

APPROACHES FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN IN MEDIA IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were to study the situation and approaches for capacity building of women in media in Lao PDR on three types of media including newspaper, radio and television. The research used the Qualitative methods using an In-depth Interview, Focus Group Discussion and Participatory Observation. The target groups comprised of journalists, media practitioners, teachers, lectures, experts and media managers. The research found that 1) women lacked of knowledge and skills in writing news and producing programs on women's rights, 2) the model of news writing and its contents on women rights and gender equality were still not varied and 3) the approaches for Capacity Building of Lao women in the media would continuously develop skills on writing news and produce programs on women's rights and should develop policy on human resource development by using media training model with a focus on gender equality and women's rights.

Keywords: Lao Women Capacity Building, Media Training, Gender Equality and Women's rights

I. INTRODUCTION

Presently, Media in Lao People's Democratic Republic has been developed moderately due to the use of new modern technology and socio-economic development including the adoption of the Media law in 2009. The Lao Government gives permission for private sectors to be able to run business on television, radio and print media, and able to buy broadcasting time of state TV and radio channel.

People in Lao PDR are able to access to TV signal through satellite without censor for more than 60 channels including BBC, CNN, Thai, Chinese and Vietnamese. Therefore, all society and people are able to fully access foreign media in which has great impact to the public to be aware and understand various issues that happen in the country, in the regional and global level.

Media has played an important role for country development and the human resources who are working in the media in various sectors need to develop knowledge on news and electronic media to respond to the need of audiences or listeners. The development of the media in Lao PDR has made through the implementation of activities such as: capacity building, technical support and International Programs/Projects. The teachers, lecturers who have experiences on News and Media are very few. Thus, in order to make the teaching/training

on News writing, Radio and TV production and providing knowledge and skills on Radio and TV Broadcasting effectively, it is necessary and important to build capacity of teachers, officers and senior students who have potential to be trainers in the future.

Building Capacity of Lao women is one of those priority policies of the Lao government. This policy has identified that all concerned parties have responsible to promote the advancement of women and gender equality. Currently, the role of women are more important than in the past in terms of economics, social and politics; women not only have a role as housewife and as mother who are responsible for household work and look after children, but also there are many women who have knowledge, capacity and able to work at high position as men. Thus women are important workforce to support and contribute to the country development. However, there are many women who have limited access to their equality role, have not received enough appropriate social protection and lack of opportunity to develop their capacity. So that there is a need for women capacity building and especially by media organization which is governmental sector that advocate and disseminate on women's rights and gender equality to the public. Media practitioners must have better knowledge and understanding on women issues. Mass media therefore is important organization to be a role model in promoting the advancement of women especially those women who are working in the media to have opportunity for developing their capacity, profession and able to get a fair and stable income and participate in the media management.

Research Objectives

1. To study the condition of, problems and needs for capacity building of women in media in Lao PDR on three types including newspaper, radio and television.
2. To develop approaches for capacity building of women in media in Lao PDR

Benefits of the Research

1. The results of the research were applied to develop an appropriate media training model with a focus on gender equality and women's rights
2. Approaches and models gained from the study help women to upgrade their skills and knowledge in their career.

II. RELATED DOCUMENTS

According to the Lao National Strategy for gender equality (2016- 2025) the situation of women's development in Lao People's Democratic Republic is still facing many difficulties for instance: poverty, education level, health problems of mother and children, early marriage, lack of skills and capacity and others issues related to the integration in ASEAN Economic Community. Therefore, Lao women have limitation in order to access into the labor market system, also women have a household burden that become barriers for them to unable to promote in their profession up to management level in some sectors like media organizations. In order to enhance those women to get opportunities for development themselves, the researcher therefore has reviewed the women development theories to be a guideline for the study as follows:

1. The theory of women's development, the promotion of women's development has been a topic for research/study at the United Nations level. There are Charters/resolutions on the gender equality and equality in terms of human rights and others rights and has reaffirmed on the application of gender Mainstreaming to be used as guidelines for the implementation to achieve the development goals and the empowerment women according to the 12 areas of concerns of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by stating that: " Government and various sectors have to promote to have affirmative and clear policy in order to integrate the women and men perspectives in the process of formulating policies/programs to ensure that before any decision will be made, there have been an analysis for results that may affect women and men." (combined 6 & 7 Lao CEDAW report : 2008)
2. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Framework, in September 2000, the Head of the State of 189 countries attended MDGs Summit in New York and have adopted the MDGs Framework that have identified Development Agenda to promote the Human Resource Development and reduce the Development Gaps to be the starting point for the new century. And recently the adoption of the Post 2015 Development Agenda: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Framework has also highlighted the achievements gained in the past including in terms of gender equality and elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, SDGs Framework is also setting future goals for achieving gender equality up to the year 2030

3. **Situation of women in the media in Lao PDR**

Around 35% of media staffs are women. The Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism through its Sub-Commission for the Advancement of Women has been integrated gender issues into its own sector strategy and action plan for instance: media production plan that focuses on the need and interest of women, the following up and monitoring of pornography materials and the capacity building on gender related issues. However, the challenges are that women have limited access to the media and ICT than men. Although the number of women in media professional is about one third of total numbers, but women who is skilled on writing news and produce program on women's rights still have small numbers. The media coverage on gender equality and women's rights is also very few.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted with the application of qualitative research methodology by using related documents, In depth Interviews, Focus Group Discussion and Participatory Observation.

The target groups were: (1) 40 journalists/media practitioners and 20 teachers/lectures on media issues from all units concerned using for group discussion (2) 10 experts and media managers were selected for in depth interview.

Methods and instruments used to study issues were:

1. An in-depth interview about the management of media policy in TV, Radio and Newspaper in terms of gender perspective.
2. Participatory observation form

3. Group discussion for problems and needs of Female Journalists /media practitioners and experts.

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

1. The result of the study on the situation and the problems of women in media in Lao PDR:

For the problems and needs of women in the media raised by Focus group discussion were:

- (1) Majority of women in the media lacked of knowledge and skills on News writing and Produce Programs
- (2) Model and Contents coverage of News and programs production on women's right were not varied yet
- (3) Awareness on gender equality, women's rights, related treaties and Laws was still limited.

2. The approaches for capacity building of women in media in Lao PDR were as follows:

- (1) Develop policies for capacity building of women in media in Lao PDR with the participation of concerned units.
- (2) Design Training model on writing News and producing of Programs with more gender sensitivity and the use of experts in the field.
- (3) Create the activities to develop capacity of Lao Women in Newspaper, Radio and TV to create learning process for women to be more empowered in their profession.
- (4) Promote the training and providing knowledge on Laws on gender equality and various rights in order to make women understand the regulations and laws.
- (5) Promote and develop training model on News writing and produce programs about gender equality and women's rights in which others media units are able to apply for use.

V. RECOMMENDATION

1. Recommendation for Utilization of the Study

- 1) The study results on approaches for Capacity Building of Women in Media in Lao People's Democratic Republic are possibly applicable to all media units/sectors
- 2) Recommendation on the capacity development of women in media:
 - (1) to develop the empowerment of women in media, it is necessary for media organizations to have an Annual Human Resources Development Plan in general, in particular for women
 - (2) The study visit to neighboring countries that have high capacity in gender sensitivity in media should be arranged in order to learn and build external network of cooperation

2. Recommendation for Further Study

- 1) Collecting data on gender equality in the workplace in different media including TV, Radio and Newspaper should be studied specifically and separately in order to get number of women working at different management levels or proportion of women who are in the media profession

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