



Mobilizing Citizens at Their Level: A Case Study of Public Engagement

Charu Uppal

To cite this article: Charu Uppal (2021) Mobilizing Citizens at Their Level: A Case Study of Public Engagement, *Journalism Practice*, 15:5, 601-619, DOI: [10.1080/17512786.2020.1753561](https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1753561)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2020.1753561>



© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 27 Apr 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1213



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

Mobilizing Citizens at Their Level: A Case Study of Public Engagement

Charu Uppal

Independent Scholar, Sweden

ABSTRACT

Mobilizing information (MI), defined as “information that allows the public to act,” is often omitted in news stories because it is considered partisan. Without relevant MI in media, participation in public discourse is restricted to the politically aware, i.e., to politicians, interest groups, and activists. This paper argues that Lemert’s definition of MI is limited and does not consider building upon audience’ orientation. Applying a more complex form of MI identified earlier (Uppal 2003) that takes audience orientation into account, to a television talk show, the paper demonstrates how varying levels of MI may be utilized. Depending on audience orientation, MI can be either invitational or empowering. More specifically, the three types of invitational MI, in ascending order of their mobilizing potential, are motivational, informational, and purposive. MI’s (Uppal 2003) application is illustrated through one episode of *Satyamev Jayate (SMJ)*, an Indian talk show, to demonstrate how MI may be directed at citizens with different levels of political orientation. *SMJ* has successfully engaged the public by adeptly bringing together interactive technologies, and journalistic methods. This paper also introduces the concept of “mobilizing context.”

KEYWORDS

Citizen engagement;
mobilizing information;
television; news formats;
journalism; mobilizing
context; public
communication campaigns;
Satyamev Jayate

Media can encourage public participation in national discourse by providing mobilizing information, i.e., information that enables audiences to act on their pre-existing attitudes and political orientations (Lemert et al. 1977). Mobilizing information (MI) can help citizens learn how and where to express their policy preferences (Lemert et al. 1977). Without pertinent MI in public media, participation in public discourse is limited to those who are already politically aware, i.e., politicians, lobbyists, elites, and interest groups. Providing MI for topics that directly relate to public life increases both the number and range of participants in a public debate (Lemert et al. 1977). However, traditional news media typically refrain from providing mobilizing information because it is considered partisan (Lemert 1981).

In comparison, talk shows are better placed than news to invite citizen participation, primarily because of their narrative style (Khorana 2014). Although exposure to cable TV

CONTACT Charu Uppal  cupkau@gmail.com

This article has been republished with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

© 2020 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

and internet can widen any gaps in political knowledge between those who prefer news to entertainment (Prior 2005), this paper argues that shows created with varying levels of information complexity and supplemented with mobilizing information can bridge the gap between people with different levels of political knowledge. Launched in May 2012, *Satyamev Jayate (SMJ)* – an Indian talk show was created with the aim of widening the scope of public discourse by inviting public participation. The show, anchored by film star Aamir Khan, airs simultaneously in six languages. *Satyamev Jayate* meaning “truth shall triumph,” a phrase that has been used as the national motto since independence, creates a space for dialogue about poignant, but often overlooked issues,¹ including those which Indian society may recognize as taboo, i.e., female feticide and child sex abuse. *SMJ* also capitalized on television’s reach, broadcasting in 100 countries outside of India. On its website, *SMJ* positions itself as an agent of mobilization and change, situating itself as “discuss[ing] possible solutions to address social issues in India.”² Notably, bridging the public service and commercial divide, *SMJ* was the first show to be aired simultaneously on Doordarshan, India’s national network (and the only equivalent of public service television in India) and Star Plus, a commercial channel.

This paper applies a more diverse form of mobilizing information identified earlier (Uppal 2003) to expand the definition of MI. Moreover, I theorize a new concept I term “mobilizing context.” Using the example of *SMJ*, I demonstrate how (previously) identified MI (Uppal 2003) can be provided within a mobilizing context to encourage public participation. In addition, using Barton’s (1990) analysis news language is regarded as forms of appeals that invite viewers to participate.

Public issues that are presented as conflicts generate higher media coverage and invite public discourse on how to resolve the problem more so than when they are reported as news events (Nicodemus 2004). Traditional journalism, while necessary for its noble goal of “turning complex events and their unobvious, often embedded dimensions and meanings into understandable stories,” (Zelizer 2017) is limited by its format, codes and ethical stipulations that prevent it from presenting comprehensive information that fosters understanding of public issues and inhibits public engagement (Bivens 2008). Despite the standard description of journalistic duties in a democracy (i.e., informing and educating the public (Hanitzsch 2018)),³ a journalist’s role should be gauged by the type of democracy s/he serves (Strömbäck 2005).⁴ More specifically, Strömbäck asserts that journalism’s role in participatory democracy is to facilitate citizen participation and in deliberative democracy to foster discussions among all “sections of the public” (337). Journalism seeks to create the conditions in which national agendas are ultimately citizen-driven. In essence, in participatory and deliberative democracies, journalism’s normative role is to create a *mobilizing context*, i.e., a formative environment that encourages providing *mobilizing information*.

Mobilizing Information & Mobilizing Context

Citizen engagement in political discourse is not guaranteed merely by news coverage of current events. Mobilizing information (MI), defined as “information that permits citizen action,” was narrowly described by Lemert in 1981 as names, addresses, and phone numbers. MI is significant because policymakers often deem public participation in an

issue to be directly proportional to its salience in the public's mind (Lemert 1992). However, if an issue is politically controversial MI is eliminated (Lemert 1984) because journalists consider MI⁵ to have a negative effect on objectivity (Feldman, Sol Hart, and Milosevic 2017). Eliminating MI dilutes the democratic process, which depends on public engagement in political discourse. Contrary to expectations, the digitization of the news has not made MI more prevalent in online newspapers than it is in their print counterparts (Hoffman 2006). Moreover, citizen-generated online content, a by-product of digitization of news, is often more lifestyle-oriented than news/information-oriented (Jönsson and Örnebring 2011). A comparative study investigating the mobilizing power of news found that news language during an environmental crisis was key to fostering or suppressing citizen participation (Nicodemus 2004). Nicodemus, considering the meaning-making quality of news language, extends MI's definition to account for news discourse's potential to foster a sense of collective identity and empowerment "so that individuals and groups come to believe that their actions can make a difference" (163).

I argue that research-based shows that present content in a manner that helps audiences better understand public issues evoke a desire to contribute and, moreover, generate a context that sets the stage to mobilize – what I term "a mobilizing context." A *mobilizing context* (MC) is activated by setting a goal for change by educating the public about issues affecting civic and social life. Once decided, the mobilizing-goal directs all of the following decisions related to the show, from pre-production to post-production, e.g., selection of topics covered, punctuating the program with well-designed spots for interaction with the viewers and providing them with information to act upon (MI). While MC is shaped by an objective which guides the format/structure of the show, MI is the content, which informs and encourages follow-up actions, and (with interactive technology) even creates feedback loops. Similar to a goal-directed public communication campaign and different from news that reports events as is and often leaves the public feeling powerless to influence policy outcomes, MC makes what Lippman calls the "unseen environment" (35) manifest, provides a better understanding of the issue and functions as an appeal to the public.

Appeal: a persuasive tool that creates a mobilizing context.

As mentioned earlier, Barton (1990) examined (news) language with respect to its ability to "appeal" to its audience. News appeals are defined

in terms of the political constituency they invite into the discursive frame and by the ways they define political issues and actors as "legitimate players." As Barton (1990) asserts, appeals are the leading edge of arguments for particular ideological perspectives. (18)

Barton (1990) recognizes a range of news appeals that can be "read/used separately or in combinations." They include appeals to restoring the ideal social order as well as appeals to authority, the general public, community guardians, and individual conscience. This paper considers two appeals that *SMJ* uses: (1) the appeal to restoring social order (ISO) and (2) the appeal to individual conscience (InCo). Both these appeals point to the need for public intervention by pointing out gaps/cracks in public attitude, policy, and behavior. More than any other appeal, appeals to InCo are guided by cultural mores and imply that change lies in the hands of the public. Appeals to ISO and InCo often overlap and have a higher potential to engage the public, than other appeals. Table 1 describes the two appeals according to their mobilizing potential.

Table 1. Appeals to the audience and their mobilizing potential.

Appeals to	Address	Mobilizing potential
Ideal social order	A disrupted social order that needs restoration. Deals with the present/contemporary “turmoil” that upsets the natural flow of life. Creates a need for a collective rather than individual action, because the issue affects a group.	Made with an assumption that public opinion matters & therefore paves the way for providing MI. Printing/broadcasting taboo topics is an appeal to restore ideal social order. Inclined towards pointing to a conflicted situation. ISOs invite the public to engage/contribute towards resolution.
Individual conscience	Those with a strong sense of conscience. Those who have been influenced by the situation directly/indirectly.	Point towards larger implications of the issue by universalizing the issue.

Fiske (2011) suggests that arguments based on logic, cause and effect, realism and empiricism tend to restrict open discussion, while devices such as irony, metaphor, jokes and contradiction open texts to multiple readings and thus allow for a broader understanding that enables more solution-directed as opposed to problem-centered approaches to the issue. Symbols used in appeals to InCo & ISO vary with culture, e.g., a strong sense of nationhood in the US may be evoked by the use of “American people,” even though the US is a nation of different ethnicities and opinions. Similarly, the Indian population is sometimes portrayed as the children of “*Mother India*” (my emphasis); such terminology has a higher potential of evoking an emotional response than that which simply refers to the population as “Indian.” Both ISO & InCo are directed toward an audience that is aware of the metaphoric phrases, which supports a *mobilizing context*.

New Forms of MI

The three types of MI identified by Lemert (1981) seem almost mutually exclusive. More specifically, his concepts of MI as locational, identificational and tactical are too narrow in their scope to be applied to complex processes of public participation. However, a study comparing representations of environmental issues in Indian and US newspapers established that Indian newspapers provided more complex MI than US papers (Uppal 2003). More specifically, the Indian newspapers in this study combined more than one of the three MIs identified by Lemert (Uppal 2003). Depending on the degree and type of information provided, the study labeled the MI provided by the Indian newspapers as either *invitational* or *empowering*. Invitational MI, because of its language and simplicity, may be used to mobilize citizens with minimal political interests and skills. Meanwhile, informed citizens with a clear stance are more likely to utilize empowering MI to uphold their viewpoints. Invitational MI was found to have three different levels. In the ascending order of their mobilizing potential, as illustrated in Table 2, these three types of invitational MI are motivational, informational and purposive. Informational and purposive MIs are more suited for those who are already familiar with some aspects of the issue. Additionally, empowering MI seems to be directed at politically active citizens and may be used by activists, scholars, and professionals. Identifying characteristics presented in Table 2 present examples of the ways in which MI may be provided.

The following paragraphs briefly present background on Indian television and talk shows relevant to this study.

Table 2. Identifying characteristics of MI types.

MI	Identifying characteristics
Invitational motivational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of celebrities, such as noted activists, scholars, professionals and other well-known individuals. • Often used in headlines to generate interest.
Informational	Information on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activities organized by interest groups, both for and against an issue. • how to get involved, details on organizations and/or those in charge.
Purposive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History and impact of issue. Reasons why activists and professionals get involved. • Detailed information on the activities of a group/institution. • Dates and venues of activist strategies to facilitate participation.
Empowering MI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly concrete, directive. • Information on policies, laws, citizen rights, scientific facts and data that may enhance understanding about the issue. Citations of publications/official documents that can be used as reference/supportive evidence.

Indian Television: History and Context

With help from UNESCO, the state-owned channel Doordarshan (DD) came to India in 1959. DD, established as an educational tool, held a monopoly over Indian airwaves for the next three decades. Compared to other mass media, television flourishes at unprecedented rates in large democracies with high illiteracy rates (Thussu 2007). While scholars do not always agree where to place India on a democratic continuum, they generally appraise Indian media for its lack of state censorship and its similarities to the North Atlantic liberal model (Mushtaq and Baig 2016). Freedom from censorship (Mushtaq and Baig 2016) and a history of revolutionary print media used since the freedom movement against the British (Verma 2016; Singh 2015; Kovarik 2016), facilitate free expression and providing mobilizing information (Haque 1988).

India, a latecomer to multi-channel broadcasting, witnessed one of the largest periods of growth in television sales and domestic production of television programming following the liberalization of its economy in the 1990s (Kamdar 2007). The entry of transnational media organizations into the Indian market weakened DD's monopoly over audiences (Punathambekar and Kumar 2012; Kumar 2014). In a matter of a few years, Indian television moved from a public service model inspired by the BBC to an advertising model of independent broadcasting that allowed Indians to choose from hundreds of channels (Thussu 2007; Narayan 2014). One of the biggest influence of this transformation was the denationalization of news, because unlike other countries in Asia, India allowed non-Indian media companies to operate news channels within its boundaries (Thussu 2007). A testimony to India's faith in its thriving democracy, this move also privatized news channels (Thussu 2007) and allowed foreign agencies to influence public opinion. A major player in the market was Rupert Murdoch's Star TV; Star TV's *Star News* was the first 24/7 news channel to be launched in India, setting the stage for TV journalists who unlike news-anchors commented on the news. During the first years of its operation, Star News partnered with New Delhi Television (NDTV), India's most respected news channel (Thussu 2007; Kamdar 2007). Though it lasted only a few years, the partnership brought Star TV closer to Indian audiences and gave insight into the Indian market.

Star TV (Star Television Asian Region) and SMJ

After failing to popularize Hollywood-based programming early on, Star TV recognized that indigenous content was necessary to compete in the Indian market. Star TV, which positioned itself as *the* patriotic channel as early as 2005, broadcasts in all Indian languages. After its split from NDTV, Star News chose to become a Hindi-only channel, focusing its programming on the language with the largest number of speakers in India. Within a week of this change, the network's ratings nearly doubled (Thussu 2007).

Star Plus, the Hindi family channel on which *SMJ* aired, is the most popular Star TV channel (Thussu 2007). While Star TV has been critiqued for tabloidizing news (Thussu 2007), the focus of this paper is how Khan combined the popularity of the channel with his vision to mobilize a nation.

New Genres, Formats, Technologies, and Challenges

Even though it has not led to quality programming, the proliferation of TV channels has increased airtime and generated fiercer competition between outlets for audience attention (Liu, Putler, and Weinberg 2004; Sarrina Li and Chiang 2001). New avatars of technology, *with their multiple arms*, enable customized content that seeks to maximize audience "engagement and knowledge acquisition" when consuming news (Greussing and Boomgard 2019), to mobilize the public. Ease of interactivity combined with growth in internet access has opened the doors for discourse where, short of their busy lives, citizens can now speak up (comments, audio and video responses), share without fear (anonymity) and connect with other likeminded people (interactivity). Technological affordances are integrated into new formats of old media and allow audience participation via phone and text messages (Örnebring 2003), emails and interactive voice response (IVR) etc. (Zimmerman et al. 2003; Debatin 2008). However, the mere availability of new technological affordances does not ensure audience-usage as developers intended. In addition, several developments currently influencing journalism are largely extensions of public behaviors that existed without such enabling technology (Bivens 2008) but operated in less visible and influential ways. Even the digitization (Karlsson et al. 2015) and gamification (Ferrer 2016) of news does not seem to motivate users to become more active netizens. Therefore, incorporating technology in a TV show must be a well-organized effort to ensure a continuous loop of interaction between media and audience.

Talk Shows and SMJ

Image-oriented and duration-bound, TV news is not conducive to the kind of in-depth coverage required for comprehending the complexity of public issues. Neither the general public nor the political elite comprehend complicated issues well enough to develop informed opinions (Lippmann 2004). Journalists must also recognize that their audiences are at varying levels of understanding and involvement in an(y) issue. Talk shows, which combine features of genres such as news, debate shows, and infotainment, have been critiqued for being conversational and digressing from journalistic responsibility. A study that compares forty years of TV programs on current affairs in Sweden, a nation that, like India, transitioned from having a state monopoly in public broadcasting to a commercial

broadcasting model in the 1980s, indicates debates gradually became more informal (Örnebring 2003). The amount of time given to experts and professionals decreased with time, diluting instead of strengthening Habermas' concept of the public sphere (Örnebring 2003). However, unlike the argumentative tradition of talk shows (Khorana 2014; Parameswaran 2012) *SMJ* is more informative and change-oriented because it places issues in their larger societal context. *SMJ* positions itself not by genre but by its purpose to remind the public about the democratic nature of the country and establish a moral compass (Kumar 2014), creating a context to mobilize. Although it fits the definition of a debate show (classified as educational, journalistic and entertaining) (Örnebring 2003), *SMJ's* restriction of discussion with the public (in which the host's commentary seamlessly weaves video clips and data visualization) to only a few minutes of its 90-min-long run time -keeps the focus on informing/educating before mobilizing. *We the People* (*WTP*), a show similar to *SMJ*, has aired since 2001 on NDTV. However the series, broadcasted only in English, does not make provisions for viewer feedback (Khorana 2014). A focus on celebrity and upper-middle class guests limits *WTP's* audience to the elite (Khorana 2014). In comparison to *WTP*, where Barkha Dutt, a journalist, performs as a celebrity (Parameswaran 2012), *SMJ's* Khan is an actor who presents himself as a com-moner to create homophily with the audience.

Journalistic Practices that Narrow Mobilizing Context

A mobilizing context generates conditions to provide MI, to enable public action. However, in service to objectivity, news is often presented in a way that prioritizes informing the public over promoting public action. For example, Breed (1955) establishes that the kind of story most likely to be left out is the politico-economic story that, if published, may cause unrest among its audience. Journalists leave out MI that may encourage public action, such as the names of public officials and the addresses of organizations. Omitting MI delays and/or obstructs public participation until it is too late to influence the issue. On the other hand, providing comprehensive information that approaches an issue from several standpoints (e.g., explaining culturally-embedded reasons, historical and contemporary viewpoints) will achieve the three steps necessary in creating a MC: *understanding* of the issue, *empathy* with those affected and *empowerment* (i.e., helping viewers form informed opinions, engage the issue and take action).

Another characteristic of journalism in democracies is that election framework is preferred over influence framework for gathering data on public opinion. Election framework, which refers both to elections and general polls before and shortly after elections, is more structured, less frequent and less reliable than influence framework, which constitutes all of the other means by which public opinions reach policymakers between the election years (Lemert 1981, 1992). Unlike election framework, in which information on public opinion comes only during election days, influence framework gauges public opinion over a longer time period. While election framework presents results empirically (i.e., reporting votes) influence framework usually includes issues that may not be on the official agenda.

Often, the issues raised during elections remain the same (e.g., health care, employment, etc.) and therefore tend to overlook several significant issues hard to separate from cultural practices (e.g., female feticide). While it is difficult to disentangle cultural practices from certain social evils, democratic ideals require clear lines between cultural

ideals and social justice ideals. For effective public opinion to reach decision-makers, MI must be provided both during influence *and* election framework. For this reason, shows that examine issues in detail during influence framework contribute significantly to public understanding and therefore participation. *SMJ's objective was to create a context (MC) that facilitates MI to encourage public action.*

This paper addresses two main questions:

RQ1: How does *SMJ* (and how might similar formats) demonstrate how to create a mobilizing context?

RQ2: How does *SMJ* provide invitational and empowering MI to engage the public at varying levels of political orientation?

Methodology and Sample

The paper aims to demonstrate how invitational and empowering MI can be integrated in a show that is grounded in creating MC. In a documentary, on *SMJ's* website,⁶ the creators of the show provide detailed information about how the show was conceived and produced. Although the documentary never uses the word “mobilization,” Khan repeatedly states that the primary purpose of the show was to appeal to people’s hearts, by “emphasizing that the key to social change remains in the hands of the citizens” (appeals to ISO and InCo). It is important to explain the uniqueness of methodology used in this paper, which is not a content-analysis, but an illustration of MI application, and how it is facilitated by *SMJ's* format (MC). The creators of the show explain (*SMJ* website) how show’s “structure” (format) was designed to meet its “purpose” and each episode followed the same pattern.

While all thirteen episodes of the first season were viewed, the first episode, focusing on female feticide, is used for exemplifying MC and MI application. The reasons for choosing the first episode are multifold. The episode is characteristic of the features that *SMJ* uses in all of the following episodes. Serving as a prototype for the series, the first episode presents the background and implications of female feticide and sets the tone for the rest of the series. In addition, it was the enormous success of the first episode that set the tone and ensured return of the audiences.

Beyond Journalism: How *SMJ* Created a Mobilizing Context

The following section illustrates how *SMJ* constructs a *mobilizing context* to provide MI through its format and content, where “format” applies to the structure of the show (RQ1) and “content” refers to the language used to appeal to the audience and provide MI (RQ2).

Format

The format/structure of the show, as the creators emphasize, was designed to evoke an emotional reaction to foster change. *SMJ's* logline, “to matter, it must hit the heart,” was at the center of all the decisions made around the show, which included formative research, set-design, audience selection, customized songs and even choosing on which

channels to broadcast the show. *SMJ*'s format, guided by its mobilizing purpose and based on research, created a MC by placing an emphasis on public comprehension of the issue at hand to invite public engagement and follow-up actions. Each episode begins with anchor's speech on the respective issue's background, followed by a brief question and answer session with live audience, interviews with survivors and experts, followed by a chat with activists working on the ground, and suggestion of possible actions that the audiences can take, a reminder to connect via the website. Each episode concludes with a song whose lyrics reflect the issues in the episode. To emphasize its apolitical nature and to avoid conflicts with public and state actors, Khan adds a disclaimer in the opening speech that notes that "*SMJ* is dedicated to creating awareness without any malice towards any person or institution."

Formative Research

Khan states that he had been thinking about creating a TV show geared towards public mobilization and social change, when Star TV approached him to host a game show. Instead, the actor shared his vision with the channel and pitched *SMJ*. Shortly thereafter, a team of researchers was commissioned to conduct desk research, on tentative topics. After months of analyzes, several teams of journalists and cameramen were sent to different parts of the country to gather ground-reports. Based on a thorough study of the gathered material, a list of the topics to be covered in the show was created. Investigative journalism, which is also research based, often stops at uncovering the information and sharing it with the public. However, *SMJ* focused on creating space for providing MI, and connecting with the viewers, even after the show on its interactive website.

Support of Commercial Channel & Sponsors

SMJ simultaneously capitalized on Star TV's established success, a commercial channel popular in cities and suburbs; and DD a public channel, "because rural Indians still watch DD more than commercial channels" (*SMJ* Website). Khan states that he agreed to do the show on three conditions: that the show be aired both on Star TV and DD, even though they are competitors, that the show be aired in major Indian languages, and on Sunday at 11:00 am slot, instead of prime time. Khan shared that he wanted to telecast the show on Sunday morning so that *SMJ* would be "discussed at lunch conversations." "We have watched Ramayana and Mahabharata (Indian Epics) and it used to come on Sunday morning. [...] My thought was Bharat-jodo-abhiyaan (Unite India Campaign)" (*Hindustan Times*, n.p.). Already geared towards family viewing, Star Plus and DD were a perfect match for Khan's goal of creating awareness and mass-mobilization.

Set Design and Audience Selection

Inspired by amphitheatres, *SMJ*'s set-design was an abstract space that displayed various aspects from daily life in India, e.g., alleyways and brick walls. To make the set inviting, all the cameras were kept hidden from the view. One of the three days, for which all the guests (i.e., survivors, activists and experts) were invited to the city, was set aside for a lunch-meeting with Khan and the entire crew. The purpose of this meeting was to

allow guests, especially survivors, to feel comfortable to share their personal stories. Ramps were created around the set to allow wheel chairs, especially since there was an entire episode on rights of the disabled. Similar to other news-shows there was also a large screen for viewing relevant clips/live interviews, and a writing board that was used in some episodes by the host. Audience for each show was selected based on the relevance of the show's topic to their lives e.g., for the episode on health services the entire audience constituted of students of medicine.

Strategic Communication

SMJ employed a deliberate "campaign-like" approach by airing only 12 episodes in its first year. Two weeks after the show wrapped its first season, a special episode was aired on August 15, 2012 to commemorate the 65th anniversary of Indian Independence. Following the success of the first season, the show continued with a 5-episode series for the next two years. Prior to its launch, several promotional TV ads were run, and *SMJ*'s theme song was shown in theatres around the country, following the national anthem. A metaphor for "bettering one's self to be worthy of someone's love," the song's lyrics worked as an emotional appeal (InCo). A digital media consultant was hired from California, USA and an official interactive website that allowed viewers to leave text, audio and video responses was also created. Upon downloading the site, an authentication box was presented to establish credibility and avoid confusion with websites with similar names. In addition, although the original show is recorded in Hindi and dubbed in five other languages, every show is subtitled in English⁷ and available on the official website for on-demand-viewing.

The show's intention to maximize reach and impact by broadcasting concurrently in several languages, on both commercial and public channels and its discussion of taboo topics not covered in election framework created a mobilizing context during influence framework. Limiting the number of episodes kept *SMJ* focused on its mobilizing-goal and not compromise format or content for ratings.

Credibility of the Messenger/Host

In India, the public often encounters Bollywood stars with the same kind of hero-worship with which they engage sportsmen. Khan, is an award-winning actor with several box office hits who is also known for his involvement in many social causes. Khan has been conferred two of the highest civilian awards granted by Indian government. Moreover, *Lagaan*, a movie Khan both produced and acted in, is one of three Indian movies ever to be nominated for the Oscars. In addition, during the course of the show, Khan penned a column in *The Hindu* and *The Hindustan Times*, Indian dailies with countrywide circulation. Khan's celebrity and established credibility has the potential to evoke follow up action, and therefore is an example of both motivational MI and a MC. In this case Khan's fame functions as motivational MI in the news column that he writes, whereas in the TV show his fame is a part of the mobilizing context that works as MI during the show, i.e., large audiences turn to watch the megastar on his TV debut. If an unknown anchor was hosting the show, the show may not have received the same attention.

Appealing to Common/Commercial Cues from Bollywood

Following the trend of nationally popular Bollywood movies, which are often musicals, *SMJ* created a theme-appropriate song for each episode. However, songs in *SMJ* were created like anthems, as the lyrics were meant to inspire hope (ISO & InCo). An album for all the songs associated with the show was made available both on CD and DVD. Furthermore, every week, following the broadcast, the songs from the show were digitally released on Hungama.com as well as across all mobile operators. The song, along with its lyrics, was officially released on YouTube by T-series, the show's music distributors and a well-known distributor for Bollywood songs, three weeks prior to the show. Most Bollywood music is released in the same manner with the goal of generating interest in viewing the movie.

Interaction/Feedback

Throughout the program there are reminders to the viewers for connecting online and taking action in their personal lives to better the society. The show's website provided suggestions for interaction, such as uploading text and video messages, asking a question, sharing a personal story, suggesting a solution to an issue discussed, or sending an inspirational message. Among the hyper-linked pages on the website, one page dedicated to *SMJ*'s impact details the number of tweets, webpage views, cities and countries represented by the respondents as well as actions they have taken. As a motivator (or maybe self-promotional tactic), *SMJ* curated and regularly updated a list of news stories that documented follow-up actions taken by government and people alike. The website itself functioned as a mobilizing tool, by empowering viewers to share ideas post airtime, creating a continuous loop of interaction.

Content: Appeals and MI

SMJ highlights issues by posing questions, providing research-based answers, offering expert opinions and speaking to individuals affected by the issue. The following section exemplifies how *SMJ* uses appeals to highlight the conflict-oriented nature of female feticide and, provides MI as it utilizes technological affordances to empower the public.

Khan's emotional speech in every episode combines appeals to ISO and InCo. As indicated earlier, appeals to ISO and InCo cultivate a *mobilizing context* by using metaphoric language and cultural symbols. *SMJ* combines logic and empiricism with metaphors – e.g., “mothers as gods,” “daughters as goddess of wealth, Lakshmi” – and the implications

Table 3. How *SMJ* uses appeals to create a mobilizing context.

Appeals to	Example
Ideal social order	Choice of the topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining implications and long-term impact of skewed gender ratio on society/national life. • Interviews with women who were forced to abort after sonogram indicated a female fetus. • Opening speech for episode discussed the significance of the mother in Indian culture and all religions.
Individual conscience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khan's speech in every episode uses cultural understanding of respective issues, e.g., reminding the audience how Indian culture considers girls as goddesses. • Interviewing survivors and activists.

of a declining male-female ratio to appeal to the Indian audience. Table 3 illustrates examples of ISO and InCo from the episode.

The first episode, like other episodes of *SMJ*, was contextualized in appeals to restoring ISO and to InCo, therefore setting the stage for providing MI. Appeals to ISO are especially important to engage the politically aware, whereas appeals to InCo apply to the public at large. For example, the episode on female feticide concluded with a song dedicated to daughters with lyrics such as “little bird, come to my garden, this earth is lonely without you,” which concerns parents regardless of political orientation. Using appeals for ISO, *SMJ* contextualized female feticide within cultural attitudes that support the practice. While the show was not scripted, it was definitely structured (*SMJ* Website). The format of the show, in line with *its* mobilizing goal, was arranged such that its content included information at varying levels of complexity (emotional appeals and MI ranging from informational to empowering). For example, the show began with testimonials of survivors, followed by chats with an activist and a specialist (doctor).

Moreover, *SMJ* addressed issues that, though common knowledge, are not covered in the news unless linked to a scandal. *SMJ* empowered audiences – especially women – with knowledge that challenged some cultural attitudes, for example with its explanation of the implications of girl–boy ratio on society and clarification that the sex of the fetus is determined by the male chromosome (purposive MI). *SMJ* presented its content in a combination of simple and complex information to target different levels of audience orientation. For example, stories about female feticide are often treated as localized, rural issues resulting from the orthodox thinking of uneducated people. Therefore, any news related to intentional killings of female fetuses has often focused on public attitudes and behaviors towards the issue rather than policy failures. However, *SMJ* uses research and interviews with survivors and NGOs to demonstrate that preference for a male child is not restricted to rural or uneducated people (purposive MI).

In addition, an interview with a doctor revealed that in the 1970s sonograms were used as a device for population control because of their ability to identify and therefore enable the early elimination of the probability of girl child. Because male children were popularly preferred, it was considered logical to give birth to boys and to abort girls. Khan ended the show by urging his audience to support his request to the government of Rajasthan to bring all pending cases related to female feticide to a fast track court for a verdict (empowering MI). Four days later, Khan visited the Chief Minister and presented the data collected in sting operations by guest journalists on the show. Within a year of that meeting 31 convictions for violating the pre-conception and pre-natal diagnostic techniques act were recorded (QRIUS 2014).

SMJ exposed flaws in different sectors of government, many of which were interconnected (e.g., the health care system that supports female feticide, the legal system that overlooks dowry issues in deciding on verdicts and that functions under the influence of the powerful, the cultural malaise that prefers girls over boys and the parents who turn a blind eye to child sex abuse to keep face in their communities). Contrary to traditional journalism, *SMJ* concentrates on discussing controversial issues such as forced abortions and child sex-abuse by presenting the information in an engaging manner using testimonies from survivors, activists, and public servants.

Khan’s fame functions as motivational MI and holds the attention of those who may not have previously given serious thought to an issue. Whereas, informational MI about NGO

initiatives to prevent female feticide and purposive MI on how to get involved may be helpful in mobilizing citizens who are less politically active than those who are the target audience for empowering MI. Informational MI can also do the work of making clear how various organizations and individuals have dealt with the issue of female feticide in the past. On the other hand, purposive MI intends to provide background and implications of the issue, e.g., the impact of repeated abortions on maternal health. Empowering MI is highly specific information that activists and professionals may use, e.g., reading charts on girl–boy ratio (RQ2).

MI as Concretized Appeal

Out of all MI, the content and language of motivational MI are least likely to evoke a political action, since it mainly ties famous names or “common sense” to an issue. However, motivational MI is necessary to attract the politically passive who are uninterested in current affairs but captivated by famous personalities, a strategy Khan employs by hosting the show.

MI is therefore a concretized form of appeal in which information is provided in the context of the chosen topic with the intended impact in mind. As such, the combined effect of appeals and MI is analogous to the laboratory environment that provides the right temperature required to initiate a particular chemical reaction. Such a desired reaction does not occur unless the optimal temperature is reached. Similarly, when presented alone, MI does not have the same power to mobilize as it does when presented in the context of appeals because such appeals establish a MC. However, it is important to note that without MI appeals primarily function at the level of rhetoric.

$$\text{MC} = \text{Appeals} + \text{MI}$$

Mobilizing information and appeals are intertwined – one feeds the other, one makes way for the other. Although MI is subtly embedded in the context just as often as it emerges as overt information that urges action, varying levels of MI can encourage audiences at different levels of political orientation to engage with the show.

Using the examples of the different kinds of MIs used in the first episode of *SMJ*, [Table 4](#) demonstrates how they might best be used to mobilize audiences at varying levels of understanding and political orientation (please also refer to [Tables 1](#) and [5](#) for more information). In addition, true to its objective, the entire show, along with the title song and opening speech⁸ saturated with appeals to ISO and InCo, serve as a *mobilizing context* (RQ1).

Since public interest and political orientation towards social issues is not uniform, each level of MI can potentially target audiences at different levels of awareness and interest. [Table 5](#) identifies different types of MIs with the political orientations of citizens for which these MIs are most useful.

As I note above, traditional journalistic codes demand non-partisan coverage that consider MI as partisan (Lemert 1981). Nevertheless, providing MI within a MC can potentially move a passive public to action – even around taboo topics. *SMJ*'s classification of itself as an agent of change and its representation of particular issues as requiring reevaluation creates a *mobilizing context*.

Table 4. New types of MI and how it was presented in *SMJ*.

MI and characteristics	Demonstration of MI
Invitational motivational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Khan's celebrity and previous involvement with social issues. • Opening signature speech emphasizes Khan's identity as a commoner. • Invited noted activists, experts, and professionals.
Informational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How sonograms were used to abort female fetuses. • Women who took a stance and chose to give birth to female infants. • NGOs that work to prevent female feticide.
Purposive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding. • the significance of the male chromosome in determining the sex of the child. • the effect of repeated abortions on maternal health. • Prejudices against educating girls (also an appeal to InCo) and its impact on their economic self-sufficiency. • Data and interviews with doctors establishing that desires for male children and related crimes are not confined to uneducated or low-income classes. • Providing the history of the origin and locations of the practice.
Empowering MI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explaining how to read the girl-boy ratio using charts and statistics. • Dispelling beliefs that female feticide is a rural practice. • Establishing that the practice of female feticide first began at government hospitals. Making clear that while activists lobbied against the practice, it is nevertheless sustained by mutually beneficial deals between doctors and sonogram manufacturers. • Establishing that South Korea is the only country that has brought balance to its girl-boy ratio by implementing a stringent policy of criminalizing the act and, moreover, that in India no doctor has yet been punished by the law for female feticide. • Interviewed activists who, through a directed campaign, reversed the negative girl-boy ratio in their state. • The audience was urged to send a text indicating their support at the cost of INR 1 (0.02 USD). • The money collected from texts, after tax deductions, was promised to <i>Snehlaya</i>, an NGO that supports the birth of female infants. • Provided phone numbers, web addresses and ways in which the audience could respond/ make suggestions.

Talk shows such as *SMJ* that cross the boundaries of traditionally-defined programs combine news, research, and investigative journalism while simultaneously using interactive technology may engage fragmented audiences in today's media-saturated world. Studies have established that media coverage is useful for helping the public make decisions, especially on issues with low moral ambiguity (e.g., health care, taxes) as opposed to issues with heavy cultural and religious implications (e.g., abortion) (Roberts, Wanta, and Dzwo 2002). However, it seems as if *SMJ* turns Bernard Cohen's well-known statement that "media are not successful in telling us what to think but they are extremely successful in telling us what to think about" upside down. *SMJ* managed to perform both -highlight taboo subjects, and take on a moral stance, thus linking the current situation to public attitudes and behavior, (e.g., *SMJ* elicits from interviews with experts and townsmen the effect of the reduced sex ratio on rural life). Testament to the show's success is that each episode was followed by nation-wide discussions,

Table 5. MI appropriate to citizen orientation to the issue.

Citizen orientation to the issue	Kind of MI most useful
Unaware, politically passive	(Invitational) Motivational MI
Nominal awareness of the issue, not much knowledge	(Invitational) Informational
Awareness of the issue	(Invitational) Purposive
Highly politically-involved citizens	Empowering

tweets, news stories and follow-up actions from governments (*Times of India*, 2012), NGOs (*Daily Bhaskar*, 2012) and individuals (Sarkar, 2012). Subsequent episodes discussed various topics revolving around the rights of the Indian citizen that may not have previously been well understood by the general public, such as the right to information. The last episode ended with a reading of the preamble to India's constitution that emphasizes the role of the citizen in democracy. Meanwhile, the episode that discussed water shortages in India and their implications was saturated with empowering information, mostly as a result of its focus on cultural practices of conserving water during pre-British rule in India, the need for changes in governance for those practices and their long-term impacts on present and future India. Working under the influence framework, *SMJ* provided information that called for policy change two years ahead of the national elections of 2014. For example, following *SMJ*, a discussion on generic drugs was revived (*First Post*, 2012), the government of Rajasthan was requested to bring those promoting female feticide to justice and the health department in Gurgaon in the state of Haryana decided to clamp down on illegal sex determination tests by declaring a reward of Rs 21,000 for any information about doctors and clinics conducting pre-natal sex determination tests. Those found guilty would lose their license and face imprisonment (Misra 2012). Other examples include requests for more stringent policies against child sex offenders and the passing of a motion for the installation of ramps for the disabled in public places.⁹ *SMJ* has had an impact of unprecedented proportion, made up of responses from viewers; tweets; and follow-up actions by state governments, activists and other film stars (*Times of India*, 2012).

While all the issues covered in the series could have been elaborated in a documentary, the format of the show (MC), combined with MI and the use of interactive technologies encouraged an enthusiastic response. While news focuses on presenting "what is," *SMJ* set the agenda for public by focusing on "how things should be." *SMJ*'s strategies, motivated by principles of journalism, are useful for anyone interested in designing shows for informing, educating and mobilizing the public.

SMJ's website and Facebook page continue to share stories of successes. In a documentary uploaded on *SMJ*'s website Khan summarizes the impact of the first season. Among other successes, Khan shares that a total of Rs 2,59,30,190 (apprx. USD 38,000) collected from public donation and corporate sponsors, was given to *Snehalya*, an NGO that supports the girl child. Taking inspiration from the episode on water which featured villages that transformed from being drought-prone to water-adequate, some villages have begun to harvest rain water (*SMJ* website). Currently, Khan is using the power of communication, (i.e., films, an android app, and training programs) (Paani Foundation, n.d.) to make the state of Maharashtra drought-free by way of the newly formed Pani (water) Foundation.

Critique and Conclusion

Although *SMJ*'s strategies are theorized here, it must be noted that the primary motivation of its creators was to generate a context (MC) for social change by empowering citizens with information that facilitated taking action (MI). My aim in this paper has been to illustrate the use of diverse forms of MI to target audiences who vary in their understanding of an issue and to introduce the concept of MC. *SMJ*'s strategies can be theorized in future research by a systematic examination of how invitational and empowering MI can be

used in current affairs shows, by journalists or media organizations (Uppal 2012). More specifically, experimental studies can be conducted for analyzing the potential of MI in talk shows that seek to encourage social change.

The success of *SMJ* makes us re-examine the power of television in the wake of the new media revolution that seems to have relegated TV to background noise. Despite its success, *SMJ* is not without critics. Some argue that the actor-host Khan ventured to make money from the show by asking for donations and thus that his concerns and consequent tears on the plight of people were mere acts and, moreover, that he is not a trained journalist. The show has also been critiqued for using emotion as bait and for working to bring Khan back into the limelight to resurrect his significance in public life when cinema-going audiences and those at home remain fragmented due to increased media choices (Kumar 2014).

While these claims may hold true, the fact that there has been a nation-wide ripple of change since *SMJ* first aired is testimony to the notion that television can, if utilized strategically, mobilize a nation as diverse as India.

Notes

1. See Appendix 1 for selected titles and topics of all episodes in the first season.
2. As stated on *SMJ*'s website. Accessed January 30, 2020. <http://www.satyamevjayate.in/reach.aspx>.
3. Hanitzsch (2018) identifies three main roles: Discursive, Normative, and Cognitive.
4. Strömback lists four types of democracies: procedural, competitive, participatory, and deliberative. While journalism's normative role in the first two is that of acting as a watchdog, that its role in the latter two is mainly to inform, and mobilize.
5. Defined as "Efficacy information" by Feldman et al. (2017).
6. Accessed February 15, 2020.
7. Although always an issue of debate, Hindi is unofficially considered India's national language since it has the largest number of speakers. English remains the link language in India.
8. See Appendix 2.
9. Accessed January 18, 2020. <https://www.firstpost.com/india/aamir-urges-nitish-kumar-to-make-generic-drugs-available-403899.html>. First Post. Also see Appendix 1.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

The Anne-Marie and Gustaf Ander Foundation for Media Research: Funding for The Ander Centre for Research on News and Opinion in the Digital Era (NODE).

References

- Barton, Richard L. 1990. *Ties That Bind in Canadian/American Relations: The Politics of News Discourse*. London: Routledge.
- Bivens, Rena Kim. 2008. "The Internet, Mobile Phones and Blogging: How New Media Are Transforming Traditional Journalism." *Journalism Practice* 2 (1): 113–129.

- Breed, Warren. 1955. "Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis." *Social Forces* 33 (4): 326–335.
- Debatin, Bernhard. 2008. "The Internet as a New Platform for Expressing Opinions and as a New Public Sphere." In *The Sage Handbook of Public Opinion Research*, edited by W. Donsbach and M. Traugott, 64–72. London: Sage.
- Feldman, Lauren, P. Sol Hart, and Tijana Milosevic. 2017. "Polarizing News? Representations of Threat and Efficacy in Leading US Newspapers' Coverage of Climate Change." *Public Understanding of Science* 26 (4): 481–497.
- Ferrer, Raul. 2016. "Points, Badges and News: A Study of the Introduction of Gamification into Journalism Practice." *Comunicació: Revista de Recerca I d'Anàlisi* 33: 45–63.
- Fiske, John. 2011. *Television Culture*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Greussing, Esther, and Hajo G. Boomgaarden. 2019. "Simply Bells and Whistles?: Cognitive Effects of Visual Aesthetics in Digital Longforms." *Digital Journalism* 7 (2): 273–293. doi:10.1080/21670811.2018.1488598.
- Hanitzsch, Thomas. 2018. *3 Roles of Journalists*. Journalism (TP Vos, Ed.) (Vol. 19). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Haque, S. M. 1988. *What is News in India? A Content Analysis of the Elite Press*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Hoffman, Lindsay H. 2006. "Is Internet Content Different After All? A Content Analysis of Mobilizing Information in Online and Print Newspapers." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 83 (1): 58–76. doi:10.1177/107769900608300105.
- Jönsson, A. M., and H. Örnebring. 2011. "User-Generated Content and the News: Empowerment of Citizens or Interactive Illusion?" *Journalism Practice* 5 (2): 127–144. doi:10.1080/17512786.2010.501155.
- Kamdar, Mira. 2007. *Planet India: How the Fastest-Growing Democracy is Transforming America and the World*. New York: Scribner.
- Karlsson, Michael, Annika Bergström, Christer Clerwall, and Karin Fast. 2015. "Participatory Journalism – The (r)Evolution That Wasn't. Content and User Behavior in Sweden 2007–2013." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 20 (3): 295–311. doi:10.1111/jcc4.12115.
- Khorana, Sukhmani. 2014. "The Political Is Populist: Talk Shows, Political Debates and the Middle-Class Public Sphere in India." *Media International Australia* 152 (1): 98–107. doi:10.1177/1329878X1415200111.
- Kovarik, Bill. 2016. *Revolutions in Communication: Media History from Gutenberg to the Digital Age*.
- Kumar, Akshaya. 2014. "Satyamev Jayate: Return of the Star as a Sacrificial Figure." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 37 (2): 239–254. doi:10.1080/00856401.2014.906087.
- Lemert, James B. 1981. *Does Mass Communication Change Public Opinion After All? A New Approach to Effects Analysis*. Chicago, IL: Nelson Hall.
- Lemert, James B. 1984. "News Context and the Elimination of Mobilizing Information: An Experiment." *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (2): 243–259. doi:10.1177/107769908406100201.
- Lemert, James B. 1992. "Effective Public Opinion." In *Public Opinion, the Press and Public Policy*, edited by D. J. Kenamer and D. J. Westport, 41–62. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Lemert, James B., Barry N. Mitzman, Michael A. Seither, Roxana H. Cook, and Regina Hackett. 1977. "Journalists and Mobilizing Information." *Journalism Quarterly* 54 (4): 721–726.
- Lippmann, Walter. 2004. *Public Opinion*. New York: Dover Publications.
- Liu, Yong, Daniel S. Putler, and Charles B. Weinberg. 2004. "Is Having More Channels Really Better? A Model of Competition Among Commercial Television Broadcasters." *Marketing Science* 23 (1): 120–133. doi:10.1287/mksc.1030.0042.
- Misra, S. 2012. *India Today*, May 10. Accessed April 3, 2020. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/north/story/ashok-gehlot-aamir-khan-female-foeticide-satyamev-jayate-101727-2012-05-10>.
- Mushtaq, Sehrish, and Fawad Baig. 2016. "Indian Media System: An Application of Comparative Media Approach." *South Asian Studies* 31 (2): 45–63.
- Narayan, Sunetra Sen. 2014. *Globalization and Television: A Study of the Indian Experience, 1990–2010*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Nicodemus, Diane M. 2004. "Mobilizing Information: Local News and the Formation of a Viable Political Community." *Political Communication* 21 (2): 161–176.
- Örnebring, Henrik. 2003. "Televising the Public Sphere: Forty Years of Current Affairs Debate Programmes on Swedish Television." *European Journal of Communication* 18 (4): 501–527.
- Paani Foundation. n.d. *Our Mission*. <https://www.paanifoundation.in/about/mission/>. *Paani Foundation Website*. Accessed April 18, 2020. <https://www.paanifoundation.in>.
- Parameswaran, Radhika. 2012. "Watching BarkhaDutt: Turning on the News in Television Studies." *South Asian History and Culture* 3 (4): 626–635.
- Prior, Markus. 2005. "News vs. Entertainment: How Increasing Media Choice Widens Gaps in Political Knowledge and Turnout." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (3): 577–592. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5907.2005.00143.x.
- Punathambekar, Aswin, and Shanti Kumar. 2012. "Television at Large." *South Asian History and Culture* 3 (4): 483–490. doi:10.1080/19472498.2012.720058.
- QRIUS. 2014. "Satyamev Jayate: An Impact Analysis." <https://qrius.com/satyamev-jayate-an-impact-analysis/>.
- Roberts, Marilyn, Wayne Wanta, and Tzong-Hong Dzwo. 2002. "Agenda Setting and Issue Salience Online." *Communication Research* 29 (4): 452–465.
- Sarrina Li, Shu-Chu, and Chin-Chih Chiang. 2001. "Market Competition and Programming Diversity: A Study on the TV Market in Taiwan." *The Journal of Media Economics* 14 (2): 105–119.
- Singh, Uma. 2015. "The Politics of Mass Mobilisation: Eastern Uttar Pradesh, c. 1920–1940." *Social Scientist* 43 (5/6): 93–114.
- Strömbäck, Jesper. 2005. "In Search of a Standard: Four Models of Democracy and Their Normative Implications for Journalism." *Journalism Studies* 6 (3): 331–345. doi:10.1080/14616700500131950.
- Thussu, DayaKishan. 2007. "The 'Murdochization' of News? The Case of Star TV in India." *Media, Culture & Society* 29 (4): 593–611. doi:10.1177/0163443707076191.
- Uppal, Charu. 2003. "Cultural Representations of Environmental Activism: A Comparative Press Analysis of Indian and American Newspaper Coverage of Hydropower Debate." Unpublished PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University.
- Uppal, Charu. 2012. "Motivation, Mobilization, Participation: Are Mobile Phones Instrumental in Mobilizing the Public?" Proceedings of M4D2012, New Delhi, India, February 28–29, 398–404.
- Verma, Madan Mohan. 2016. *Gandhi's Technique of Mass Mobilization*. Bloomington, IN: Partridge Publishing.
- Zelizer, Barbie. 2017. *What Journalism Could Be*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Zimmerman, J., N. Dimitrova, L. Agnihotri, A. Janevski, and L. Nikolovska. 2003. "Interface Design for MyInfo: A Personal News Demonstrator Combining Web and TV Content." Paper presented at INTERACT Conference in Zurich.

Appendices

Appendix 1

(Selected list of episodes from Season 1)

- EP 01: FEMALE FOETICIDE: Daughters Are Precious/Preference for male progeny
- EP 02: CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: Break the Silence
- EP 03: BIG FAT INDIAN WEDDING: Dowry/Domestic violence.
- EP 04: EVERY LIFE IS PRECIOUS: State of Health Care and Hospitals in India
- EP 06: PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: Rights of the disabled
- EP 08: TOXIC FOOD: Poison on our plate?
- EP 12: WATER: Every drop counts
- EP 13: THE IDEA OF INDIA: We the people

Appendix 2

The following prologue accompanied every episode.

(Use of metaphor, symbols and poetry functions as MI to attract public interest.)

I act in films. I have lived many different lives and roles. Then there's another life. A life of my own. Outside the actor's life, my personal human existence. And cross winds in life's course play upon my mind.

I read newspapers, I watch news, I talk with friends, with strangers. Many things touch my heart

...

On one hand India is rising. Soaring to new heights. Makes me happy, proud to be Indian.

But in our society there are some bitter truths, we turn a blind eye to. To look these in the eye is disturbing ... And sometimes I wonder why think about these things that do not concern me?

Appeal to ISC: My life is working well, what difference do these things make to me? But it makes a difference. I am a part of this society. A string of events touches you, touches me in the passing ... resonating, reverberating. If Gandhi, Bose, Nehru, Maulana Azad were still alive, could we have faced them? What would we say to them? Did our forefathers fight for this freedom?

That is why I am coming among you, with a wish to listen, to learn, to interact ...

To get to the root of every cause, to discover truth. I wish to talk of matters, that touch the lives of every Indian. I lay no blame, nor speak ill of anyone.

Appeal to ISC & ISO: All said those responsible for our woes are amongst us. Or maybe we are collectively responsible. So join me on this journey, of seeking, finding, learning, sharing, to unravel some tough riddles.

My purpose is not to (merely) create a furor, I strive to change the times. If not in one (mine), then in another's breast –wherever lies a spark, the fire must be rekindled.