

## The participatory intensities of actors in private media teams' investigative journalism programs: A case study of Program Sar-e- Aam (Pakistan)

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### Abstract

Private broadcast media, particularly news media, claims to be a true representative of the public by involving the public in its media production processes. Hence, it becomes worthwhile to evaluate the levels of participatory processes in news media teams given their claims to be participatory. This study attempts to examine the participatory intensities of actors in private media teams' investigative journalism programs, and for that purpose the research project takes the case study of ARY news channel Program Sar-e- Aam, which can be regarded as a prototype of such media teams that claim to have extensive public participation. More precisely, the research study aims to identify actors, categories their participation intensities and their status of participation as privileged or unprivileged. This case study presents an application of analytical model of media participatory processes in political approach (Carpentier, 2016) 4-level, 12 steps analytical framework on the program 'Sare-e-aam' to scrutinize the participatory intensity of program's participants. The data set consists of the 70 episodes selected randomly of the programs aired during the months of (June 2019- June 2022). The researches is an interpretive inquiry, and the data is collected through field notes of the broadcast media content (textual + audiovisual) of the program. The application of the analytical model on the case study, program Sar-e-Aam identifies three major groups of actors i.e. media team, police department/local authorities and citizen participating at different stages of the program. The findings of the study show that the media team is the most influential and privileged group of participants in the program because it has sole control over the execution stage. All other participants at this point are supporters or minor contributors. The case study does not demonstrate an equal nature of the power position owing to inequalities in the amount of involvement, even though the program permits multiple actors to participate at different stages.

**Keywords:** *Participatory intensities, actors, private media teams, investigative journalism.*

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## Introduction

### The Context of the Case Study:

It is an established fact that the media's role as watchdog is to safeguard the transparency. In attempts to highlight the unjust, illegal practices prevalent in the society, some of the news media teams have set the trend of investigative journalism by conducting sting operations. One such case is the media team of the television program, Sar-e-Aam (meaning: open to the public) aired on ARY news channel in Pakistan. According to the claims of the media teams as mentioned in the description of its YouTube page, the program aims to show the public the true picture of whatever is happening under their eyes. The show is recorded live, no re-enactments are used. Mostly the informers are the volunteers/local citizens who approach the media teams through their given contact numbers and emails, but at times paid informers are also used to get detailed information about illegal activities. Another interesting fact about this media team is that they initiated a group of volunteers (named '[Sar-e-aam volunteer](#)') in the year 2015. They gave the call to the members of society (across all ages, races, and gender) to become members of this group free of cost and to contribute to the efforts for the betterment of the society and the country. They claim this campaign to be a non-political, non-business, and non-profit. In the first four and a half years, 1.6 million volunteers became members to the movement across all regions of the country. As per their website, this television program consists of 300+ episodes covering varying social evils ranging from domestic severity to corruption at the executive level. The episodes of the program cover/narrate all the incidents of how they have been reached out by citizens and shared the issue and how the team plans and conducts the operation against the dishonest fraudulent forces to catch them red-handed with the help of local authorities and police department. The program is very famous among all Pakistanis living inside and outside Pakistan. The program won the best TV show of the year in 2019, and the host of the program, Iqrar-ul Hassan won the 10th achievement award for the program. In 2013, Iqrar-ul Hasan also won [Agahi Award for the "Anchor of the year"](#).

Almost all news media channels claim themselves to be in service of the public by presenting an independent, unbiased, and true picture of the society. Private broadcast media, especially news media professes itself to be the true representative of the public by collaborating public as the part of its media processes. Considering the claims of news media to be participatory, it becomes worthwhile to assess the intensities of participatory processes in such media organizations. Besides, the decentralized nature of digital media and the levels of participation it offers has raised the question of whether mainstream traditional media can also guarantee empowerment via participation. This study attempts to examine the elements of participation in mainstream private television media.

### Aim:

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This research aims to investigate the participatory intensities of Program Sar-e-Aam and analyze how and to what degree power is distributed among actors in these processes.

### Research Questions:

Primary Question:

- To what extent does Program Sar-e-Aam ensure participation of various actors in the media processes?

Secondary questions:

- i. What is the participation intensity of multiple actors in various stages of the program?
- ii. What are the identities of the actors participating in the program?
- iii. What is the status of diverse actors in the program, in terms of (non) privilege?

### Conceptual Framework of Media and Participation:

The role of public participation in media through multiple social areas and in various concentrations have been acknowledged and explicated by scholars and theorists in the field.

#### *Media in service of citizen*

Various forms of media have been acknowledged to expose crime and increasing public awareness about these illegal activities. Sarkar (2020) in her article, 'Media as an instrument of social awareness', recognizes the role of media in bringing to surface the weaknesses of public agencies by using social awareness as the useful weapon to fight against crime. Richardson (2007) refers to the role of journalism, "to enable citizen to better understand their lives and their position(s) in the world" (p.7). Later he professes that, "Journalism has more power to shape our understanding about events, ideas, people and the relationships between people than many other forms of communication" (ibid, p.220). Besides news reporting, media is also required to conduct objective investigation of the issue for a successful democratic society, Lule (2012) emphasize the need to continue investigating facts after first reporting, as is the ethical duty of the media to tell the public of the truth even if it goes against the interests of advertisers or other stakeholder groups. Hence, media's role in the democratic society is significant and multifaceted.

#### *Participatory media*

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Numerous studies on the relationship between media and public participation talk about the value of participatory media in boosting media effectiveness and good governance (Ritonga & syahputra 2019; Rheingold, 2008). Thornborrow (2014) offers a perspective on what ordinary people do on TV screens. The author examines how participants shape their identities and play their roles in a variety of public participation genres. She refers to the popularity of TV reality programs, talk shows, with expanding public involvement formats, which have introduced new platforms for public access and engagement.

Jürgen Habermas (1962) refers to the concept of Public sphere as an area in social life where citizens come together independently to discuss and identify societal problems and through discussion influence political action. The ideal condition for the public sphere consists of private people assemble together as a public and communicating the societal needs with the state (Habermas, 1991). So, the public sphere generates opinions and beliefs by means of assembly and dialogue which attests or opposes the affairs of the state. In any functioning democracy, the public sphere in its absolute terms is the source of public opinion needed to legitimate authority (Rutherford, 2000). The success of the public sphere depends upon, the extent of access, the degree of autonomy, the rule of law, and the quality of participation (ibid). Habermas recognizes the growth of cultural industries and the evolution of large private interests as dangers to the public sphere. Commercialized news industries may become agents of manipulations: "It became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere" (Habermas, 1992, p. 185). Furthermore, Habermas' classical theory about the transformation of public sphere (1962) considers the centralized press as the structural transformation of public spheres which manipulates public opinion. According to Seth (2008), '...today's participatory media can be considered as reconstructing the traditional scenario of personal letters and decentralized salon discussion. For example, many blogs are personal narratives of people, akin to letters, which could reinforce the humanitarian perspective in public opinion' (p.6).

But later, in his most in-depth analysis of the public sphere, "Between Facts and Norms," Habermas (1998) considerably revises the idea of the public sphere. He refers to democracy, emphasizing its growing complexity, and the centrality of networks in the economy, political system, civil society, and the real world that necessitates changes to basic theoretical presumptions regarding the structure of the public sphere (Friedland, et.al, 2006; Khan et. al, 2012). Khan et al., (2012) further point out that the concepts and mechanisms of Habermas' public sphere model, though initially designed to describe the public and sphere at the state level, are still pertinent to the theory and practices of the global public sphere (GPS) and global civil society (GCS). The emergence of new digital technologies via internet and social media, has given the global public sphere, new dimensions and created a new public domain (NPS). These social communication networks are becoming more and more centralized due to the social integration

via modern technological means that has induced the rise of a global civil society. 'This multimodal communication space is what constitutes the new global public sphere' (Castells, 2008, p. 90).

The aforementioned studies on public participation and the public sphere affirm the relevance of citizens in social and political structures at all times. The significance of public engagement cannot be contested, from the traditional model of the public sphere to the global and networked public sphere. Moreover, a centralized network of public sphere sectors is created by the contemporary media and communication technologies.

### *Approaches to participation*

The concept of participation in media encompass various positions about participation. Among these approaches to participation two approaches are more often used i.e. sociological approach and the political approach. The sociological approach (Carpentier, 2016), offers a wide range of human interaction as participation. Although Power is not the central component in this approach, it is still not excluded. 'It is defined as taking part in particular social processes' (p. 92). Whereas the Political approach, "...produces a much more restrictive definition of participation, that refers to the equalisation of power inequalities in particular decision-making processes" (Carpentier, 2014, p. 92). Participation according to this approach is defined as, "equalisation of power relations between privileged and non-privileged actors in formal and informal decision-making processes." (ibid). Following the political approach where the concept of power is central, the concept of participation becomes more intense with the introduction of struggle over participation in various social domains (Carpentier, 2011), "including media domain". (Carpentier, 2014, p.93) These struggles in multiple social domains generate various participatory intensities.i.e., Minimalist and Maximalist versions of participation. The power positions of privileged (elite) actors are sometimes secured by more minimalist forms of participation, to the cost of non-privileged (non-elite) actors, without completely excluding the latter. Whereas "more maximalist versions of participation strive for a full equilibrium between all actors (which protects the non-privileged actors)" (Carpentier, 2016, p. 73). Hence, the distinction between the intensity of participation makes it relevant and necessary to scrutinize the participatory intestines of a political approach based analytical model.

### **Research Design & Methodology:**

As the media team offers to create structures where public and media work together, a case-study of Program 'Sareaam' is selected to examine the participation intensities of actors in its organisational processes and the power positions of the actors in these processes. The selection of case study as a research approach to investigate this topic is a befitting choice as it generates an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context. The case under study, 'Sar-e-aam', can be regarded as a prototype of such media teams

that claim to have extensive public participation and it seems to be an interesting case to examine how they 'construct' participation. The paper is informed in particular by the work of media and participation, where the participation is associated with power sharing and co-decision making (Carpentier, 2011; Yüksek & Carpentier, 2018). This case study presents an application of analytical model of media participatory processes in political approach (Carpentier, 2016) analytical framework on the program 'Sare-e-aam' to scrutinize the participatory intensity of program's participants.

According to the TV program schedule, the program Sar-e-aam is broadcast every Friday and Saturday from 7-8 p.m. on ARY news channel. The data set of the study consists of the 70 episodes selected randomly of the programs aired during the months of (June 2019- June 2022) of the total population of 116 episodes made available on the YouTube channel of Sar-e- aam. The research is a qualitative in nature, an interpretive inquiry, that focuses on understanding of the meaning, purposes and intentions people give to their actions and interactions with others (Given, 2008), as it is based on reflective practices, that includes reflexive notes, observations, and field notes of the media content studied. The data is collected through field notes gathered from the media content (i.e. textual and audio-visual elements) of the program. Field notes consists of the researcher's observations i.e. documentation of the events in the programs, voiceover documentary explaining the procedure followed, participations of actors, and the researcher's reflection on them. Both, descriptive and analytic types of field notes have been employed in the study, where descriptive notes simply describe a researcher's field observation as clearly as possible. Whereas, in analytic field notes, a researcher makes note of impression about their observations and the details turn out to be important during analysis (Bowman, 2018). There are four main analytic categories that have been studied using the selected model. Field and processes, the first analytical category, examines specific media processes and their objectives, participation in the field and across fields, and the role of the media in the field. The second analytical category focuses on actors who are involved in the media process and, by identifying their roles and identities, questions their form of participation, the level of their participation, the diversity of actors, and their material situations. All decision-making phases in the participative process at various levels of the media process fall under the third category. The power model, which studies micro-processes of power in connection to actors' engagement in each decision-making moment, is included in the fourth analytical category.

In section 8, titled "Application of analytical framework," a full overview of these analytical categories is provided.

### **Justification for the selection of the participatory model:**

The theoretical framework, selected for the research paper, the analytical model of media participatory processes in political approach (Carpentier, 2016), seem

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befitting for this project, as it presents the main components of a participatory process in a hierarchical order i.e. fields and processes (level1), actors (level2), decisions (level3), and power relationships (level4). Besides, this model does not consider all actors as a homogeneous group rather allows us to identify various group of actors involved in media processes with different participatory intensities. Another important function of the model is that it has the scope to analyze participatory intensities at multiple media processes, in this case, Pre-Planning, Planning, Execution, Post-Execution, of the program and to present differing power relation among diverse actors in these processes. Hence, the application of the model on this program delineates various dimensions of participation along with its intensities.

### **Description of the Participatory Model:**

The analytical model of media participatory processes (Carpentier, 2016), presents the main components of a participatory process in a hierarchical order i.e. Fields and processes (level1), Actors (level2), Decisions (level3), and Power (level4).

*The first level, the process and its Field(s)* consists of three steps; Step1, identifies the particular media processes and its goals. Process is explained as series of steps taken for the achievement of a goal. Step 2, analyses the structure of each of the field points and assesses the presence of participation in all fields. Step 3 examines the position of the media process in the field, it highlights the context within which the process is located and how it impacts the nature and development of the process.

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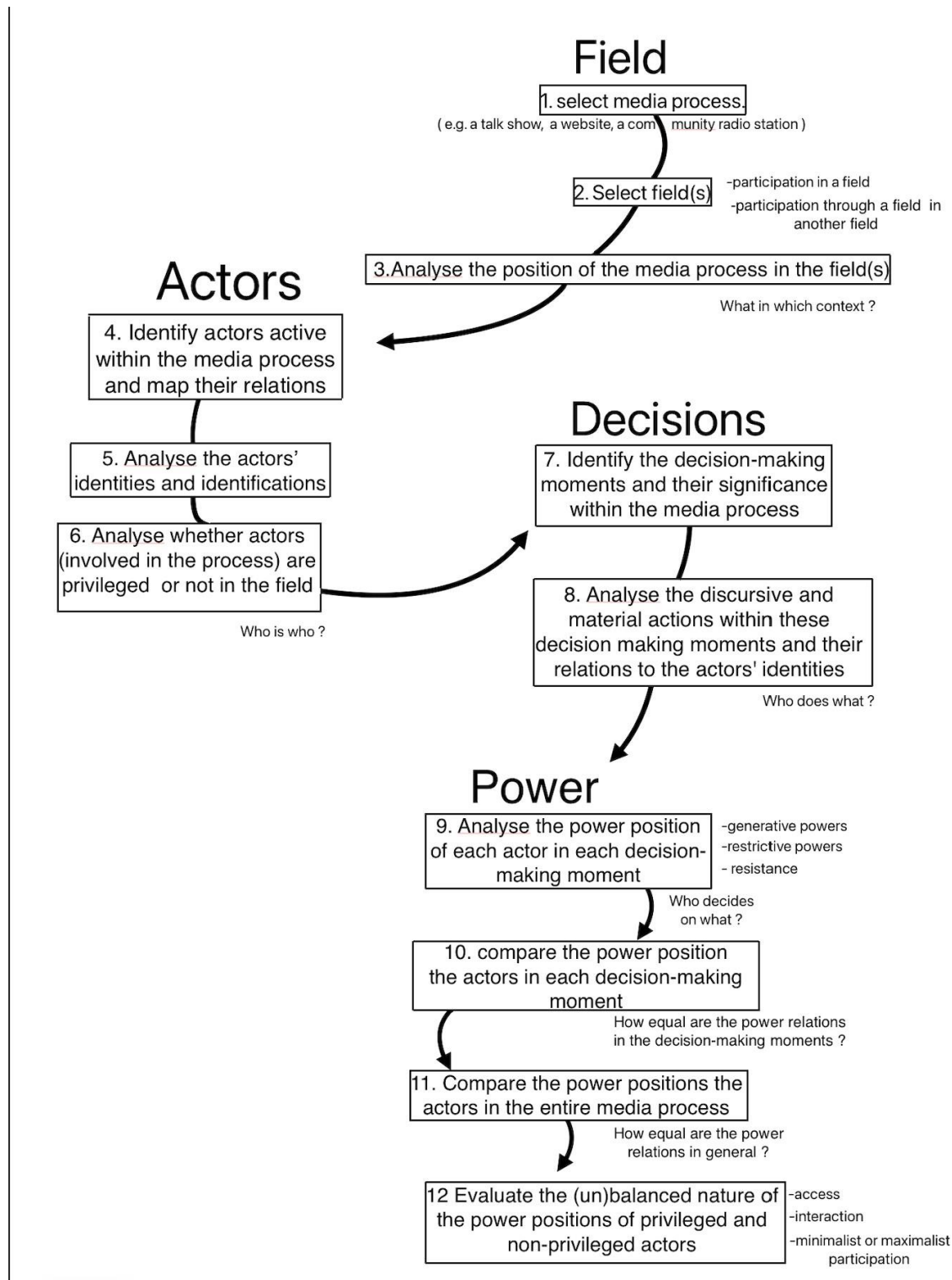


Figure 1: The 12-stage analytical model for the study of media participatory processes in the political approach (Carpentier, 2016, p. 83).

**The second level**, examines the **actors** involved in the media process and assesses their level of participation in further three steps. Step 4 delineates the identity of diverse actors in the media process, Step 5 analyzes the actors'

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material positions; their roles and identities step 6 investigates about the fieldposition of the actors (social elites & non-elites).

**The third level**, charts all **decision-making moments** within participatory process and their significance in relation to goals of the participatory process. Step 7 identifies the decision-making moments and their significance within the media process. Step 8 analyzes the discursive and material actions within these decision-making moments and their relations to the actors' identities.

**The fourth level**, explicates the concept of Power in media participation in three steps. Step 9 examines the power aspects to each decision-making moment. It distinguishes between generative, restrictive and resistance components. Step 10 compares the power position of the actors in each decisionmaking moment. (how equal are the power relations in decision-making moments?) Step 11, offers the comparison of the power positions the actors in the entire media process (significant and insignificant areas). Step 12 evaluates of the power balance /imbalance. It also distinguishes between access, interaction & participation in order to evaluate participatory intensities.

### Application of the analytical framework on the Case Study:

The selected analytical model (Carpentier, 2016) allows us to focus on the main components of a participatory process, namely: fields and processes, actors, decisions, and power relations and to assess the degree of power as it is redistributed in media processes.

#### Level 1. Field & Processes:

This level comprises of three steps; the first step identifies the particular media processes and its goals, the second step analyzes participation in the field and across fields and the third step assesses the position of the media in the field.

The media process in this case study is a news television show, i.e. ARY News which is famous for exposing social evils and illegal practices prevalent in the society. The program is connected with various fields of the society, as it is covering a range of topics, e.g., fake food industries, survey of public about their views on government policies and political parties, exposing crimes against women in urban as well as far flung / rural areas, bribery by the government departments, exploitation of power and sexual harassment by various office holders, all these topics are related to different sections of the society.

The structure of the program shows that it is conducted with the cooperation and participation of various sections of the society. So, the participation across multiple fields e.g., media teams, journalists, police department, local authorities and citizens is visible in the various media stages of the program. Moreover, the program attempts to create structures that enhance public participation and encourage their access and interaction by providing them opportunities to make

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their voice heard through their program. The team share their contact information with their audience so they can get in touch with them and ask for assistance in resolving social and personal issues pertaining to human life. The context within which the process is located, i.e. the context of investigative reporting, impacts the nature and development of the process. More generally, it lies in the field of media and journalism. In most cases, as the victims of any social atrocity or any other related citizen informs the team about the event and requests the team to help them out, the team initiates action and plans to reveal the culprit with the help of police and local authorities.

### **Level 2. Actors:**

The second level analyzes the actors involved in the media process and questions their kind of participation. The diversity of actors is identified, their material positions are assessed by defining their roles and identities. Furthermore, the status of the actors in terms of privileged and non-privileged position is assessed. In simple terms, this level analyzes, who is involved in the making of the program, in what capacity and to what extent?

Program Sar-e- Aam is the outcome of joint efforts of various actors. Three major groups of actors have been identified including; media team, police department or local authorities and citizens with varying intensity of their participation (i.e. privileged and non-privileged actors). These group of actors are involved in the program without any discrimination of age, creed, and social status as it includes members of different strata of society. The diverse group of actors can be categorized into two broad categories in terms of their identities i.e. volunteers and professionals, and in terms of their involvement in the decision-making i.e. privileged and non-privileged. As far as identities of the actors are concerned, the program involves actors from different fields of life. The program brings together different subject position of actors as volunteers and professional both are involved in the making of the program. Media teams, police departments and local authorities are the professional whereas local citizens which serve as informers, reporters and participants/supporters in the execution the program are the volunteers.

- *Privileged / Elite Actors: Management and Coordination:* Program producer, host, editors and other staff and team members can be categorized as group of elite actors as the producer and host are the chief decision makers in selection of the event, content and the plan to execute the program and its editing. This group of actors is privileged in the sense that they comprise the power to make significant decisions. This group of actors carry the major responsibility for the making and execution of the program. Other professional actors include, police department and local authorities, although this group of professionals are

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privileged in society as they make significant decision but in the making of the program it can be argued that they act under the pressure of media and citizens, so they seem not to be privileged as they are driven to take action against the guilty criminals in the presence of media and public.

- *Volunteer Actors: Informers and facilitators:* Participation of ordinary citizen redress the power imbalance caused by elite members of the society. Common citizens who volunteer to perform as informers, reporters, facilitators and participants in giving information and their opinion about issue can be categorized as non-elite group of actors. In a program (ARY, 2020) aired on 1st May 2021, the host describes how their media team learned about the abuse of minor domestic worker at elite households in an affluent neighborhood of Islamabad. He says that, '*a man (whose identity is concealed) called them after learning about the abuse and asked for assistance to help the youngster. The man trusted us and turned to us for assistance rather than calling the police or any other government agency and provided us with the video evidences*'.(06:30-08:00)



Source: Sar-e-Aam | Iqrar Ul Hassan | ARY News | 01 May 2021. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SNP-DtjC6Y4&t=1419s>

Citizens are empowered in the making certain content of the program and they are independent in providing information, to become the part of recording and offering their opinion and reaction about the particular situation. Although these actions contribute to obtain the objective of the program but the influence that they create in the various stages of the program is not as significant as that of the media team.

### Level 3. Decisions:

This level charts all decision-making moments within the participatory process and their significance in relation to the goals of the participatory process, which defines power-relation among actors in level 2. The structural analysis of the

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program highlights the fact that many decision-making moments occur at various stages of the media process. Some of them carry higher level of significance whereas some other hold less significance but still are necessary for the completion of the program. The decision-making moments made at various stages of the program can be categorized as follows:

### **Decisions at pre-planning stage: (Pre-planning Initiatives):**

The media team makes itself accessible to the citizens by providing them its contact numbers and media portal information, as it has been mentioned in the programs. It is also claimed in the programs that the citizens voluntarily initiate the process by providing information about some illegal activity going on in their surroundings or at times the victims themselves contact the media team to narrate their story and seek help.



Source: *Sar-e-Aam* | *Iqrar Ul Hassan* | *ARY News* | 17th June 2022 [Video]. YouTube.  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJe6U2Msqj8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJe6U2Msqj8)

Mostly the information is substantiated with some documentary evidence e.g., audio or video clip / image etc. Citizens as informers are independent in deciding whether to reveal their identity in the program or not. Citizens also provide their support and cooperation in conducting operations at later stages.

The decisions made by the citizens at this stage possess high significance as this volunteer action of providing information is responsible for the creation of the program.

### **Decision at planning stage:**

The planning stage can be regarded as very crucial stage of the program because the execution of the program depends on its planning. Certain significant decisions are made at this stage e.g., selection of topic, format of the program, selection of time slot, plan for the execution, selection of participants, allocation of the tasks, seeking help from relevant government departments etc. At this point, the media team members make all of the decisions; no other players are involved in the decision-making process. The administration of the program is

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thus the privileged actor of the key decision-making moments in this stage. Besides the members of the media crew, no other actors currently play any significant roles.

### Decisions at Execution stage:

At the execution stage of the program, major discursive and material actions are taken by the media team; management and coordination of the program, following the plan to conduct operations, contacting local authorities and police department, approaching venues, recording of the scenes, editing, framing (what to highlight/foreground and what to background), narrative voice-over, etc.

At this stage general citizens are participating to the extent of access and interaction (with mic and camera) but other than voicing their opinions, providing clarifications, and responding to situations, they are not responsible for any acts; yet, their activities are recorded and presented in the program. Police department and local authorities are also not involved in any significant material action they act as peacemakers and representatives of state and law as they are called by the media team.

Even though the police department is free to pursue any legal action against the guilty at the conclusion of many programs, it can be argued that the police department is somehow under pressure to work with the media and to file cases against the guilty in the presence of a media team and convincing evidences. It can be seen in a number of episodes that the police department seems to be reluctant to take legal action but does so on the insistence of the media team. In the episode (sar-e-aam, 2019), aired on 21 June 2019, on not getting favorable response, the host says in camera to the police officer, "Okey, we will mention in the program that the police have let the criminal go at large...." (29:52)



Source: Sar-e-Aam | Iqrar Ul Hassan | ARY News | 21 June 2019. [Video].

YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4VQ4VeS5YQ>

Additionally, there are many programs that focus on

uncovering bribery and other serious crimes committed by civil and governmental agencies (ARY News, 7 June, 2019; 7 May 2021; 18 June 2021; 7 August 2020).

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Source: Sar-e-Aam | Iqbal Ul Hassan | ARY News | 7 May 2021 [Video]. YouTube.  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=LU2CxfOOxVk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LU2CxfOOxVk)

### Decision at post-execution stage:

After the program is broadcast, the content of the program is watched and evaluated by the audience. The viewership of the programs and viewers' feedback on the program is also significant actions responsible for the successful running of the program. The feedback is provided in the forms of likes, shares and comments on various social media portals. At this stage, citizens are empowered to offer feedback and post their comments related to the content of the program. The program has been running successfully for ten years, and viewers and citizens have expressed their interest and confidence in the content of the program, It has been mentioned earlier that this program and host have won two awards besides having huge popularity and fan-following. So the popularity of the program is dependent on the citizens' feedback. Here, another angle that cannot be ignored is the use of social media for the propagation of the program by the program's social team which in turn influences audience's perception.

### Level 4. Power:

This level analyzes the power aspects to each decision-making moment. The power model includes micro processes of power that are analyzed in relation to actors' involvement in the decision-making. We can observe diverse actor groups involved in the decision making at various stages of the program with various degrees.

*8.4.1 In Planning and Execution stages:* The diversity of actors is low at this stage as team sar-e-aam is responsible for major decision making. Besides the decisions made at these two stages are of higher significance than the decisions made at other stages. Decisions related to the content of the program and editing and sequencing of the events in the program are made solely by the media team. As stated at the beginning of almost every episode, the host talks about his team and describes how the plan was developed and carried out by the team. He then

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assumes responsibility for the entire operation, working with his team to expose the culprit or the system's flaws. In a program (ARY, 2020) about the working of team sar-e-aam aired on 18 Dec 2020, it is narrated that *'for team sar-e-aam to create a plan and execute it in order to catch the culprits was a huge task' (1:25)* *'we have shown in one of the episodes that how by developing acquaintance with the security guards, one can easily take arms inside the provincial assembly' (34:05)*. Hence, the participation intensity at these two stages is minimalist as major power of decision making is retained by the media team members.

### *In Pre-planning and Post-Execution stages:*

We can observe how citizens play a part in making decisions regarding provision of information, going to the venue with the media team, collaborating in programs recordings, and expressing their thoughts and reactions. All of these acts have a crucial role in attaining the program's objective. The audience of the program is independent in evaluating program through multiple ways on social media. Even while these choices have a lot of weight, it can be claimed that they have no direct bearing on the program's execution or content and have no material impact on the actual activities that were conducted. The media team also contributes to these stages by making itself accessible to citizens during the preplanning stage. Additionally, during the post-execution stage, the media team's social media group takes part in the propagation of the program's content and goals on various social media platforms, which ultimately affects the program's viewership and popularity among the general public. Hence, at these stages, the diversity of actors is high and the participation of actors can be characterized as maximalist because everyone is included in the key decision-making processes.

### **Summary of findings:**

The application of the analytical model to the case study program Sar-e-Aam addresses all three research questions, raised at the beginning of the investigation, inquiring about the participation intensity, identity and the status of diverse actors in terms of privilege.

It identifies three major groups of actors i.e. media team, police department/ local authorities and citizen participating at different stages of the program. According to their identities actors are categorized as volunteers and professionals whereas on the basis of ability to make significant decisions actors are categorized as elite / privileged and non-elite / non-privileged actors. The analysis of the given participatory model on the case study indicates that at different stages of the program, various group of actors possess variant intensity

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of power to make significant decisions. Since the program comprises high diversity of actors with different groups of actors empowered at different stages and we can see various actors possessing maximalist version of power at certain stages i.e. in the pre-planning and post execution stage, citizens as volunteers are analyzed to enjoy more power, whereas at the planning and execution stage media team as professionals possess major decision-making power. But the overall media-process does not guarantee the equal participation of actors through all the stages. The study reveals the media team is the most powerful and privileged group of actors in the program it possesses the sole power of the execution stage other actors at this stage are supporters and insignificant participants. We can conclude by saying that even though the program allows different participants to participate at different phases, the case study is unable to establish an even nature of the power position due to variances in the level of engagement.

### **Implications of the study:**

This study is significant in assessing the degree of public participation in media team programs that claim to be highly participative. Following the same paradigm and extending it to various media programs that encourage public engagement, the degree of participation in those programs may be assessed and labelled. Besides, the study describes how different actors play a spectrum of privileged to non-privileged roles. Furthermore, the study carries noticeable theoretical and social implications, as the model offers a theoretical model of analytical nature based on theories of political approach of media participatory processes. It enables us to concentrate on the key elements of a participation process, including the fields and processes, actors, decisions, and power relations, and it also helps us to gauge the extent of power distribution in media processes. This analytical model can be practically applied to any other media program of the similar kind and hence the claim of public participation can be assessed and the identities of actors involved in the various processes can be recognized. Once the participation intensities of any media event are measured and the identities of the actors are noted, public participation can be enhanced in a more pragmatic way. After identification, the phases where involvement is low and unsatisfactory can be improved, hence, ensuring increased public involvement.

Here, it is crucial to mention that the findings of the study are heavily reliant on the program's procedures and setting. It is also important to bear in mind that this is a case study that is limited to Program Sar-e-aam. The study is indeed very context-dependent because the model depends on the dynamics of each individual program. As a consequence, the conclusions cannot be broadly generalized and may yield different results when applied to other media programs.

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### Appendix:

Youtube link to program Sar-e-Aam:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@SareAamOfficial>

Youtube link to ARY News:  
<https://www.youtube.com/@ArynewsTvofficial/featured>

Sar-e-aam Website : <https://sareaam.org/About.aspx>