

Community Radio's Contribution to Community Development in India

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Abstract - When local residents make and broadcast their own programming and help run the station, it is referred to as community radio. It is a gathering and collaboration space for the community. It's a lot of fun, and it's often life-changing. Individual creativity and self-empowerment are common outcomes. Participants find it extremely rewarding not just to make radio in this unique way, but also to contribute to the transformation of community life. There are 338 operational community radio stations in India till April, 2022. The Community Radio can help us in addressing social, economic, cultural, educational, health, water and sanitation and disaster related issues more effectively and strategically. In order to highlight the importance and effectiveness of community radio for the community development of, this study has been conducted based on the secondary data. The study's goal is to learn more about the value of community FM radio in India, particularly in backward / Marginalized areas.

Keywords - Community Radio, Community Development, Backward / Marginalized Areas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Community radio stations are operated, owned, and influenced by the communities they serve. They are generally nonprofit and provide a mechanism for enabling individuals, groups, and communities to tell their own stories, to share experiences and, in a media-rich world, to become creators and contributors of media. During a crisis such as COVID-19, community radio can play a major role to these communities as the type of media that is nearest to the community. It can reach and educate communities in local languages as journalists and community volunteers live in and knew the communities better. This advantage makes a community radio station a lifeline for knowledge and connectivity to these communities. However, the capacities of journalists and volunteers in the stations need to be empowered with current knowledge on COVID 19 and skills for effective communication. It is with this that UNESCO facilitated a virtual training for community radio journalists and volunteers in Ethiopia. Community radio is a local and participatory medium of communication that provides information to the rural community in local languages.

In India, half the population lives in rural areas. The majority of people are poor in India. It is very difficult for them to access the internet. In this situation, community radio - a local and participatory type of radio - plays a very important role in disseminating information among the rural community. Rural people

want valid and reliable information on Corona. During this time, community radio plays a very important role in broadcasting information on Corona. Presently, 275 community radios are operational in India. They broadcast different programmes on different issues, including what protections to take to protect oneself from Corona, such as social distancing information.

2. OBJECTIVES

The major goal of this study is to determine the significance and effectiveness of community FM radio in India (particularly in backwards/ marginalized areas). This analysis has the following specific objectives based on the general objectives :

- To assess the effectiveness of community FM radio programming.
- To learn about the different forms of community FM radio and their characteristics.
- To investigate the opportunities of creating a community FM radio station.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Secondary data was gathered from national and international literature, journals, books, articles, and other sources to create this context study. These secondary data were examined in order to gain a

more complete picture of community radio in India (backward/ marginalized areas).

An Overview of Community Radio

A 'community' is defined as a group of people who share some common characteristics and or traits, such as sharing a common geographical area, such as a city or town, or a village; sharing economic and social life through business and trade, as well as the exchange of goods and services among themselves .

Karekatti T. and Wadgaonkar I. (2020) discussed the preferences, beliefs, and opinions of the Kolhapur District engineering stream students about FM radio programmes and the features of RJs' talk. The study revealed that the private FM radio channels of this area are more popular among the youth because youth is the target audience of the programmes broadcasted by private radio stations so the language is used according to them. Music is the biggest preference of the listeners followed by the information of local events and happening. Listeners also liked the way of the RJs for presenting the programmes with the incorporation of local words, phrases, tone and expressions.

Dim O. (2019) came out with the findings that listeners preferred to listen to the radio on the bases of signal quality, quality of programmes/ news/ and the style of the station as well as the presenters. Entertainment based programmes attracted a higher proportion of the respondents as it has the capacity of improving listeners' mood, reduce stress and boredom. This paper also found that morning time between 6am to 12 noon has the highest listenership. Researcher suggested that programming strategy of radio stations must take into consideration listeners' preferences

Benefits of Community Radio

- ❖ Communities perceived as being inclusive, supportive of diversity, and possessed of a climate of "cultural variety" attracted skilled, innovative workers more effectively.
- ❖ Communities encouraging diversity and participatory civic culture and possessed of highly developed cultural and environmental amenities enjoyed long-term success in retaining talent.
- ❖ Sociological and environmental factors are increasingly as important as if not more important than economic factors in generating and sustaining regional health.

Community Radio's historical context: In India, the advent of community radio can be traced back to the mid-1990s. It followed the February **1995 Supreme Court judgment** that said "airwaves are public property". In **1996, VOICES, a development communications** NGO based out of Bangalore, organized a gathering of community radio stakeholders. A declaration calling for the establishment of a third tier of broadcasting, i.e.

community broadcasting, was signed. Calls were also made for grant of licence to NGOs and other non-profit groups to run community radio stations. At this time, UNESCO provided a portable production and transmission 'briefcase radio station' kit to VOICES to do experimental broadcasting and get hands-on experience in setting up an independently-run community radio station. In early 2003, the Government of India released the first set of community radio guidelines, but restricted eligibility to educational institutions only. It was finally on **16 November 2006** that the government implemented new Community Radio Guidelines, which permitted NGOs, educational institutions and agricultural institutions to own and operate community radio stations. **The first community-based radio station licensed to an NGO was launched on 15 October 2008 by Deccan Development Society, in Pastapur village, Medak district, Andhra Pradesh.** Government guidelines require community radio stations to produce at least 50 per cent of their programmes locally, and, to the maximum extent possible, in the local language or dialect. The stress is on developmental programming. **As of 31 May 2019, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has listed 251 operational community radio stations in India.**

Forms of Community FM Radio

Because community radio creates and broadcasts programmes for a specific rural town, it can also be tailored to a certain demographic. The historic idea of community radio has been to use it as a platform for the backward/ marginalized group and improvement in general as a tool of progress.

Radio's Impact

Radio being a convenient form of entertainment caters to a large audience. With the advent of transistors this medium hrs reached the common man in urban and rural areas of India, though the utilization of radio is more among rural elites. It can capture more people, literate or illiterate at a time and also have lower cost than the community video, newspaper or television, particularly in developing countries.

Characteristics of Community Radio:

- It serves a recognizable community.
- It encourages participatory democracy.
- It offers the opportunity to any member of the community to initiate Communication and participate in program making, management and ownership of the station.

Ownership and Control

The most important and conflicting aspects of defining a CR are usually ownership and control. This can be accomplished by communities holding open and public meetings where the station's

governance is elected, either to a Board of Trustees or a Board of Directors, or to a Coordinating Committee.

Between annual general member's meetings (AGMs), which are the supreme decision-making forums, the leadership makes decisions. This type of leadership is supposed to represent community interests in the day-to-day operations of the station and make sure that policies guiding daily management are developed and reflect the needs of the community the station serves. Those elected leaders will be up for re-election after a period of time (generally one or two years) determined by the community at its AGM. If they have not done their jobs properly, they should not be re-elected and should be replaced by other community members.

Community Radio: The Non-profit Aspect

Community radio is a non-profit radio station whose primary goal is to promote the well-being of local residents. It creates programming for people in a specific geographical region, as well as representing their culture, viewpoints, opinions, and concepts. In addition, community radio represents the civilization and customs of the society who live in a specific area. Its goal is to help that society grow by sharing their culture and trying to express their challenges and limitations all over the world.

Involvement of the community

The most crucial component of community radio is community participation, which ensures that the station is truly owned and controlled by the community. The participation of community members in a variety of ways that reflects the community's interests. The necessity of community involvement ensures that members of the community are involved in the station's activities such as: election of board members; making station policy; station management; selection and provision of content and programming; production of various programmes reflecting the community; station external representation, and so on.

Funding for Robust Community Radio Experience in India

Government Initiatives

Community Radio is a non-profit initiative by the members of the community but has its own operational costs. To start with, there needs to be an initial investment of Rs.2, 50,000 to Rs. 3, 00,000. An additional running cost of Rs. 20, 000 per month is required to pay for staff salaries, electricity, generator fuel, travel and other expenses. Hence, funds are of utmost importance. According to the new policy guidelines of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting applicants are eligible to get funds from multilateral agencies. Those desirous of foreign funds for setting up of community radio stations have to obtain FCRA Clearance under Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 1976. This has given fillip to the

movement for community radio because there is scope for more and more N.G.O participation. As mentioned earlier there are N.G.Os like DDS (Deccan Development Society) and Voices which are taking the community radio experience to the desired levels. The opportunity given for inflow of foreign funds can further bolster communities in rural India to set up community radio stations.

Challenges being faced in operating community radio in India

These were attributed to **high operating costs**; challenges with **generating revenue**; poor governance of community media projects and a **lack of financial management** skills at community broadcasters; difficulty in **generating content**; problems with **filling critical vacant posts**; and adapting to **technological advancement**.

Community Radio's Key Characteristics and Functions

Community radio allows different groups and concerns in the community to be expressed, as well as the inclusion of disadvantaged and minority groups. The following are some distinguishing characteristics:

i. The protagonists are the people in the audience

Community radio's main goal is to make its listeners the main standard-bearer by involving them in all aspects of its management, content, and programme production, as well as by providing programming that will aid in the overall development of communities.

ii. News, Entertainment, and Education with a unique perspective

A community station's news isn't just about one single story or event; it's about being a part of a long-term process that promotes community change and development. Education and entertainment are provided in a way that promotes collective cultural expression and experience sharing.

iii. Community Representation of Separate Groups and Interests

Community radio broadcasts programmes that cater to the community's most vulnerable and marginalised groups, encouraging them to start sharing their thoughts and opinions on the air. Through the broadcast of their programmes, problems and limitations, issues, and so on, disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in the community will be able to express themselves.

Minority and Marginalized Groups Inclusion

Community radio programmes promote a wide range of ideas and perspectives from various marginalised groups, such as women and youth, as well as the gypsy and dalit communities. Furthermore, community radio helps promote minority groups' cultural perspectives (Fraser, 2001).

India's Community Radio

Community radio has begun its journey in India, albeit in a small number of stations. In order to increase the no. of community radio stations in India, action must be taken.

<u>India Radio</u>	Nationwide
<u>Ananthapuri FM</u>	<u>Kerala</u>
<u>AIR FM Rainbow</u>	<u>Odisha, Maharashtra, West Bengal</u>
<u>AIR FM GOLD</u>	<u>Chennai Delhi Kolkata Mumbai Ludhiana</u>
<u>Amurthavarshini</u>	<u>Karnataka</u>
<u>Theydal FM</u>	<u>Chennai</u>
<u>Amurthavarshini</u>	<u>Karnataka79.uj,</u>
<u>Aamar FM</u>	<u>West Bengal</u>
<u>All India Radio</u>	<u>Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh</u>
<u>BIG FM</u>	<u>Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry</u>
<u>Chennai Live 104.8 Fm</u>	<u>Tamil Nadu</u>
<u>Club FM</u>	<u>Kerala</u>
<u>Deccan Radio</u>	<u>Andhra Pradesh</u>
<u>Fever 104 FM</u>	<u>West Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka, New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh</u>
<u>Friends FM</u>	<u>West Bengal</u>
<u>Gyan Vani</u>	<u>Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar</u>

	<u>Pradesh, West Bengal</u>
<u>Hint FM</u>	<u>Uttar Pradesh</u>
<u>Hello FM</u>	<u>Tamil Nadu, Puducherry</u>
<u>HasyaKatta Official</u>	<u>Maharashtra& Worldwide</u>
<u>IITK Community Radio</u>	<u>Uttar Pradesh</u>
<u>MY FM</u>	<u>Chhatisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan</u>

<u>radioBollyFM</u>	Worldwide
<u>Radio Choklate</u>	<u>Odisha</u>
<u>Radio City</u>	Nationwide
<u>Radio DC</u>	<u>Kerala</u>
<u>Radio Dhamaal</u>	<u>Maharashtra</u>
<u>Radio Indigo</u>	<u>KarnatakaGoa</u>
<u>Radio Macfast</u>	<u>Kerala</u>
<u>Vishnu FM</u>	<u>Andhra Pradesh</u>
City FM 92	<u>NCR</u>

CR Radio: Experience gained

NammaDhwani, 'Our Voices' was the community radio in Budhikote in Karnataka, the villagers had adopted it fully by heart since they believed it was in their language and accent delivering contents touching their lives. Sangam radio which broadcast on 90.4 MHz in Pastapur Village, Medak District, Hyderabad (AP) got the privilege of being first NGO based community radio station. Kunjalpanjkuchjee- an interactive and participatory development communication project through voluntary organization- Kutch MahillaVikasSanghathan operated community radio as its community radio strategy under UNDP support . The radio is engaged in getting feedback from its audience and continuously improving the delivery. Since then a variety of community radio appeared on the scene under utilization on air- waves spectrum policy 2002 and later in 2006. The major types have been – The Farm Radios, Educational, Community Radio , general social welfare service radio, Marketing Radio and the mix radio programmes . A classification crystallized specifying broad categories of community radio that is educational radio, NGO operated radio, agricultural radio (KVK/SAU2002).

4. NEED FOR COMMUNITY RADIO: INDIA CONTEXT AND COMMUNITY RADIO

I) Root system level population service

Community radio was created primarily for the local rural population. The broad sense villagers who listen to the radio are the main targets of community radio. Villagers will be made aware of social issues through community radio, which will also entertain them. It will

provide information on agriculture, purchasing, and manufacturing, as well as rainfall up - to - date and emergency alert the user.

II) Keeping Crime at Bay (minimize)

From two perspectives, community radio can help to reduce crime. After committing a crime, community members will first notify their community radio station, and then this information will be shared with other people in the area, as well as law enforcement agencies . If a murder occurs in one part of a city but the police station is in another, community radio can alert law enforcement agencies as soon as the news is received.

III) Adolescents' Information

Young boys and girls in our country are unable to start sharing their problems and challenges with their elders during their adolescent years. Community radio can assist them in this situation by providing necessary information and services. Community radio can raise awareness and emphasize guardians' responsibilities and duties in relation to adolescent difficulties.

IV) Services for Women Who Are Discriminated Against and Youth Who Are Unemployed

Women are one of our society's most vulnerable groups. Illiterate women are frequently oppressed by men for dowry and other reasons. Women in need of immediate legal assistance can be rescued from oppression. In India, many govt and non-governmental organisations are working to advance women's rights. Women in our country, both literate and illiterate, are unaware of their rights and services. They don't even know where to turn for assistance. In this regard, community radio can play an important role. Women's awareness programmes can be broadcast on community radio, and these programmes can inform women about where they can get legal help. Community radio has several benefits over other forms of media as a tool for social change :

- (i) It facilitates true participatory communication, which is necessary for long-term development;
- (ii) It caters to a specific group or community (marginalised or vulnerable);
- (iii) Its programmes and content are of interest to the community;
- (iv) It is an excellent means of communication for the illiterate; and
- (v) It is cost-effective in terms of investment, ensuring its long-term viability.

5. LIMITATIONS

The following are the study's limitations:

- i) The lack of basic data needed to comprehend the current state of community radio in Delhi .
- ii) The insufficiency of secondary data for a more accurate assessment.

6. SUGGESTIONS

India's people/communities living in backward areas or marginalized group can be developed and their issues and desires can be expressed through the establishment of a community radio station, which will assure their socio - economic development.

However, to spread the blessing of community FM radio, Ministry of ICT of the GOI needs to :

- Train personnel to run the system and generate content/programs that convey the perspectives and hardships of marginalized / backward groups.
- Ensure that members of marginalized / backward groups have access to and involvement in community FM radio stations, as well as variety, independence, and location, so that they can communicate their problems and difficulties.
- Ensure that community FM radio is used for a variety of purposes, such as disseminating information about education, health, and several other national issues.
- Ideally, the notion of a community should be understood broadly to include both geographic communities and communities of interest but, as a practical matter, and in the early phases of recognition, States may wish to limit the scope to geographic communities and even where relevant to rural geographic communities.
- Only broadcasters which can demonstrate ownership or governance by the community they serve should be recognised as community broadcasters. Specific conditions may be imposed to achieve this but any such conditions should be concrete and realistic in terms of achievability. At the same time, in recognition of the initial challenges this can pose, a relatively more flexible approach should be considered in the early days of establishing a particular community broadcaster.
- To safeguard the independence of community broadcasters from the government and other political forces, public and political ownership of these entities should be prohibited. They should also be required to operate on a non-profit basis to protect them against undue commercial influence.

- Consideration should be given to supplementing the general requirement of community participation with specific programming requirements for community broadcasters, which may refer to languages, programme genres and/or the local content production. Any such requirements should be relevant to the purposes and goals of community broadcasting, and should not be unduly vague.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Radio is widely regarded as the most popular form of mass media, with the greatest number of listeners. It has the significant impact on our country's societal situation up to this point. People are familiar with FM radio in today's world, & community FM radio has the ability to reach the local level rural population. There has long been a charge that, in the context of India's current radio broadcasting environment, air broadcasting has been heavily influenced by political forces. Since the beginning of radio in India, it has primarily been used for state-sponsored propaganda. Although there are some commercial radio stations in India, community radio has yet to be legitimised. Furthermore, professional or commercial broadcasters believe that community radio will erode commercial radio's dominance in India.

They also believe that if community radio can be formed anywhere, their stations will end up losing listeners. Community FM radio can help to focus the voices of our community's most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents, promote rural livelihoods and agricultural advancement, make sure local level good governance and accountability, disaster preparedness and management, gender equality, community empowerment, & safeguard local and community culture. For the local population, a community FM radio station can be a boon. Community FM radio, for example, will be beneficial. To aid social advancement, particularly in difficult areas.

- It is necessary to establish more community FM radio stations in order to bring the voices of marginalised and vulnerable groups to the attention of decision makers, social scientists, and others.
- Through a community FM radio station, it is possible to raise awareness of the social issues of child marriage, poverty, as well as unemployment.
- Any upcoming natural disaster in a specific area could be telecast to a specific group of people.
- It would be simple to provide training and education.
- The fundamentals of participation and inclusion, diversity, personal autonomy, and locality would all help to keep community broadcasting alive.

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