

Abstract

Research on the role of broadcasting for national integration aims to study the history and current situation of broadcasting for national integration and to also study the structure and administration on the radio of the Army. The research also included methods of developing radio broadcasting for national integration in the future by utilizing quality research in a framework which uses data gathering, report documents, distribution of information and a management team plan. The research also applied in depth interviews to select a target group by utilizing a purposive sampling and to survey the FM Radio broadcasting market of the army in the Bangkok area. This included interviews with the target group, news reports and distribution via mass media which completed the research.

According to this research, radio broadcasting for national integration originated with the Armed Forces together with the Department of Public Relations 80 years ago. It is identified in four different periods 1) Origins of radio broadcasting for national integration period 2) The war and propaganda period 3) Broadcasting for social and economic development period 4) The present period and reform of media for national integration. In all of the four periods, radio broadcasting has been used as a channel for political security and government security more than being utilized for national integration. The armed forces and government organizations have had total control which later led to media reform which was the origins of community radio and the new rules and regulations under the current system. After laws related to this topic were put into effect all sectors had to participate in protecting national integration which includes the following major groups 1) Government and units related to integration 2) Independent monitoring organizations and vocational institutions 3) Broadcasting operations and mass media personnel resources 4) Media consumers. All these groups will play a different role but will all focus on national integration which will be the main objective and will develop the quality of media to respond to requirements and needs of

society for security and stability. This role will not change regardless of changes in the government. Most of all, the armed forces will play a large part of the role.

The armed forces play the strongest role in broadcasting for national integration and own 256 stations with a share of about 48.5 per cent of the total broadcast stations. Among the armed forces, the army has the most broadcasting stations with 138 stations followed by the Royal Thai Police with 44 stations, the Air Force with 36 stations, the Navy with 24 stations and the Royal Thai Armed Forces and Ministry of Defense 14 stations. The structure and administration of these organizations is of the same style called "centralization". The policy sets approximately 70 percent of the total air time to be franchised to the private sector. The rest of the air time of about 19-29 per cent is for the armed forces to produce news and their own traditional security programs. Most of them have not changed the quality of the programs except the army who has become a leader in news shorts by establishing a news center and utilizing production values. The Internet is also used to provide radio service. Television stations in the network include Channel 5, Channel 7, cable TV and cell phone coverage while the navy has partnered with Channel 3 to franchise air time. All the armed forces have broadcast services via the Internet.

The most desirable franchises have been a monopoly for a long time and include FM broadcast stations in the area of Bangkok and the larger cities in the region. From the year 2004 to 2009 estimated income from FM broadcasting stations in the armed forces was more than 1,424 million baht. 20.5 per cent was advertising income which in 2008 totaled 6,933 million baht. In the Bangkok area in the last 10 years a total of 20 radio stations has generated an income of at least 720 million baht annually. The largest media company who monopolized and franchised the broadcast stations of the armed forces is ClickRR1 Limited who has the most stations at 4 stations. Sky-High Network Limited and Airtime Media franchised 3 stations each and the rest of the companies franchised about 1 or 2 stations. Each station produces about 45 per cent news programs and quality programs. The other 55 per cent are entertainment programs and advertising. All franchisees share the similar presentation program

formats called Format Station Radio to use as administration and also duplicate the ownership model with the armed forces stations. The station has utilized a complete market strategy to and long-term profit plan.

Challenges and issues can be identified in each communication group and includes the government group who has not cleared coordination in security, established limits or created a master plan. The establishment of an independent organization will take 1 to 2 years. There is also a conflict with standard and interference as all must protect their own interests. The temporary National Telecommunication Commission has set illegal rules and regulations for community and public radio stations. The operation of the broadcast stations of the armed forces has gone against their own objectives for a long time with the quality of resource personnel of the armed forces and the impact from the allocation of radio spectrum.

It is necessary to improve the methodology of development by focusing on the benefits to the media consumer and improving the structure and administrative strategy for the broadcast station of the armed forces by focusing on developing resources personnel and new technologies. There also needs to be more program variety, improved content, establishment of community stations, participation promotion and provision of support funds.

Researchers recommended integration of the operations of broadcast stations of the armed forces and other group by re structuring or privatizing part of the broadcast station of the armed forces to adhere with the current business climate. All recommendations warrant further study in the future.