. Dahal started the session by presenting over view about the federalism and he has given depth knowledge to the participants about the Right to Information.

Main Coverage of the session

Rights to Information: Mr. Dahal talked about existing Rights to Information Act 2007. As the act defines, *"Information" means any written document, material, or information related to the functions, proceedings thereof or decision of public importance made by a Public Body* are information. We can demand information from the public concerned authorities by application. RTI regulation and directives have the provision of paid and non-paid information.

The following subject matters shall not be disseminated:

- (a) Which seriously jeopardizes the sovereignty, integrity, national security, public peace, stability and international relations of Nepal.
- (b) Which directly affects the investigation, inquiry and prosecution of a crime.

(c) Which seriously affects on the protection of economic, trade or monetary interest or intellectual property or banking or trade privacy.

(d) Which directly jeopardizes the harmonious relationship subsisted among various cast or communities.

(e) Which interferes on individual privacy and security of body, life, property or health of a person.

These types of information we could not demand from the authority which is clearly mention in RTI act. Ms. Babita Basnet also made it clear the process to demand information and discussed some provisions of RTI act and regulations. She shared some experiences of working on Right to information in districts.

Session-2

Topic: Reporting on Civic issues and expectations of Civil Society and Citizens with Media

Facilitator: Dr. Mahendra Bista

Method: Discussion

Dr. Bista facilitated this session and covered what types of problems journalists faced in the field reporting and how to face this type of situation. Also he talked about ethics and code of conduct.

Code of Conduct for Journalists and its importance

He talked about Code of Journalistic Ethics 2003 (Amendment and Revised 2008) released by Press Council Nepal. He presented the points of code of conduct and suggested to the participants that every journalist has to be informed about it. He said Code of Journalistic issue has become a serious issue with in related stake holders. To make the media responsible journalists should follow the ethics. And ethics deals with self regulation and discipline. He presented some examples journalist related cases and said a journalist always should have the document of code of conduct in his/her bag or pocket.

Session 3

Topic: Civic Journalism: responsibilities & challenges during editing, publishing, broadcasting, program production and follow up

हाम्रो धेरै ठाउँमा मात्रै समाजिक सेवाहरू मात्रै सञ्चालित रहेको
बासोको विकासको लागि विभिन्न क्षेत्रहरूमा सहभागिता रहेको
पनि संरचनाहरूलाई प्राथमिकता गराउन समस्या रहेको
बुझ्नु पर्ने।

उसको अनुसार सचिवालय सञ्चालनलाई अलग
विशेषी सरद्वै प्राथमिकता गरी ~~सञ्चालन~~ सञ्चालनलाई पनि
सचिवालय, हेमराईस्ट्रिप आदि जस्ता सेवाहरूको संरक्षण
रुने बुझ्नु पर्ने।

Session 4

Topic: Coverage of Civic Issues in FM Radio Stations and Local Media: Experiences & Commitments

Facilitator: Ms. Babita Basnet

Method: Sharing and Discussion

This session is basically experience sharing session. Participants and the resource persons shared their field experiences. Especially they focused on commitment to work, Punctuality, Sincerity and continuity.

Feedback and closing session

Some feedbacks and their experiences from the participants

Jyoti Chauhan: I used to feel that I know many issues but now I can realized my weakness from this training.

Dhanu Tamang, I realize that there are no limitations of learning for a media person. Now I am feeling, we need to know a farmer related issues to the center level political issues in detail.

Yesoda Chemjong, I had read about Civic Education in my school, now I realized Civic Education is also related to journalism.

Maya Raut, We learn more practical subjects from the training and now I know still more to learn. Now I am thinking, how I can implement the learned matters in my profession.

Bimala Rai, We are chanting these words; Democracy, federalism, republic and so on however, I just learned the meaning from the training. Similarly, I learned how to prepare news and reports effectively.

Samjhana Subba, I had participated many trainings however the civic education is new topic for me. We got to know about issues and how to report, I think we need at least 5 days training in this subject.

Swikriti Shrestha, I am a new comer in radio journalism however, from this training I learned that ‘to be a good citizen and a good journalist we need to speak truth’.

Menuka Bhattarai, I have been participating in the monthly interactions of constitution information center but I haven't gained these types of knowledge yet. I have participated lots trainings; among them this training is great for me. I want to request to organize a same type of training for all journalists in Ilam.



Menuka Basnet (Pandey) I got to know the importance of the Civic Education. I want to request to add the subject about child and old age people in the curriculum in coming days.

Simple Khanal, I learned more positive things from this training which the footsteps for positive thinking in life. I got to know that how one success story can change the prospective of the people.

Some Recommendations

- Basic journalism training is necessary for women journalist
- Civic Education is a very important issue for the journalists so male and female both should be included in the training.

- Numbers of media and media persons in the districts are increasing, so training on Civic Education should be expanded to other districts too, if possible around the country.