



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



# A REPORT ON NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON COMMUNITY RADIO POLICY

IIMC, New Delhi

Year of Publication: 2011

Publication of the United Nations of Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

ISBN 978-81-89218-39-3

UNESCO New Delhi Office

B – 5/29 Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi – 110 029 India

Ph: +91 11-26713000

Fax: +91 11-26713001/2

Email: [newdelhi@unesco.org](mailto:newdelhi@unesco.org)

Website: [www.unesco.org/newdelhi](http://www.unesco.org/newdelhi)

Printed in India

The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in this work and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of UNESCO and do not commit the Organization.

All rights reserved. This document may be freely reviewed, abstracted, reproduced or translated, in part or in whole, but not for sale or for use in conjunction with commercial purposes, provided that mention is made of the source.

Design and Production: Silverline Communications

Email: [silverlinecomm@gmail.com](mailto:silverlinecomm@gmail.com)

**A Report**

**National Consultation  
on Community Radio Policy**

IIMC, New Delhi

Organized by  
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India in collaboration with  
UNESCO and the Community Radio Forum, India  
on 13-15 December, 2010

# Contents

---

1. Acknowledgement	7
2. Concept, Aims and Objectives	9
3. Inaugural Session	11
4. Day 1	
a. Session 1: Review of Community Radio Policy	15
b. Session 2: Community Radio on the Ground : 'On Air' experiences	19
5. Day 2	
a. Session 4: Broadcasting Technology and Infrastructure	23
b. Session 5: Financial and Social Sustainability	27
c. Session 6: Community Radio and Other Development Concerns	31
d. Session 7: Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing	35
6. Day 3	
a. Session 8: Role of Government and other International Agencies	39
b. Session 9: Valedictory Session	45
Annexures	
1. Abbreviations	47
2. Agenda	49
3. Report – 'On Air': A Comparative Study of Four Community Radio Stations in India Vinod Pavarala, Kanchan K. Malik, Vasuki Belavadi	52

4. Working Papers by Community Radio Forum	
a. Review of Community Radio Policy Vinod Pavarala, Stalin K, Sajan Venniyoor	73
b. Sustainability of Community Radio Arti Jaiman, Stalin K, Ashish Sen	78
c. Broadcasting Technology and Infrastructure N. Ramakrishnan, Hemant Babu, Aaditeshwar Seth, Vasuki Belavadi	83
d. Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing Ekta Mittal, Rajen Varada, Ram Bhat	89
5. Papers Presented by Panellists	
a. Response to the Issue of Sustainability David Melzer	95
b. Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building for Development Education Ian Pringle	98
c. Broadcast Technology and Infrastructure H. O. Srivastava	102
d. Community Radio Station - An Appraisal and Demystification of the Technical Issues R.Narasimha Swamy	105
e. Community Radio and Development Concerns Steve Buckley	113
f. Listening to Ordinary Voices Jo Tacchi	117
g. Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing in Community Radio Kalinga Seneviratne	120
h. हर दिन नई चुनौती से जूझने का नाम है रेडियो बुन्देलखण्ड अनुजा शुक्ला	126

# Acknowledgement

UNESCO would like to thank the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), Government of India, in particular, Mr. Raghu Menon, Secretary, MIB; Mr. Arvind Kumar, Joint Secretary, MIB; Ms. Supriya Sahu, Director, MIB for their valuable contribution and support; Prof. Vinod Pavarala, President, CRF of India and Mr. Sajan Venniyoor, Secretary, CRF of India and all the CRF members for working hard to prepare the background documents for the consultation and their dedication to promote community radios in India; Ford Foundation, New Delhi and Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, New Delhi and all the participating Community Radio Stations for their assistance, financial and in other ways, and their full cooperation in making the National Consultation on Community Radio Policy held at Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC), New Delhi on 13-15 December, 2010 a success.

Our deep appreciation and regard for Mr. Wijayananda Jayaweera, Former Director, Division of Communication for Development, UNESCO, Paris for promoting development through community radio. We wish to also thank Mr. Sunit Tandon, Director, IIMC and his team for their hospitality and facilitating the smooth running of the event. Our special thanks to all the delegates and panelists from India and abroad who gave valuable feedback, comments and insight into challenges and solutions faced by Community Radio Stations. We also wish to acknowledge that Mr. Sajan Venniyoor and Dr. Kanchan K. Malik facilitated the writing and production of this report.

# Concept, Aims and Objectives

Nearly 15 years after the Supreme Court of India declared that "the airwaves are public property," India today has the beginnings of a vibrant community radio sector. Since the announcement of the first phase of the Community Radio Policy in 2003, and, subsequently, that of the second phase in 2006 permitting community-based organizations to enter the field, we have over 100 operational radio stations licensed under the policy. Of these, about a quarter are stations owned and managed by community-based organizations (CBOs).

In spite of these promising numbers, there is a growing perception that we are nowhere near realization of the huge potential for Community Radio (CR) in India. The factors for this rather slow growth could include: time-consuming licensing procedures, lack of awareness about the policy, lack of capabilities to do audio production and set up broadcasting facilities, the seemingly prohibitive costs of technology and infrastructure, and, more generally, the absence of a strong movement for community broadcasting.

In the last three years since the previous such Consultation was held, no doubt, efforts have been made by the Government, multilateral agencies, capacity-building and advocacy agencies, and by associational groups such as the Community Radio Forum (CRF) to address many of these issues. These could be evidenced not only by the number of awareness and capacity-building workshops that have been organized around the country, but also by a gradual increase in the number of applications, exploration of technological possibilities, research studies, and the launching of new communication channels to get the word out.

Those that have been on air, both campus and community-based, have already expanded the media landscape in the country by offering fresh voices and perspectives, many from the margins, that have hitherto not been heard. There is a palpable excitement as one hears about revival of the full range of radio formats (as against just music radio) as well as the effective articulation of local information, local identities and culture. The successes are often accompanied by struggles to just keep the stations On Air, leave alone manage a steady flow of volunteers, ensure community-based content generation, sustain financial support, and to bring back a radio listening culture around the idea of locally relevant content in local languages by local people.

It is in this context that the National Consultation seeks to bring together community broadcasters and other key stakeholders such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), media activists, academia and the policy makers to take stock of the achievements of this burgeoning sector of radio broadcasting in India, and explore ways to take this movement to the next level.

The goals of the National Consultation on Community Radio Policy in India, 2010 are to:

1. Assess the on-ground situation of community radio sector in the country through an analysis of community voices and good practices
2. Define the strengths and weaknesses of the CR policy in facilitating an enabling environment for Community Radio in India
3. Work out a plan to plug gaps in capacity building as well as in technological prowess of NGOs and CBOs to set up Community Radio Stations
4. Discuss issues of financial and social sustainability of CR initiatives, including horizontal skill sharing, community mobilization, etc.
5. Deliberate joint action strategies to link community radio with such pressing issues as the reduction of poverty, disaster management, good governance, and women empowerment and social inclusion
6. Reinforce the need for monitoring and research to evaluate the effectiveness of Community Radio initiatives in deepening democracy
7. Determine the role of organizations such as UNESCO, CRF and others in strengthening the CR movement and achieving the above goals.

The expected outcomes of the National Consultation on Community Radio Policy in India, 2010 include:

- A. A concrete action plan to facilitate a vibrant and an enabling environment for Community Radio in India – in policy and in practice
- B. Significant push to implement specific awareness and training campaigns for scaling up the numbers of Community Radio Stations in the country
- C. Enhancement of stakeholders' coordination in developing a sustainable CR sector through knowledge, experience and skill-sharing
- D. Furthering of the use of new media and innovative/appropriate technology in the CR sector
- E. Increasing scope of partnership and collaboration with organizations working on developmental issues such as poverty reduction and good governance
- F. Strengthening of commitment to allow poor people, women and excluded communities in rural areas to be heard and empowered through CR



# Inaugural Session

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) and UNESCO organized a three-day National Consultation on Community Radio in collaboration with Community Radio Forum (CRF) of India, Ford Foundation and Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA). The Consultation was held in New Delhi from December 13-15, 2010 at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC). Over 100 participants from across the country and also from Australia, Canada, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Bangladesh and Nepal came together to share their experiences and discuss the post-CR policy scenario in India. The Consultation was also attended by officials representing various ministries such as the Ministry of Human Resources and Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Woman and Child Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.

The Consultation began with the welcome address by Arvind Kumar, Joint Secretary, MIB. While welcoming the delegates to the Consultation, he said that this three-day event has brought together the various stakeholders of CR sectors including organizations running CR stations, researchers, academicians, technical experts and representatives of the government. Kumar traced the development and evolution of radio broadcasting in India and recalled that it was in 1999, that FM broadcasting was opened up for private participation, and in the year 2003, educational institutions were granted permission to start campus radio stations. He mentioned that in 2006, the scope of eligibility to start CR stations was expanded to include non-governmental and non-educational institutions. Kumar also gave an overview of the regulatory and policy framework that governs community radio broadcasting in India.

Sunit Tandon, Director, Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) expressed his pleasure at being given an opportunity to host this landmark event. Tandon expressed that he was proud that the IIMC runs a campus radio station and students have started taking initiative to produce and air programmes. However, he said, much needs to be done to sustain quality programming that would make the station successful.

Vinod Pavarala, President, CRF of India and Dean, Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad, recollected that it had taken over a decade of

debates and discussions on Community Radio (CR) to put CR activists and enthusiasts on the other side of the podium where the government was giving an ear to their concerns. Reminiscing about his visit to the village of Pastapur in July 2000 where CR enthusiasts had congregated for a workshop organised by UNESCO South Asia, he remembered how after much deliberation, the team came up with what is now called the 'Pastapur Declaration'. The declaration broadly articulated the need and mandate for community radio sector in the country and even today many of the concerns stated therein need to be addressed. Pavarala cautioned the donor and facilitating agencies against losing out on community participation in a bid to hurry up, scale up, and anticipate hasty results. He also stated that the policies governing community radio need to be reviewed and loosened up. He also applauded the MIB for trying to shed the role of a regulator and take on mantle of a facilitator.

Ravina Aggarwal, Program Officer, Ford Foundation emphasized on the issues of sustainability, networking and scale. She suggested that though community radio stations served definite territories and communities, there is a need to devise ways to share knowledge between CR stations. Since All India Radio served larger geographical areas, an hour of community radio programmes on All India Radio may enable local voices to be heard across a broader spectrum. Aggarwal suggested that technology can play a significant role in scaling up and reaching a wider audience if CR can be put on platforms such as mobile phones, which is the new medium of effective communication.

Wijayananda Jayaweera, Director, Division of Communication for Development, UNESCO, Paris, delivered the key note address. He mentioned that he was participating in the 3<sup>rd</sup> such forum partnered by UNESCO and MIB (2004, 2007 and 2010). He noted that policies governing CR need to be reworked. The deficiencies must be identified and remedies worked out. "This Consultation is more important today since India was elected to head the International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC) with Raghu Menon as Chairman." India, he added, now holds the flag for the development of free, independent and pluralistic media worldwide.

Wijayananda Jayaweera also talked about the structure for licences which he felt was unfavourable towards rural and poor communities. He suggested reservation of parts of radio spectrum for community participation also emphasised that a proportion of revenue generated from telecom licences and radio spectrum allocation must be used to support Community Radio. He also made it clear that campus community radio stations are not a substitute for Community Radio Stations owned by marginalized sections of the society. He proposed that a national mentoring forum should be set up for a little hand-holding of CR stations at the initial stages. Wijayananda Jayaweera hinted towards a media literacy campaign that will serve to evaluate and effectively implement free and pluralistic media objectives.

In his address, Raghu Menon, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting sounded a note of caution by citing the example of a Delhi CR Station which has become totally commercial in its functioning and content. He also mentioned that his Ministry was working out a process to shorten the time required for processing applications and granting licences. Online application system for CR stations has been launched and so far 121 licences have

been granted. Menon felt that awareness generation is critical and MIB had thus been organizing workshops all over the country to build understanding about CR - some 23 such workshops had been organized since 2007, he informed.

The inaugural session came to end with Iskra Panevska, Advisor for Communication and Information, UNESCO, New Delhi delivering the vote of thanks to the dignitaries on the dais, the participants and as well as the collaborators and the hosts.



## Day 1 *1* Session

# Review of Community Radio Policy in India

Session one of the National Consultation – Review of Community Radio (CR) Policy in India, chaired by W. Jayaweera, UNESCO opened with a presentation of the Community Radio Forum (CRF) working paper on Policy by Stalin K of Video Volunteers.

The presentation conveyed that the CR Policy is currently shaped to bunch together all groups other than public radio broadcasters (AIR) and the private FM broadcasters. This, CRF believed is a key problem as the rapidly diminishing spectrum for CR is being monopolised by campus-run and farm radio stations. By the time the communities feel ready to plunge into this sector, it should not be that they are left with little or no spectrum.

The second issue highlighted by the policy paper was that it is taking most community-based organizations at least two to two and a half years before they can clear all hurdles and go on air. While the process at MIB has been streamlined to a great extent with the setting up of a dedicated CR Cell, the procedures at the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (especially the Wireless Planning & Coordination (WPC) wing) are contributing to interminable delays.

The CRF working paper also flagged the important issue that the ban on news and current affairs restricts freedom of expression and is unconstitutional. The recommendations made for policy reform included, among others, that the Government should prepare a comprehensive Spectrum Allocation Plan, if necessary by geographical zones, and reserve spectrum for community-based stations both in rural and urban areas. It was also suggested that if both the Campus and Community Radio Stations must remain under the same policy, it be renamed as: Campus and Community Radio Policy. The guidelines for the two should be given separately where they are different. This would involve removing the mandate of doing development programming from Campus Radio Stations. The recommendations also sought the streamlining of licensing procedures at WPC wing of the Ministry of Communication and Information



Technology. And importantly, the prohibition on broadcasting of news and current affairs on CR stations must be lifted immediately.

Responding to the issues concerning CR policy in India, the panellists made the following comments:

Jo Tacchi, Queensland University of Technology, Australia said that for her, Community Radio is essentially all about horizontal communication, diverse information sources, dialogue and debate. It has the potential to be incredibly powerful – symbolically and in everyday practice. It allows for ordinary issues from ordinary people to be voiced in ways that is extraordinary in the opportunity it provides. She felt that research is necessary to understand the significance of the CR sector and contribute to its growth. Having a voice, and being recognized, can be a powerful and transformational thing. She cited the example of a CR Station in Gujarat where she found it life changing for the women who were involved in the programming to say their names out in public and to get their voices across to those in power. Tacchi also articulated that news is a democratic process, not so much a political thing. How big is a threat for news to be allowed on private radio versus any other content?

Sajan Venniyoor, Secretary, CRF of India observed that CR in India is

*Raghu Menon delivering the inaugural address*



*Inaugural Session of the National Consultation on Community Radio*

firmly positioned in the framework of development. This emphasis on development for CR stations is a bit unrealistic as the stations have been started for communities that have no other medium for access. Sajan also raised the issue of CR applications from the North and North East being turned down because they are perceived to bring in the threat of terrorism, "But terrorists do not stand in queue for radio licenses!" He felt that CR stations must be allowed to broadcast their news; else it is a violation of the Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression. As for the Ministry not allowing news and current affairs for the want of regulatory mechanisms to oversee defaulting stations, "the poorest of the country should not be punished for the incapacity of the State." He pointed out that in India, it is given that private radio may not broadcast programming in minority languages such as Santhali or Lepcha, but why are stations in Delhi missing out on regional language programming, say in Bengali or Tamil?

Vinod Pavarala, Dean, Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communications, University of Hyderabad was categorical that we need to move away from mistrust and suspicion and move towards transparency and trust in CR sector. We must trust Community Radio Stations on the content part as they endeavour to reverse AIR's old mandate of development programming. It is also time to deliberate on what campus radio stations, KVKs can do in terms of youthful and experimental programming, he said. For government funding to support CR stations, he remarked that we need to look at successful models in other countries such as Australia. Funds can be under the aegis of an autonomous body, the government can contribute to it and we can have an independent panel to monitor it.

As a representative of the Ministry, Arvind Kumar, Joint Secretary, MIB, made an effort to address some of the concerns identified in the policy session. He informed that five frequencies had been set aside for FM and that on a pan-India basis, there are only 100 CR stations on air. In some metros such as Mumbai, Bangalore, Noida and Gurgaon, CR stations are asking for more spectrum. However, since they are not operational for 24 hours, the option of frequency sharing can be discussed. Arvind Kumar emphasized that license should be given only to well-established and deserving organizations and it is difficult to judge an organization's credibility and intention if it has been operational for less than three years. He said that applications are rejected not because there is shortage of spectrum, but because these organizations may not "deserve" a licence. He also agreed that government has kept away from funding CR stations, but funding is an issue and it needs to be seriously addressed.







Day 1

## Session 3

# Community Radio on Ground: 'On Air' Experiences

The session on Community Radio on the Ground: 'On Air' Experiences started with the presentation of highlights of the report "On Air: A Comparative Study of four Community Radio Stations in India" by Kanchan K. Malik. This comparative study (For detailed report see: Annexure 3) carried out by the Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad for UNESCO, documents the working of two rural CR stations (owned and managed by community-based organizations) and two campus-based CR stations that have completed at least one year of broadcasting. Malik pointed out that although brought into being by the same policy, a close study of radio stations run by educational institutions and community-based organizations reveals that there are distinct differences between the two. The rural community-based Community Radio (CR) stations require much more specialized attention as well as support to be able to take off and play a significant role in the lives of the communities.

Following the tabling of the report, several invitees from operational CR stations shared their stories, experiences and concerns with the audiences. Algole Narsamma of *Sangham* Radio in Andhra Pradesh explained that the concept of community radio came out of their work on other development issues like education, health, nutrition and so on. Their station has primarily been supported by UNESCO. After the license was obtained and the station went on air, most of the 5000 members of *sanghams* in 75 villages where DDS works have been contributing Rs. 5 every year to sustain it. They are also supported by various funds from Deccan Development Society (DDS). They prepare programs based on seasons and festivals and also special programs for children and old people. Algole said that *Sangham* radio strongly feels that government should fund them, as it is difficult to sustain due to the restrictions on revenue generation methods.

Through her presentation titled, "*Apna Radio – Apni Baatein*", Anujaa Shukla narrated the journey of Radio Bundelkhand (RB), Madhya Pradesh which had gone on air in 2008. The station runs for 5 hours a day – covering 250 thousand population in 125 villages. RB follows participatory model and their program formats include infotainment, drama, discussions, talks, storytelling, documentary, listener's requests and songs. RB has a team

of Radio Reporters, a Narrowcasting team and a Marketing team. The subjects/issues covered are agriculture, environment, climate change, health, banking, education, and employment. RB is a platform to promote local culture and talent. An efficient system for feedback is in place.

P Krishnamurthi of Kalanjiam Samuga Vanoli, Tamil Nadu claimed that, "Ours is the first radio on disaster preparedness in India. We had been narrowcasting for two years before we received our license. We went on air on 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2010 and have been broadcasting for four hours a day." He added that Kalanjiam CR has turned into a Village Information Centre. They regularly get feedback from the community and the programmes are made depending on the needs of the people with the participation of self-help group members, fishermen and youth.

Arti Jaiman shed light on Gurgaon ki Awaz, Haryana community radio which went on air in May 2009. They had applied for the license with only a vague idea of CR and so, she felt that awareness building is an important step towards establishing more stations. According to her, the hardest task is to find the management committee for the CR from the community. Stipends or honorariums are usually provided to those taking part in the production, but as there are limited avenues for revenue generation, financial sustainability is a serious issue for the survival of the station. Gurgaon ki Awaz has built up a 200-hours rich music bank of songs sung by local artists. Since the community is in Haryana, programming is mostly in Hindi and Haryanvi. In one year time the station has received 16000 phone calls.

Sharing his grassroots experiences from Nepal, Raghu Mainali of Radio Sagarmatha informed the participants that CR movement in Nepal has a two decade history. The civil society in Nepal waited for five long years to receive license to start Radio Sagarmatha. The struggle was not easy as they had to use different strategies to get the licenses from the concerned officials. After obtaining the licence, the challenge was "who" would decide on the content to be aired. Raghu Mainali said, the stations decided to go with the participatory, and inclusive approach in our format of programs. This was done to ensure transparency in programming by the organization. Once there is transparency, the CR Station can be sure of creating trust among listeners.

MUST (Mumbai University Students Transmission) Radio, or Mumbai University ka *apna* Community Radio, has been on air since February 2008 and was represented at the Consultation by its station manager, Pankaj Athavale. It airs programs for students and the community around the university. The multilingual programs on Community Radio give voice to different sections of the local community. Programs on civic administration, sanitation, and career are substantiated in a creative manner with local music.

Manvendra Negi of Mandakini ki Awaz said that their quest for CR began in 2001. In the beginning only four people volunteered and that has now increased to 20 volunteers who are instrumental in obtaining the content from the community. Mandakini ki Awaz is into narrowcasting and wall paper writing and will continue this till they get license. As a result of narrowcasting, they now have a 200-hour program backup. Supported by UNESCO and Ford Foundation, the CR initiative is growing in Uttarakhand as a service provider to the community

Namma Dhvani (ND), a CR Station in Budhikote, Karnataka was established by Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency (MYRADA), a non-governmental organization. Presenting on behalf of ND, Archana Ramachander said that even before getting the license, they had built the infrastructure and were narrowcasting. MYRADA had a continuing interaction with the community even before ND got the

license. The initial challenges were sorted out through a continuous dialogue with the community members. Archana Ramachander explained that ND follows an informal dissemination program format which has made it an institutional and knowledge resource for the community. MYRADA is a self-sustained organization in terms of finance, with a long-standing commitment to promote CR.

The first Tibetan community FM radio, 'Tashi Delek 90.4 FM' was launched on June 1, 2010 at the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) in Dharamsala, India by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Kalsang Tsewang of Tashi Delek, said that "Tashi Delek 90.4 FM is the first licensed CR Station in the Indian Himalayan Region." Named after the Tibetan greeting 'Tashi Delek', meaning hello/good luck/blessings/may good things come to you, the goal of the station is "to serve the Tibetan, Indian and expatriate communities of the region with excellent music and timely local information. Tsewang explained that the purpose of this radio station is to serve the local community, educating them about health and social issues, and at the same time to provide information and entertainment. The radio station is currently staffed by a station manager with content contribution from six students and five staff volunteers who have received short-term training in reporting, anchoring and broadcasting.

Bazlur Rahman, Chief Executive Officer of Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC), shared his experiences of working at the grassroots level with CR in Bangladesh. According to him, the CR movement started in 1998 in Bangladesh. After ten long years of relentless struggle by the civil society, the Government came up with CR Policy in the year 2008.

As per the guidelines for issuing of licenses, in Bangladesh the CR application goes through three committees – the National Recommendation Committee, the Technical Committee and the Monitoring Committee. Bazlur reported that on April 22, 2010, the Government had cleared licenses to establish 14 CR stations in the country and more licences were in the pipeline. An interesting piece of information that came out was that the Bangladesh Government is planning to align the

CRs with the Government agenda of "Digital Bangladesh by 2021" for technological development of the nation. In accordance with the said agenda, the second phase of CR licensing will begin in 2011, the third phase would be in 2015 and the fourth phase is expected in 2021. Also, the present ruling party, Awami League, has included CR as a promise in its election manifesto.

The two sessions, "On Air" Experiences, chaired by N Ramakrishnan, Ideosync Media Combine and Richard Rego, Radio Sarang, respectively, brought out the concerns and issues faced by the CR stations even as they are putting their best foot forward to involve the communities and dwell on locally relevant content. The issue of sustainability, both social and technological, emerged as one that requires most attention in addition to capacity building. Several speakers also felt that the policy needs to be re-visited for incorporating provisions that make the licensing process simple and accessible.



*Mr. Arvind Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting*



# Broadcasting Technology and Infrastructure

The session on Broadcasting Technology and Infrastructure was devoted to exploring the technological possibilities for Community Radio (CR) practitioners and on the new innovations in this field. The panelists evaluated the merits and demerits of the available technological options in terms of their community friendly features and their cost effectiveness. The session was chaired by HO Srivastava of the World Development Foundation. Vasuki Belavadi from the University of Hyderabad presented the Community Radio Forum (CRF) Working Paper on Technology. The presentation first pointed towards the problems being faced by LOI holders to get Standing Advisory Committee on radio Frequency Allocations (SACFA) clearances and Wireless Operating License (WOL). While on the one hand it is unfair to make online application mandatory for Community Based Organization (CBOs) operating in remote areas, even for those with reliable internet connections, there have been inordinate delays; in some cases, over a year, mostly caused by functioning of the SACFA website.

The paper further elaborated on the several technology options available in the market for setting up of a CR. However, it called attention to the fact that CBOs often tend to withdraw their idea of setting up a CR stations on getting an impression (often created by agencies promoting turnkey solutions) that technology costs are very high whereas low cost options are available. The presentation noted that the import duties on radio equipment such as transmitters is exorbitantly high given the absence of indigenous manufacturers of electronic equipment in India. While there is need to curtail the duty levied, research needs to be undertaken to reduce the costs of transmitters.

The working paper made many recommendations which were discussed during the session. It sought that the process for SACFA & WOL applications should be revamped to make it more accessible and that the Wireless Planning and Coordination (WPC) wing should be set up as an effective mechanism to provide feedback to the applicants on their applications. It was suggested that the Ministry should provide concessions for higher transmitter power in difficult terrains. The current duty structures need to be reviewed to make it more enabling for CR stations. Also, more agencies should be allowed to manufacture transmitters.

It was proposed that the government and donor agencies could look at setting up a grant for Research and Development on cost effective technologies. Start up CRs must be encouraged to explore low cost technology options too. CBOs should explore the option of integrating mobile telephony into their radio stations to provide for increased interaction and effectiveness in terms of programming.

Among the panelists, Hemant Babu of Nomad India Network felt that it should be made easier to import technology from other countries, "Why is there a 52% import duty for the technology which we are not manufacturing here in India? Even in eBay, a lot of broadcast devices are sold without license. Then why is CR technology so expensive legally?"

Aaditeshwar Seth, Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi made a presentation on some of the technological challenges and opportunities that CR is facing in the present times. He explained how radio and mobile phone integration could lead to efficient community engagement and that a platform for CR campaigns could showcase impact stories and content from CR stations. He felt that for continued



*Sunit Tandon delivering the Welcome Address*



*Prof. Pavarala, W. Jayaweera, Sajan Venniyoor, Arvind Kumar at the Consultation*

training and sustainable content production it was necessary to develop a peer-to-peer mentoring platform.

Narsimha Swamy, from Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL) talked about the technical challenges that CR is facing and the manner in which they could be addressed. Yogendra Pal, Chief Engineer, ALL India Radio talked about the cost effective infrastructure for radio. P Chandrasekharan, Dy. Wireless Advisor, Wireless Planning and Coordination shared with the participants that the database and process for SACFA clearances was being upgraded and this is causing delay in giving clearances. He said that if an applicant approaches WPC with SACFA with all related documents then the applicant doesn't have to wait for a long time as the process is being streamlined to cater to CR stations. However, the SACFA application asks for many details because the application process is not meant exclusively for CR.

The session also discussed the need to insure CR equipment and also that the CR NGOs should network so that they can share technological support.



*W. Jayaweera, Jo Tacchi, Arvind Kumar in one of the sessions*





# Financial and Social Sustainability

The session on Financial and Social Sustainability was an animated one and commanded engaged participation from among the audiences. Against the backdrop of current challenges facing Community Radio (CR) stations and lack of awareness and preparation among license applicants, issues of sustainability are paramount, particularly human and social, programme, technological and financial sustainability. The session chaired by Raghu Mainali, Nepal Forum of Environment Journalists, Nepal sought to address these challenges and offer recommendations to both the government and CBOs to ensure the survival and success of the CR movement in India.

Arti Jaiman presented the working paper put together by the Community Radio Forum (CRF) of India member that touched upon the key challenge related to sustainability, which included changing development priorities, shrinking overall funding climate, challenges of digital versus analogue, and vulnerabilities of 'NGOisation'. The working paper elucidated that in the absence of funds, building and sustaining a cohesive link between the radio station and the community is difficult. Also, as dynamic community engagement is the only critical aspect in programme sustainability, it was important to build a CR Station as a reflection of community aspirations and NOT just NGO/Institution mandate in the field. Another important factor important for sustainability, according to Arti was an emphasis on low-cost, sustainable infrastructure and technology. The presentation ended by reiterating what had been stated in the community radio policy working paper/session i.e. a need for instituting the community radio support fund which would contribute directly towards enhancing the sustainability of the CR stations.

The important recommendations of the working paper and this session stressed that for greater community involvement, emphasis should be more on live, phone-in programs and on narrowcasting sessions. Ongoing training to build a local talent bank and to encourage volunteerism must be taken up. The presentation looked at community audits as an ideal means for measuring station's community content, participation, and impact.



Soma Biswas shared the sustainability experiences of Radio Bundelkhand (RB). RB follows the Action Research model to build the capacities of the local people and also analyse a range of area-specific issues for programmes. They have explored inexpensive, local and innovative technologies to run radio by facilitating experimentation by NOMAD and Gramin Radio Inter-Networking System (GRINS). They implement ground-level projects of national and international funders e.g. United Nations of Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), COL, HIVOS. RB also collects advertisement from local markets. However, as Bundelkhand is an extremely poor region, so people think of "community reporting as a job... not a voluntary activity."

In his response to the issues of sustainability, David Melzer talked briefly about the community broadcasting in Australia. Australia, after 40 years of community broadcasting, has more than 350 stations. Commercial stations have 250 licences and the national and public broadcasters have 70. Australia has more licensed CR stations than the number of government and commercial stations combined. He said that 70% of CR stations are outside big cities, but each of these have diverse programs and diverse participants. He emphasized that people need to be engaged with their stations, their participation needs to be meaningful. They need to be invited to make decisions – including management decisions – the essence of CR is access and participation in all aspects of station's operations. It is a matured sector in terms of sustainability in Australia and a complementary sector in Australia. The program content is for the indigenous, migrants, ethnic, educational institutions, human rights and justice groups. There is community involvement in terms of administration, accounts and content generation and so on.



*The dignitaries in the inaugural session*

David also argued that sustainability for all stations must be assisted by a good national body. The CBAA started some years after the first stations – set up a separate funding body, the Community Broadcasting Foundation which gets funding from different government departments, philanthropic groups and NGOs to distribute to stations and the Community Broadcasting Association Australia (CBA). CBAA is recognized in the national broadcast legislation. It lobbies for stations and also runs services, like program exchange, training, national music distribution and research.

Raghu Mainali presented a Nepal version of the sustainability model and explained several aspects that govern sustainability including whether or not CR is visualized as a community heritage, legitimized and held in esteem by the listeners and is self-governing in its functions or not. Mainali has developed indicators that help obtain the sustainability quotient of a CR Station.

This session elicited several questions such as how can a CR Station generate finances for self-sustenance from within the community, and from outside, say, in the form of advertising revenue etc.? Are there innovative ideas of financial sustainability that can be borrowed from the experiences of other CR stations? What is it that motivates people to participate in CR? Do issues related to their identity unite them? Or are citizenship and cultural concerns closer to the hearts of the people? How can a democratic process be put in place so that the voices of the marginalized are genuinely heard?



# Community Radio and Other Development Concerns

The session on Community Radio and other Development Concerns chaired by Vinod Pavarala, President, CRF of India sought to look at Community Radio (CR) not only as a tool to disseminate information to an audience in a top-down mode, but as a powerful tool for social change. As articulated by Pavarala, community radio addressing development concerns suggests that CR is meant for disseminating developmental messages in terms of health and education, etc. But, community radio is an end itself, as it helps the people come out of their shells and make their voices heard to the world out there.

Among the panellists, Rajen Varada from LabourNet, Bangalore talked about his organization which provides social protection, welfare services, builds capacities of workers and markets their services to customers. With an objective to transform the lives of workers in the informal sector who make up 93% of India's workforce and suffer from poverty, deprivation, as well as a lack of social and economic mobility, LabourNet's endeavours are directed towards making them a strong, professionally competent, and empowered asset to the nation. Rajen felt that CR could help the informal labour community people, also because they travel 2-3 hours to reach their work place in a day.

Speaking in this session with a focus on the role of community radio in development, Steve Buckley, Asociacion Mundial De Radios Comunitarias (AMARC) said most would agree that broadcast media have profound impact on human development, yet the nature of that impact is complex and multi-layered. This, according to him, presented challenges at the level of analysis and in the formulation of strategies to strengthen the development impact of CR. He felt that as development impact is most often measured in terms of income, health and education, there is a tendency to discount the intrinsic value of providing community media - its contribution to strengthening people's capability to communicate, which is central to our self identity and to recognition by others. Steve then gave examples of how these new perspectives can be illustrated by the role of community media in responding to particular development challenges such as: climate change and natural disaster.



*W. Jayaweera, Director, Division Communication for Development, UNESCO Paris giving his keynote address*



Steve also commented on some of the contentious issues that were the focus of discussion during this National Consultation and offered a perspective from the international experience. These included issues such as ban on news, distinction between community and campus radio stations and the proposals for an independent funding mechanism to support the sector. *(for details, see Annexure 5).*

S Panneerselvam, Panos South Asia emphasized that content generation is what matters in community media in terms of development and not the technology that we use. Citing an example, he said that if people protest against a developmental project and the mainstream media



were to cover this, it is known as polyphony and when community media covers, it is called cacophony. He felt that using only development indicators to evaluate CR is not justified as the impact of CR goes much beyond just development. Also, community is not a dump to receive everything, but a dynamic organ that breaks the hierarchy of the centralized state media.

The discussion that followed dealt with how there could be joint action strategies that could link CR with such pressing issues as the reduction of poverty, disaster management, good governance, food security, right to information, women empowerment etc.

*Sunit Tandon, Prof. Vinod Pavaral, W. Jayaweera, Raghu Menon, Arvind Kumar, Ravina Aggarwal*





# Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

The final session on day two of the Consultations thrashed out issues related to Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing. It was chaired by R. Sreedher, Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA). The focus of the session was on the role of knowledge sharing and capacity building that could happen at different levels in the CR sector. Ramnath Bhat, MAARA, presented the working paper on behalf of the Community Radio Forum. The paper emphasized the need for CR practitioners to allow knowledge to flow. CR stations must be seen as knowledge managers. However, care needs to be taken so that knowledge sharing does not tend towards standardization. Keeping the spirit of community radio, knowledge sharing should be sensitive to local contexts, should be adaptable across cultures and regions, and have the flexibility of cognizance. Ram's presentation also indicated that unless participatory systems are well in place, content development will remain a huge challenge.

The paper earmarked the areas that need capacity building inputs among communities as policy literacy, technology, content development, research and evaluation, documentation, management and sustainability. The main recommendations included, that practitioners be recognized as trainers, knowledge sharing in regional languages, open repository to demonstrate adaptive knowledge sharing, community based models of monitoring, evaluation, documentation and research, emphasis on live programming in production, among others.

Ian Pringle, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), focused on knowledge sharing using Community Radio (rather than among Community Radios) in his presentation. Based on the success of COL's work with educational programming using community media, Ian talked of four areas that are closely interrelated, and together they reflect what he called "*learning for development*." These are: Dialogue not Dissemination, Participation, Collaboration for Synergy and Blended and Multichannel Learning. In the second part of his talk on capacity development, Ian made a pitch for a new approach, namely distance training for CR stations.

Kalinga Senivaratne, from AMIC (Asian Media Information Centre) expressed his concern that the 'BY THE PEOPLE' component is lacking in CR especially those operated by educational institutions and NGOs and what are the ways in which 'BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE' model could be established?

The other panelists in this session were Naimur Rahman, One World South Asia; Venu Arora, Ideosync Media Combine; and Osama Manzar, Digital Empowerment Foundation. While Rahman underlined the need to plug the



*Sajan Venniyoor emphasizing an issue*

capacity gaps adequately, Osama Manzar expressed the need to recognize the power of indigenous knowledge. Venu Arora felt that CR today is a community communicator and huge investment in terms of time, energy and learning is required to create communicators. People should not shy away from making this effort. She also endorsed on the basis of her experience of working with communities that community members are the best trainers and that both new and old technology should go hand in hand in the case of CR.



*Prof. Pavaral responding to queries*



# Role of Government and Other International Agencies

**O**n the final day, Supriya Sahu, Director (Broadcast), Information & Broadcasting gave a presentation on the final day based on the proceedings of the previous two days of the Consultation on "Role of Government and other International Agencies in Promoting Community Radio Movement in India". The presentation reflected the proactive spirit of her Ministry in terms of CR initiatives in India. She identified some basic areas where there was scope for improvement in designing of development schemes. She felt that in development program communication strategies, the community was not involved in the design process and in implementation. These non-participative strategies adopted by the government have failed to achieve their full potential.

Supriya also considered that relationship between the government and the community is perceived as that of 'Giver' and 'Receiver' where the government always acts as a 'Giver'. For growth and development, the relationship should be equitable. She shared some important moves that the CRF could initiate so that CR becomes a reliable alternative and vibrant medium of communication. She further said that the CR movement has grown; there are over 100 CR stations in the country. Though the number is insignificant, it is a milestone. There are 263 CR stations lined up to be operationalized and very soon it is expected grow to 300-500.

Government of India has launched excellent development programs like Right to Information (RTI), National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), and National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) which are changing the social fabric of our country. Most of these programs have been designed taking inputs from the community and that is the reason that they are successful and making a big impact in the community. These programs must tap the potential of CR for a wider reach. In this regard, she posed some important questions such as: "Whether Government should continue to play the role of a mere regulator or take on a new proactive role of a facilitator? Given the tremendous potential of CR stations, should there not be a paradigm shift in the policy to define the new role of the government and international organizations?"

Supriya Sahu's presentation had thrown some very crucial, feasible and promising recommendations including:

- The licensing procedure needs to be simplified and demystified.
- WPC should come forward to facilitate quick processing of applications.
- Empanelment of CR stations with the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) should be a priority to enable CR stations to get government advertisements.
- The guidelines for empanelment should be finalized before Jan 2011.
- There should be a series of workshops to involve local community at the district level.
- A lot of effort and relevant communication material is needed to familiarize every Gram Sabha (village council) about CR.
- There should be a continuous dialogue and discussion between the government, CR operators, aspirants and the listening community.
- The National Consultation should be an annual feature and not held once in three years.
- The discussions should help feed the policy to make it vibrant and dynamic and not something that changes only once in 5 years.



*Raghu Menon addressing the media*

Supriya Sahu also provided a set of special recommendations for Community Radio Fund (CRF) that she thought was essential for giving the much needed push to the CR sector in India:

- CRF should be set up as a registered autonomous body.
- The managing body should have members from community, CR operators and CR forums, government, and international organizations.
- It should have a seed capital that should fund CR stations for Capital grants and running expenditure for some period.
- It should have complete independence to decide who to fund, how to fund and how much to fund.
- It should follow completely transparent procedures for selecting organizations.
- It should be subject to social audit by stakeholders.
- Funds should come with no strings attached as it would undermine the philosophy and spirit behind CR stations.
- No forcing or influencing the content from outside by any government or international organization.
- Communities should have complete freedom to decide the content and choose their priorities.
- CR stations should be an integral part of all communication strategies of the government and the international organizations: World Bank – Health Systems Projects; UNDP – Livelihood projects; UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNICEF – several projects on empowerment.
- A 10-member Core Committee to work on the detailed project for CRF.
- The guidelines should be re-drafted and should allow change.
- The time frame set for the task is 3 months.
- The policy should be vibrant and dynamic.

Vinod Pavarala, who chaired this session expressed his agreement and welcomed the change in the language being used by the government as it was the language of a facilitator and not that of a regulator.

Among the other panellists for this session, Nitin Chandra, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development expressed that he was impressed by the idea of how CR can be an extremely vital tool of communication for his Ministry. The Ministry has an onerous mandate to reach out to every rural household in the country. What is being discussed is a huge number of about 720 million people in rural areas spread across three million square kilometres area. The Ministry has a very good network of institutions and they can do their transactions much more efficiently and effectively. They have a huge array of programs. Approximately



*Audience at the Consultation*

INR 830 billion have been spent on 9 different flagship programs like rural roads, employment, livelihoods generation through self-employment, social assistance through pensions, rural housing, drinking water and sanitation. In all these programs, the component of engagement of people is very high. We stipulate that the plans of employment generation projects, housing projects should be drawn by the community itself. It's the Gram Sabha where the plan should be drawn. In that regard we have an important task of communication. One block in each state has been identified to communicate about the government programs. The intervention of CR can help boost participation in the programs.

Sree Ranjan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, had this to say about their involvement with CR, "Women and children constitute 75% of the population of our country. Their needs are specific at various age groups. There has to be a lifecycle approach in communication in this Ministry as well as from the perspective of women and children. I look after ICDS – Integrated Child Development Services scheme. A major challenge for us is that of malnutrition. There is need of intense engagement of community, rather, individuals and households on many issues which affect our behaviour, dispels our doubts in myths that have been perpetuated. Social issues like dowry, foeticide can also be dealt with effectively through CR."

Informing the audiences that Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has a separate cell of Information Education Communication (IEC) that undertakes publicity of the Ministry through electronic and print media, Raman Prasad, Program Officer, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said that they have six to seven programmes that are aired through All India Radio,





*The audience in the interactive session.*

India's public service broadcaster. He felt that if CR is to be engaged, then guidelines for engagement need to be prepared. The Ministry is keen to publicise the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) messages through CR. Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) programs in states blocks and villages can also be run on CR as can other policy and programs of the Ministry.

Uma Iyer from the Ministry of Panchayati Raj also felt that CR is promising as it ensures communication in one's own language, engages with rural communities and is an empowerment tool. It bridges the gap between the rural and urban. She felt that the multiple programs that the Panchayati Raj ministry is working on need to be communicated to people and this is possible only through CR.

Sundeep Muppidi, Secretary General, AIMC, Singapore elaborated on the role of international agencies in funding for social change and adopting inclusive implementation strategy to engage with the community. Iskra Panevska from UNESCO put emphasis on the strong support that UNESCO is providing to CRs across the globe. She also mentioned that International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) is equally endorsing the CR initiatives in India along with other nations. She informed that IPDC had played a key role in Nepal's first CR initiative. UNESCO has funded the National Consultations on CR in India as well as supported the establishment of 10 CR stations in India. Iskra Panevska revealed that UNESCO, with the help of state governments and CBOs, has campaigned whenever any natural disaster occurred in India to establish CR stations in the disaster-prone area.



## Valedictory Session

Wijayananda Jayaweera, Director, Division Communication for Development, chaired the valedictory session in which he invited comments and feedback from the participants. He expressed his optimism about the development of the policy and the consensus on establishing a support fund for the Community Radio (CR) movement. To work pro-actively to promote the CR sector in communities, the focus should be on community-built or operated CRs, he said. Recalling that in 2004, during the first Consultation, he advised against license to panchayats (local government), Wijayananda Jayaweera articulated that the reasons for this are clear. Community media, like any other media has a watchdog role. The media is there to ensure transparency, accountability, and to unravel facts which are not normally in public domain. To do that, they must have editorial independence both from political, business or other private interests.

Wijayananda Jayaweera expressed that government or political institutions should not run their own media except for publicity. The media should keep their autonomy, independence and distance from governments. That's why the need to foster free, independent and pluralistic media – free of vested interest, having editorial independence and pluralistic in having different types of media, different viewpoints in the community. India as leader of International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) is supposed to protect and promote free, independent and pluralistic media. Giving license to panchayats is contrary to the principles of free and independent media. Wijayananda Jayaweera proposed that UNESCO could help in forming community broadcast and editorial guidelines for CRs.

Vinod Pavarala, President, Community Radio Forum, made the CRF stand on campus and community radio clear by emphasizing that it is not opposed to campus radios. The campus radios are welcome to step out of the campus and work with communities around them. They cannot be mandated to do that. When working with communities, the campus radios should not reproduce the top down hierarchies of the past in a developmentalist paradigm where the educated elite 'teach' the illiterate. Instead, the campus radios should work with communities and see how they can promote participatory programming. He said that in our country there is a huge infrastructure of radio stations. There are about 75



*Training community youth for programming*



*Setting up equipment at a Community Radio Station*

local radio stations run by All India Radio all over the country near villages. They are completely dysfunctional. They were mandated to do community-based programs which they not been doing because of various reasons. The local bodies like the panchayats can be given access to these radio stations which is the state's public infrastructure.

Supriya Sahu who represented the government's view on various issues related to CR observed that there was a need for capacity building for organizations and individuals applying for CR licenses. One big lacuna in the entire licensing system is that the information on CR is not available to the applicant. There is a need to work on having a contact centre in each state. She also touched on the controversial topic related to community radio stations in the state of Jharkhand. The probable reason for non-clearance of CR licenses in Jharkhand could be the perception of the threat of extremism. She suggested that a national body like CRF should take up advocacy for CR in Jharkhand on a case-to-case basis.

Venu Arora, Director of Projects, Ideosync Media Combine who had been asked to provide a summary of the Consultation on behalf of CRF, thanked all the participants and panelists for a healthy discussion and contribution in what she termed as a milestone Consultation. The language being used in the Consultation was that of partnership with the government, and it is language to be celebrated, she felt. She was appreciative of the government's stand on the policy issues that needed to be resolved and had been highlighted during the Consultation. The policy should be an enabling policy which will include the role of the government as a facilitator rather than as a regulator. The CRF needs to be strengthened as the association of community broadcasters in the country. A step forward is the creation of the support fund as well as reframing campus and news issues. A lot of thought and investment should be put in research and development to develop robust yet low cost technology for CRs. It is recommended that the import-export duty on equipment be cut. A bigger effort is needed for capacity building and sustainability for maintaining the equipment since the CRs are set up and operate in remote areas. Guidelines for content sharing and programming have to be developed with the help of community intervention.

Towards the end of the Consultations, Rajiv Takru, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting launched the new website, [www.communityradioindia.org](http://www.communityradioindia.org) developed and maintained by the University of Hyderabad and funded by UNESCO.

Supriya Sahu proposed the vote of thanks where she thanked all the participants from India and abroad, the UNESCO team, CRF, IIMC and her team for their efforts to make the Consultation productive and successful.

# Annexure 1

## Abbreviations

AMARC	Asociacion Mundial De Radios Comunitarias
AMIC	Asian Media Information and Communication Centre
CBAA	Community Broadcasting Association Australia
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CEMCA	Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia
CR	Community Radio
CRF	Community Radio Forum
CRS	Community Radio Station
FM	Frequency Modulation
GOPA	Grant of Permission Agreement
IIMC	Indian Institute of Mass Communication
KVK	Krishi Vigyan Kendra
MAYA	Movement for Alternatives and Youth Awareness
MIB	Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NHRM	National Rural Health Mission
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
RTI	Right to Information
SACFA	Standing Advisory Committee on Radio Frequency Allocation
SHG	Self Help Groups
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WOL	Wireless Operating License
WPC	Wireless Planning and Coordination

## Annexure 2

### National Consultation on Community Radio Policy 13-15 December, 2010, IIMC, New Delhi

## Agenda

### Day 1 (Monday, 13 December, 2010)

Upto

10:00am	Registration
10.00am-10.30 am	Welcome Remarks and Introduction to Community Radios in India: Arvind Kumar, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Welcome Address: Sunit Tandon, Director, Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi Special Remarks: Vinod Pavarala, President, Community Radio Forum of India and Head, Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad Special Remarks: Ravina Aggarwal, Program Officer, Ford Foundation Keynote Address: Strengthening Community Radio in India: W. Jayaweera, Director, Division Communication for Development, UNESCO, Paris
10.30am-10.40am	Inaugural Address: Raghu Menon, Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
10.40am-10.45am	Vote of Thanks: Iskra Panevska, Advisor for Communication and Information, UNESCO New Delhi
10.45am-11.15am	Tea Break
11.15am-11.30am	Session 1: Review of Community Radio Policy in India  Chair: W. Jayaweera, UNESCO Paris  Presentation of Working Paper: Stalin K, Video Volunteers
11:30am-01:00pm	Panelists 1. Arvind Kumar, Joint Secretary(Broadcasting), Information & Brodcasting 2. Vinod Pavarala, Community Radio Forum of India

3. Jo Tacchi, Queensland University of Technology, Australia
  4. Sajan Venniyoor, CRF of India
- Interactive Session

01:00pm-02:00pm

Lunch

02:00pm-02:15pm

Session 2: Community Radio on the Ground: 'On Air' Experiences I

Chair: N Ramakrishnan, Ideosync Media Combine

Presentation: University of Hyderabad field report: Kanchan K. Malik, Associate Professor, University of Hyderabad

02:15pm-03:30pm

Panelists

1. Sangham Radio, Algole Narsamma
  2. Radio Bundelkhand, Anujaa Shukla
  3. Kalanjiam Radio, P Krishnamurthi
  4. Gurgaon ki Awaz, Arti Jaiman
  5. Grassroot Experiences from Nepal, Raghu Mainali
- Interactive Session

03:30pm-04:00pm

Tea Break

04:00pm-05:15pm

Session 3: Community Radio on the Ground: 'On Air' Experiences II

Chair: Richard Rego, Radio Sarang

Panelists

1. MUST Radio, Pankaj Athavale
  2. Mandakini Ki Awaz, Manvendra Negi
  3. Namma Dhvani, Archana Ramachander
  4. Tashi Delek, Kalsang Tsewang
  5. Grassroot Experiences from Bangladesh, Bazlur Rahman
- Interactive Session

## Day 2 (Tuesday, 14 December, 2010)

10.00am-10:15am

Session 4: Broadcasting Technology and Infrastructure

Chair: HO Srivastava, World Development Foundation

Presentation of Working Paper: Vasuki Belavadi, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad

10.15am-11:15am	<p>Panelists</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Hemant Babu, Nomad India Network</li><li>2. Yogendra Pal, All India Radio</li><li>3. Aaditeshwar Seth, Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi</li><li>4. Narsimha Swamy, Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited</li><li>5. P Chandrasekharan, Dy. Wireless Advisor, Wireless Planning &amp; Coordination (TBC)</li></ol> <p>Interactive Session</p>
11.15am-11.45am	Tea Break
11.45am-12.00pm	<p>Session 5: Financial and Social Sustainability</p> <p>Chair: Raghu Mainali, Nepal Forum of Environment Journalists, Nepal</p> <p>Presentation of Working Paper: Arti Jaiman, Community Radio Forum of India</p>
12.00pm-01.00pm	<p>Panelists</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ravina Aggarwal, Ford Foundation</li><li>2. Indira Mansingh, Development Alternatives</li><li>3. P V Satheesh, Deccan Development Society</li><li>4. David Melzer, Community Broadcasting Association of Australia</li></ol> <p>Interactive Session</p>
01.00pm-02.00pm	Lunch
02.00pm-03.15pm	<p>Session 6: Community Radio and Development Concerns</p> <p>Chair: Vinod Pavarala, President, CRF of India</p> <p>Panelists</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A S Panneerselvam, Panos South Asia</li><li>2. Steve Buckley, AMARC</li><li>3. Rajen Varada, LabourNet, Bangalore</li></ol> <p>Interactive Session</p>
03.15pm-03.45pm	Tea Break
03.45pm-04.00pm	<p>Session 7: Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing</p> <p>Chair: R. Sreedher, Commonwealth Educational Media Center of Asia</p> <p>Presentation of Working Paper: Ram Bhat, Maara</p>



- 04.00pm-05.15pm
- Panelists
1. Naimur Rahman, OneWorld South Asia
  2. Ian Pringle, Commonwealth Of Learning, Canada
  3. Kalinga Senivaratne, The Asian Media Information Centre
  4. Osama Manzar, Digital Empowerment Foundation
- Interactive Session

### Day 3 (Wednesday, 15 December, 2010)

- 10.00am-11.30am
- Session 8: Role of Government Departments and International Agencies
- Chair: Iskra Panevska, UNESCO
- Working Paper: Supriya Sahu, Director (Broadcast), Information & Broadcasting
- Panelists
1. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health
  2. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Human Resources and Development
  3. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development
  4. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Woman and Child Development
  5. Joint secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
  6. Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
  7. Supriya Mukherji, UNICEF
  8. Sundeep Muppidi, Secretary General, Asian Media Information and Communication Centre, Singapore
- Interactive Session
- 11.30am-11.45am
- Tea Break
- 11.45am-12.30pm
- Session 9: Role of Government Departments and International Agencies - Continued
- 12.30pm-01.15pm
- Valedictory Session
- Summing Up: Venu Arora, Director of Projects, Ideosync Media Combine
- Launch of Website: [www.communityradioindia.org](http://www.communityradioindia.org): by Rajiv Takru, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
- The Way Forward: Rajiv Takru, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
- Vote of Thanks: Supriya Sahu, Director (Broadcast) , Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
- 01.15pm
- Lunch

# Annexure 3

## 'On Air': A Comparative Study of Four Community Radio Stations in India\*

Vinod Pavarala, Kanchan K. Malik, and Vasuki Belavadi

### Introduction

In many ways, the history of the struggle for Community Radio (CR) in India, which culminated in November 2006 in a new Government of India policy permitting CR, has been an effort to realise the mandate to use radio as a means to build a robust civil society in the country. The processes of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation in the media industries since the late 20th century have intensified concerns about homogenisation of content, centralisation of power and control, and increasing marginalisation of the issues affecting the lives of the poor and disenfranchised in mainstream media. The fight for freeing of the radio spectrum has been concerned with providing an alternative to the dominant media and a means of expression to a wide spectrum of social actors who have been socially, culturally, geographically, economically and politically excluded from power. Taking into consideration the experiences and policy precedents from other democratic countries, the Community Radio activists have appealed for broadcasting in India to be based on principles of universal access, diversity, equitable resource allocation, democratisation of communication, and empowerment of historically disadvantaged sections of society.

A historic judgment delivered by the Supreme Court of India in February 1995 ruled that, "airwaves constitute public property and must be utilized for advancing public good." The judgment further decreed that broadcasting media as a whole should promote freedom of expression and speech and, therefore, should be able to enjoy freedom from Government monopoly and control subject to regulation by a public body. Following this judgment, campaigners for Community Radio in India struggled through the good part of a decade for the creation of a new tier of not-for-profit radio stations, owned and run by local people, typically in rural areas, which would enable marginalized communities to use the medium to create opportunities for social change, cohesion and inclusion as well as for creative and cultural expression. These intense advocacy efforts and passionate debates about CR broadcasting for the social sector finally resulted in an inclusive CR policy approved by the Union Cabinet in November 2006.

It is in this context that this research was conducted with a mandate to observe and study the practices of CR among non/semi-literate, rural communities as well as by educational institutions after the announcement of the CR policy in November 2006. CR initiatives such as, *Sangham* Radio and Radio Bundelkhand by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other developmental groups across India are making an effort to use communication technologies for the empowerment of local communities; for enabling sustainable development; and to provide people with access to media not

---

\*The study is part of an overall project on Community Radio – *Sharing Capacities, Empowering Communities* – of the Department of Communication, Sarojini Naidu School of Arts & Communication, University of Hyderabad supported by UNESCO, New Delhi.

*Annexure 3*

solely as receivers and consumers but as producers and contributors of media content. Campus-based community radio stations, such as MUST Radio (Mumbai) and *Hamara* MSPICM 90.4 FM (Solan, Himachal Pradesh), on the other hand, are eager to play a crucial role in promoting education; addressing emerging social and ethical challenges; fostering cultural diversity; supporting gender equality; and building inclusive knowledge societies. The Department of Communication, Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad (UoH) carried out field work to study how these CR stations are being harnessed as a tool for social change and empowerment at the grassroots level.

## Objectives

The broad purpose of this study undertaken between March and June 2010 was to document the working of two rural CR stations (owned and managed by community-based organizations) and two campus-based CR stations that have completed at least one year of broadcasting. We examined the origins of the CR stations, the philosophy of the organizations owning and managing the stations, and also indicators such as their notions of community, levels of community listenership/participation, community mobilization practices, financial and social sustainability, appropriate content, capacity-building of marginalized social groups and incorporation of participatory monitoring and evaluation methods in the overall operations of the CR stations.

Given below are some of the specific objectives:

1. To find out about the CR Station – beginnings, launch, training, language, funding, partners, signature tunes, reporters, coverage area, issues, broadcast timing, programme format(s), participation, personnel, management, ownership, advisory committee, audiences, feedback mechanism, volunteers etc. (Interview(s) with owner/coordinator/station manager of the station).
2. To interact with the reporters, station managers and staff of the CR Station regarding aspects mentioned in objective one.
3. To visit villages/parts of the city where the radio programmes reach and to interact with the listeners regarding the programming on the CR Station and about the role that it plays in their lives.

Some broad research questions that the team sought to address are:

- What difference is the CR Station/programmes making? Does it promote dialogue between individuals and groups?
- Do grassroots issues and indigenous ideas get transformed into radio programmes? Is the programme strengthening individual and community communication capacity, decision-making and action?
- Does the programme enable previously powerless individuals and communities to take control of the means and content of communication and to achieve their own social change goals?
- What are some of the key domains of change that the programme has brought about in people's lives; in people's participation; and in sustainability of people's institutions and their activities?

## Methodology

It is suggested by many scholars that the research work with rural communities, particularly in the context of participatory development, must be qualitative in nature. Such research must ensure participation of rural audiences in a more meaningful manner than as mere respondents in the interrogative context of a structured questionnaire. The same holds true of research in urban areas where the work involved is purportedly community-based.

Given the nature of our research study, semi-structured in-depth interviews and formal/informal Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) seemed to be the obvious choice. Semi-structured interviews and FGDs are particularly useful in gaining specific information and also allow better control over the flow of information resulting from the exchange. Unlike questionnaires, the exchange in semi-structured qualitative interviews and focus group discussions offers the scope to broach issues/topics at length and go into details that are otherwise missed in other methods. There is perceptible respect for popular knowledge and the inquiry is neither exploitative nor detached as in the case of some scientific models. There is a conscious attempt to break down distance between researcher and the researched and that the research process seeks to promote critical reflection among participants themselves. Participant observation in the radio stations is a vital part of this methodology.

The initial brainstorming by the research team involved deliberations on the following:

- a. Objectives of the study/methodology
- b. Selection of sites (CR stations) to undertake the research.
- c. People to be contacted for interviews/FGDs.
- d. Selection/Number of respondents/participants.
- e. Discussion on characteristics of the Participatory Evaluation Approach to be adopted by the team to carry out research which was exploratory in nature.
- f. Themes/issues to be explored – construction of a flexible interview guide.
- g. Other logistical details.

After general discussions and a review meeting to thrash out the research plan, two of the first rural community-based radio stations to go on air – *Sangham* Radio in Medak district (Andhra Pradesh) and Radio Bundelkhand in Orchha (Madhya Pradesh) – and two campus-based radio stations which are at least a year old – MUST Radio in Mumbai (Maharashtra) and *Hamara* MSPICM 90.4 FM in Solan (Himachal Pradesh) – were selected for the study.

## Field Visits to CR Stations – A Narrative Account

### *Radio Bundelkhand, Orchha, Madhya Pradesh*

Orchha is a small town in Tikamgarh district of Madhya Pradesh. This district is part of the Bundelkhand region which lies in the central most part of India. The Bundelkhand region is a semi-arid plateau and covers 12 districts of northern Madhya Pradesh (MP) and 5 districts of southern Uttar Pradesh (UP). A region of high density of population, it records some of the lowest levels of per capita income and human development in the country. Literacy levels are poor while infant mortality is high. Local inhabitants rely mainly on rain-fed single-crop agriculture and small-scale livestock production for their livelihood. Factors such as deforestation, fragmentation

## Annexure 3

of land holdings, limited rainfall and fresh water reserves have resulted in low agricultural productivity that barely meets the subsistence needs of the people. Temporary and long-term out-migration of males from villages in search of alternative sources of livelihood has become increasingly common.

The NGO, Development Alternatives (DA), has set up TARA (Technology and Action for Rural Advancement) *gram* (village) – an appropriate technology village in Orchha. It is in TARA*gram* that DA launched the first CR in Madhya Pradesh called Radio Bundelkhand on October 23, 2008. DA is a non-profit organization engaged in research and action for sustainable development. It was established in 1983 and its activities broadly cover three primary areas that underlie any form of sustainable development process: the design and large-scale dissemination of appropriate technologies; environmental management systems; and effective people-oriented institutions and policies. DA and its associate organizations operate on the philosophy that sustainable development benefits not only the economy, but also the environment and above all – the people.

The purpose of setting up Radio Bundelkhand, is to work along with the communities in the radius of the radio station and, "use this communication medium to create awareness, give information, participate in local self governance and provide entertainment – all based on requests and feedback from the community" (<http://www.devalt.org/radio.pdf>). The first test broadcast of Radio Bundelkhand was on August 15, 2008 followed by a three-day training workshop by MARAA, a Bangalorean arts and media collective. DA, which has a track record of 26 years of presence in the Bundelkhand region in the areas of water, electricity generation/energy, SHGs involved in micro-financing, handicrafts, masala units, handmade paper etc. had interacted with the community on the issues and programme formats.

The station is managed by staff recruited by DA, and includes a CR coordinator and a station manager. Five people (educational qualifications: 12<sup>th</sup> class to graduation) were selected to be community reporters. Matadin who also takes care of the day-to-day works in the office is also a singer and participates in the programming. They were "raw hands" and were trained "on the job" by the CR coordinator and the station manager appointed by DA. There were also workshops on the art of gathering information, importance and approach of the radio and what they can do for the community. From a stage where the reporters did not have an understanding of day-to-day running of the radio and making of programmes, the reporters have grown to handle all the three stages of production independently. They now have the expertise to develop a programme at very short notice. Although the reach of the station is much wider, the reporters cover only about 11 villages that are in proximate distance to the station.

There is a managing committee, which has an advisory role, includes the *sarpanch* (elected village-head) of a village, experts such as doctors, farmers, and self-help group members. The main task of the managing committee is external review, auditing of programmes and providing strategic (but not operational) advice. Whenever a program has to be made on a specialized theme, the concerned management committee members act as resource persons for programming. They also ensure that the AIR programme code is followed rigorously.

The total transmission is for five hours a day. The morning session from 10-12.30 is a repeat broadcast and the evening session from 4-6.30 transmits fresh programming. Although *Bundeli, Brij*

and *Avadhi* are the three main dialects in UP, *Bundeli* was chosen as the language for transmission since it is the most widely spoken dialect in Jhansi and neighbouring areas.

Radio Bundelkhand seeks to reach out to the communities with programming that especially addresses women, youth and the marginalised groups. The issues are identified by the communities during their interaction with the reporters who also belong to the community. Based on the feedback from the communities, Radio Bundelkhand broadcast programmes in innovative "infotainment-based" formats that provide information related to employment and livelihood opportunities, development of women, girl's education, legal rights, farmers' issues, training, culture and history, issues concerning basic infrastructure such as water, energy and roads, development issues, and any other information sought by the communities. The formats are mostly talk and interactive and *Khet Khaliyan* (Farms and Farming), *Aas Paas* (Our Neighbourhood), *Stree*, (The Woman) *Ho Jaayen Batein Khari Khari* (Straight Talk) are some of the programmes that are popular with listeners. Radio Bundelkhand claims to have an archive of about 1,025 songs the credit for which goes to participation by artistes and the successful running of their programme "*Bundeli Idol*" – a local audio version of the popular reality television show, *Indian Idol*. Participation of women in programming that was minimal earlier has started improving with certain success stories of women using radio to voice their issues. Some programmes are exclusively meant for women to express their views. Radio Bundelkhand still has an exclusive team for narrowcasting. The team organizes special listening and interaction sessions to elicit feedback and further ideas for programming. This is also converted into a radio programme for broadcast. Now Radio Bundelkhand is planning to introduce phone-ins.

According to sources at Radio Bundelkhand, with a frequency of 90.4 MHz, it covers 131 villages and has a listenership of around 1.5 lakh people spread across Tikamgarh (Madhya Pradesh) and Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh) districts. The station claims a reach of about 25-30 kms and that the signal is very good in 96 villages and average or poor in the remaining villages.

The biggest challenge for Radio Bundelkhand at this juncture seems to be financial sustainability. Funding for programming is mainly through short-term projects. Radio Bundelkhand is yet to evolve a policy on the kind of commercials to be accepted for broadcast. Volunteerism is not common although the trend is "growing in centimetres". They are now generating stringers among the communities. Although radio is a medium for disseminating information for the rural masses, the DA does not intervene in the ideas generated by the community. Our research team visited villages Barua Sagar, Futera, Babai and Taparian where they interacted with Radio Bundelkhand artists and audiences in addition to conducting interviews and discussions with the coordinator, reporters and management committee members. The team also attended a narrowcasting session.

Reporters, during our discussions, said that it has not only become a good source of livelihood for them, but also helped them with learning new skills like computers and brought them recognition and respect in their communities. With enhanced credibility, villagers now approach them with problems to which they seek solutions. On being asked what would happen if Radio Bundelkhand stopped functioning, they expressed shock at even such a thought. They were confident that the communities would not let Radio Bundelkhand shut down under any circumstances. They quoted instances and incidents that reflected the popularity of Radio Bundelkhand.

### **Sangham Radio, Machnoor, Andhra Pradesh**

*Sangham* Radio, India's first CR Station completed one year of broadcasting on October 15, 2009. It was this day last year that the radio station, supported by the Deccan Development Society (DDS) and located in Machnoor village in Medak district, went on air. The inauguration was blessed by the presence of Justice P.B. Sawant, whose historic judgement in the Supreme Court that 'airwaves are public property' had sparked off a decade-long civil society campaign for democratization of the airwaves. For the poor, dalit women members of the village-level collectives (*sanghams*) set up by the DDS, it had been a long wait.

The four *mandals* of Medak district, Zaheerabad, Jharasangam, Raikode and Nyalkal, where the DDS works, fall in one of the least developed regions of the country, Telangana, which is also the most neglected province in the state of Andhra Pradesh. Telangana is a border area contiguous with the least developed districts of North Karnataka. It is a semi-arid tract where the land is extremely degraded and offers limited livelihood opportunities in agriculture to people. Telangana is drought-prone and the problem is made worse as irrigation is underdeveloped. Poverty, illiteracy, malnourishment among children, child labour, farmer suicides, unemployment, water scarcity and electricity shortage are some of the problems of this region. It is in this geo-political and developmental context that the efforts of DDS are centred.

A couple of young DDS women trained themselves in audio production and a radio station was also established with assistance from UNESCO in 1998. However, for about 10 years, without a Government policy permitting CR, they had to be content with narrowcasting at *sangham* meetings through audio cassette recorders. All that changed as an enabling policy framework was finally designed allowing NGOs, with a proven track record of community development work, to apply for licenses for CR stations. The intense desire and aspirations of thousands of men and women in the DDS villages for a technological medium of expression of their own, to talk to each other about their problems and concerns, articulate their identities and common history, take pride in their own language, and promote fundamental issues of agriculture and food, found an exciting outlet in this radio station.

Broadcast on 90.4 FM, *Sangham* Radio goes on air every day from 7 pm - 9 pm. Initially broadcast for only 90 minutes, the duration was increased within a couple of months of the inauguration because of public demand. With good production and post-production equipment, the station transmits over a 50W transmitter, as per government regulations. According to the station managers, listeners in villages about 30-40 km away from the station have also reported picking up the broadcast. The production hub is the radio station located in Machnoor village, with 'General' Narsamma and Algole Narsamma taking on the roles of reporters, programme producers, RJs, and station managers. About 16 *sangham* supervisors, each covering about 4 villages on the average, also double up as CR reporters and motivators at the level of their respective villages. These individuals also serve as the eyes and ears of the radio station, giving access to the needs of the villagers at a given time and providing feedback. People participate enthusiastically in a range of programmes, including interviews, discussions, songs, folk tales, and plays. An analysis of some sample programmes reveals that more than 80% of the participants are women and dalits. Substantial contributions come from the elderly who are seen by the station as repositories of very valuable knowledge.

On the whole, the content of *Sangham Radio* includes: information specific to agricultural needs of semi-arid regions; education and literacy – both formal and non-formal; public health and hygiene; environmental and ecological issues; biodiversity and food security; gender justice; local/indigenous knowledge systems; local cultures, with emphasis on the narrative traditions of song and drama. The programme that begins with the vibrant signature song, "*akka chellelu koodi podame*" (come sisters, let us go to the *Sangham* radio), includes a variety of segments. Among the regular features are: *Mana oori pantalu* (Crops of our Village), *Mana Bhasha* (Our language), *Chavidi katta* (a sort of a village chaupal), *Yarandla Muchatlu* (literally, the gossip of the sisters-in-law), *Mee Lettarlu* (literally, your letters, but this actually a request segment). The programme also promotes indigenous herbal medicine through a segment called *Darwazala Dawakhana* (Medicine at your Doorstep), discusses the participatory development work being taken up by the collectives in a feature called *Sanghalu*, and offers a bi-weekly children's feature called *Balanandam*.

A preliminary analysis of the programmes shows that less than 1% of those featured on the radio are professional experts such as doctors, agriculture scientists, and bureaucrats. In keeping with the philosophy of DDS, the radio station treats individuals and groups within the community as repositories of tremendous amount of local knowledge on crops, soil, agriculture, foods, health, etc. This is a clear reversal of the top-down communication (from professional expert to 'ignorant masses') practised in the mainstream media. The station provides culturally vibrant and locally prevalent expressions such as "bichapolla kathalu" (storytelling and singing by itinerant beggars). Many of these are not only in the local idiom, but also reflect the local social, economic, political and cultural milieu of the region.

'General' Narsamma, Algotte Narsamma, and the watchman are the only salaried employees of the station, the rest being volunteer participants. Unlike in mainstream broadcast outlets, there is no set payment for those coming to the station as 'talent'. However, taking into consideration the fact that many participants would have to forego some income-generating activity in order to take part in a radio programme, the station often pays the cost of transport, offers refreshments, and a modest honorarium. The station has recently started involving the *sangham* supervisors (about 16 of them, including 10 women) to record field-based programmes, and give in at least an hour's content each, every month. The station managers estimate that it costs them about Rs.500 to do one recording in the studio. They incur additional expenditure for electricity and generator, and some modest transport costs when they have to travel for any field recording.

Although the government policy on CR permits about five minutes of advertising in an hour of broadcast, *Sangham Radio* has so far desisted from any commercial advertising. Considering that it is generally a poor and depressed area, they have not found advertising to be a viable means of financing their station. They did a public service announcement once for L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, but that was done without any fee. They also let community members make free announcements about their lost cattle or missing children.

A unique feature of the economics of *Sangham Radio* is that every one of the approximately 5000 members of the 75 *sanghams* contributes about Rs. 60 per year towards the maintenance of the station, making it a community shareholder model that has few parallels in the country. More than the financial sustainability of this model, this offers very significantly social sustainability for the station, with the community developing a strong sense of ownership and identification with the radio station.



*Annexure 3*

The research team interviewed the station managers and producers and the director of the NGO, Mr. P.V. Satheesh. The team also held focus group discussions with *sangham karyakartas* (representatives) of about five villages in addition to visiting a non-*sangham* village where there are regular listeners and interacted with them.

### ***MUST Radio, Mumbai, Maharashtra***

MUST Radio (Mumbai University Students Transmission) is the campus radio station of the University of Mumbai. Inaugurated by the President of India in February 2008, the station can be heard on 107.8 MHz FM. Located in the heart of a megapolis, MUST radio offers a unique case study of the strategies adopted by an urban CR Station run by a major university.

The University of Mumbai (known earlier as University of Bombay) is one of the oldest and premier universities in India. Established in 1857, it is among the first three Universities set up in India. Recognized by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) as one of the top universities in the country, it has two campuses of 230 acres and 13 acres, respectively, with 1.25 million square feet of built-up area, 22 thousand sq. feet of class-rooms and 84 thousand sq feet of laboratory space. It has two post-graduate centres, 354 affiliated colleges and 36 departments. Apart from its intellectual achievements and contribution to higher education in the city of Mumbai and the country, the University of Mumbai prides itself for its community linkages and social commitment. It is not without significance that the first post-graduate departments to be established in the University were the School of Sociology and Civics & Politics. According to one estimate, the University caters to the educational needs of approximately two million students.

It is in this context that the University authorities felt that a radio station of its own would not only serve as a means of information to those who want to know more about the university and its activities, but also allow them to address socially relevant issues such as education, public health, and women's empowerment in an entertaining manner. It could also provide a platform for creative expression for its student community. It was during its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in 2007 that the University decided to apply for a broadcast license to run a FM radio station under the Community Radio policy. Neeraj Hatekar, a professor of Economics was one of the key University faculty members who got involved in the project. An order for the equipment was placed with BEL and the licensing process took almost a year, a period that Hatekar recalls to be 'stressful times'. The university then recruited Pankaj Athavale, a young instrumentation engineer with some experience in radio broadcasting, as a Programme Executive to manage the station.

Right from the outset, Athavale and the university advisors of the radio station made a conscious decision to run the station as a community outreach activity of the university and not as a 'campus' radio station. Hatekar who had been involved earlier in some community service around the Kalina campus took the initiative to invite young women who live in the surrounding slum settlement to come and make radio programmes of their interest. Apart from the 70% population that lives in the slum areas, a reasonably identifiable audience, the rest, as Hatekar and Athavale acknowledge, is a more diffused listenership that includes students, professionals, middle class homemakers, senior citizens and others.

The radio station is situated on the third floor of Justice Ranade Bhavan on the Kalina campus of the University. Initially, a Mathematics classroom was given for the purpose and it was soon turned into a

functional radio station, with the conversion of adjoining spaces into air-conditioned rooms for recording, editing, and transmission. From outside, there's no indication that the old academic building houses a radio station inside its hallowed precincts, with departments such as English literature, Urdu, Marathi, and even Pali lining up its musty corridors. With a reach of about 10 km radius, the station operates in areas such as Goregaon-Andheri, Vikhroli-Ghatkopar, Chembur-Wadala, Dadar-Bandra, Khar, Santacruz, Parle, and Versova.

The station started with being on air for four hours a day and has been scaled up to 13 hours currently, with about three hours of repeat programming. This anxiety to continuously expand the broadcast duration is borne out of a feeling that one cannot cultivate a listening culture and a loyal audience by being on air for only two or three hours a day. In terms of content, MUST Radio offers a multilingual menu, with programmes in Hindi, English, and Marathi. Athavale does not want to have fixed time slots for programming in a specific language because he feels that it would make them miss out on audience who would not tune in at that time because they know beforehand in what language the programme is going to be broadcast. Sometimes, the same programme can contain a mixture of two or even three languages.

The station eschews film music, but manages to have about 25% music content, sourced from independent musicians and bands, and the rest of the programming is 'talk'. There are about 20-25 people, men and women, not all students of the university, who come in at various times to produce programmes or to do radio jockey (RJ) duties at the station. A number of young professionals with a keen interest in radio come to the station and participate in programme production and transmission. In fact, one of the notable things is that there are few specialists, with almost all of them performing multiple tasks. These young and enthusiastic people make the atmosphere in the station very informal – more a 'hangout' than a place of work.

The annual budget for the station is about Rs.12 lakh, including salaries and maintenance. There is no pressure on the station to become financially self-sufficient as the university provides assured funding, although those managing the station do express the intention to gradually reduce the dependence on the university. One revenue generator for the station and the university has been a part-time course on radio jockeying that has become quite popular.

They have not had any problems with the content they broadcast so far. The station generally takes a cautious approach to issues, especially those concerning the university. They would like to avoid politically sensitive issues on campus, but it has not stopped them from doing a discussion programme on Khairlanji. In another instance, there was a caller who wanted to know what the station would do for Valentine's Day. Given the right-wing sensitivities in Mumbai, the station manager did some loud thinking about how the programme could explore the commercialization of the Day, without getting hysterical about it. There is a fair amount of interaction with NGOs espousing various causes, including urban transportation, slum development, pollution, etc., which lead to on-air programmes. For instance, an environmental group trying to revive the disappearing sparrow population in Mumbai worked with the radio station to run a campaign and offered artificial sparrow shelters to those who were interested in hanging them in their apartment balconies.

There has been no systematic listenership survey undertaken by the station so far. A considerable amount of 'knowledge' about the audience and its needs seems to be gathered instinctually and

through phone calls made by listeners. While there is a sense that the station's audience is somewhat nebulously defined in this large cityscape, the station has ambitions to reach greater numbers of listeners. Hatekar and Athavale have both expressed their wish for a policy amendment to allow transmitters with capacity greater than the current 50W.

### **Hamara MSPICM 90.4 FM, Solan, Himachal Pradesh**

*Hamara* MSPICM 90.4 FM was the first CR Station to be launched in the state of Himachal Pradesh. It is a campus-based station started by a private educational institution, the M. S. Panwar Institute of Communication and Management (MSPICM or the Panwar Institute) in the Solan district of Himachal Pradesh on March 13, 2009. The language of broadcast is Hindi and the local *Pahadi Bhaghati* dialect. The students of the institute double up as reporters contributing to the station, as radio training is an important part of their curriculum.

MSPICM applied for a licence as an educational institution in 2007, and it took almost two years before they were allotted the frequency and could go on air. The transmitter for the station was provided by WEBEL, the West Bengal Electronics Corporation. On the occasion of the inauguration, MSPICM also organized a regional workshop, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, for the community reporters in which 75 NGOs participated.

Situated in the midst of the picturesque Shivalik ranges, at a distance of about 75 kms from Chandigarh and 45 kms from Shimla, Solan has emerged as an educational hub of the country. Among a couple of specialized universities and many other institutions catering to different disciplines, the MSPICM is a centre for media education. Managed by a registered Trust - M.S. Panwar Foundation - the institute offers Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in Journalism besides other certificate and diploma courses. The institute has development communication as one of its thrust areas and initiatives like setting up a community radio are part of the community development action plan/agenda of the institute.

Before setting up a full-fledged campus-based CR Station, MSPICM in collaboration with an international NGO, One World South Asia (OWSA), carried out a pilot grassroots level radio project in 2006. This initiative was operationalized in a cluster of 15 isolated villages situated on Karol hill, 15 km from Solan near Kandaghat, which have very low infrastructure. Topographically these villages are at a height that cuts them off from the main town and there are no roads developed to connect these villages to the highway. MSPICM, along with OWSA, identified five community reporters from these villages. The faculty and students of the institute facilitated the process while the actual training was taken care of by OWSA. The radio programme, *Karol Ki Aawaz*, produced by the local reporters was broadcast on All India Radio (AIR) for 15 minutes on Sundays (anytime between 2-3 p.m.) and repeated again on Wednesday. The content was community-driven and there were different types of formats which included drama, local songs, talks, discussions, interviews and news. Radio listeners' groups were also organized among community members to get feedback about the programmes.

The *Karol Ki Aawaz* project gave MSPICM the concept of CR, and the response it got from those 15 villages gave confidence and encouragement to MSPICM to apply for a radio of their own, *Hamara* MSPICM 90.4 FM. The purpose of *Hamara* was to provide exposure to the students and broaden their perspective on social issues. As stated on the institute's website (<http://www.mspicm.org/>), "Through

this initiative, MSPICM seeks to serve the community residing in a radius of 15 km from the institute. It would also help in grooming professionals in broadcast journalism. The students of the institute would get hands-on experience in script writing, reporting and editing for radio. They would thus be exposed to the real experience of working in radio studios/stations." According to the Director, Brijender Singh Panwar, the philosophy of *Hamara* 90.4 FM is to focus on the developmental aspects of the local area, "The content revolves around developmental issues of health, agriculture, employment, government opportunities, literacy programmes and life coping skills etc." He is aiming to have at least 60–70% of rural programming on *Hamara* dealing mainly with issues of development.

The radio caters to two kinds of community – one is urban and the other is rural although there is not a clear rural-urban distinction existing in Himachal – the villages and towns being in close proximity to each other. There exists a culture of radio listening in the rural as well as (semi) urban areas of Himachal. Shopkeepers, for instance, have the radio playing in the background in their shops. There is no particular programming planned for non-literate audience because as far as Himachal is concerned, literacy is quite high and so are the awareness levels of the people. *Hamara* considers the young audiences as a sort of sub-community and there is special programming directed towards them. Young people are inclined towards entertainment, older people are inclined to information – so their programme mix includes *Jago Re* on social problems and *Yuva Jagat* on youth issues. The *Hamara* team does not consider either AIR or the private FM stations to be a competition as "We are not competing with them – it's a different trip altogether for us".

*Hamara* started broadcasting initially for two hours, one hour in the morning and repeat broadcast in the evening. This was increased to four hours in the morning and evening. The institute entered into a partnership with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) which held orientation programmes. Eventually MSPICM itself became a training centre for radio programmes of IGNOU. The six-month radio jockey training course of the institute started generating a regular flow of human resources for the radio. Transmission then slowly increased to six hours. On August 15, 2009 the station began to broadcast for 12 hours with only one hour of repeat programme that is *Vandana* (prayers). One of the reasons for the confidence in increasing the duration was the purchase of songs under the Indian Performing Right Society's (IPRS) licence.

In terms of community participation, from rural areas *Hamara* gets people who are into folk singing. *Hamara* is also trying to get people from the villages and train them to be community reporters, but there is hesitation, "They may be having talent but they are not forthcoming to offer their services as jockey but do come forth to sing songs here." Talented students from local schools and colleges are also encouraged to participate in programmes like '*Bachho ki Paathsala*'.

With a view to mobilize community participation, MSPICM is collaborating with DRISHTI, a media advocacy and training NGO, and Mountain Forum Himalayas through which six radio producers from MFH and four reporters from Solan will be trained over a period of one year at the Panwar Institute. Drishti will locate a trainer at the Institute. This is being seen as a step towards deeper commitment towards community based programming.

## Analysis and Observations

### Concept of Community and Launch of a CR Station

Both the rural Community Radio (CR) stations, *Sangham* Radio and Radio Bundelkhand, that we visited during our research have been established by NGOs, Deccan Development Society (DDS) and Development Alternatives (DA), that have a track record of doing development work with communities in the coverage area of their CR stations for the past more than two decades. They have over the years, established a rapport and credibility with the people and most of their ongoing projects are run through the participation of the members of the communities with whom they work. Also, because of their respectable reputation of development work, these NGOs were able to mobilize substantial funding from multi-lateral agencies to purchase equipment and set up the stations even before their licenses were granted. They were able to afford the salaries of the permanent staff to initiate the running of the CR Station. Hence, the seed money for establishing a CR Station was not an issue for them, which may not be the case with community-based organizations (CBOs) and smaller NGOs planning to start their CR stations. However, being able to launch a station does not imply that the well-established NGOs do not face other sustainability issues that are discussed later in the report.

The urban campus-based CR stations studied here, did not encounter the problem of funds either for purchase of equipment or constructing a building to house their stations. The wherewithal to set up and carry forward the day-to-day functioning of the station is provided for through the budget provisions of the institution/university in whose name the licence is obtained. They have hired salaried professionals to run the stations and have students who volunteer to do the programming without having to bother about the opportunity cost of volunteering as in the case of their rural counterparts. This was especially true in the case of MUST radio of the University of Mumbai, where all civil work, sound-proofing, air-conditioning and setting up of the equipment was carried out with the support and advice of a radio committee appointed by the University. Pankaj Athavale, station manager of MUST radio explained the general excitement generated by the prospect of starting a radio station, "Every department of the university was enthusiastic about the radio and right from the accounts to administration, everyone was very involved in it, including the vice-chancellor himself." Located alongside other departments on the third floor of a majestic old academic building, the well-equipped MUST radio station has three air-conditioned rooms for transmission, editing, and recording. *Hamara* MSPICM 90.4 FM in Solan, Himachal Pradesh is run by the M S Panwar Institute of Communication and Management (MSPICM or the Panwar Institute) belonging to an educational and developmental trust. Although not as financially well-endowed as the Universities, this institute has nevertheless invested in the station hoping to add value to its courses while at the same time, also fulfilling the educational and developmental mandate of the trust.

The idea/perception of the 'community' that the rural CR stations want to reach has largely remained true to the philosophy of CR. These are the rural poor and marginalised communities that have been deprived of the right to produce their own media, to talk about the issues that they want to talk about, and to present their view to the outside world. However, the programmes are not meant only for the people involved in the NGO activities; the listenership and participation goes beyond, to all others from the same socio-economic background. The two rural CR stations studied here see their initiatives as filling the gap created by the mainstream media.

With the limited capacity of a 50W transmitter permitted under the policy, a university that technically extends along the coast from Mumbai to Goa could not possibly have conceived the station only for members of the university community. The technological imperative and its social awareness of the demographic composition of North Mumbai (with a sizeable slum population), defined the community and potential listenership for the station. "The youth and of course, students are the priority because it's a university, but it cannot be limited to only students, as the broadcast is also going outside the campus. It depends on the technology wherever it reaches" explains the station manager. The MUST radio team tends to have a holistic approach while conceptualizing its audience, seeking to cater to everyone who is within the reach of the radio broadcast. They claim that they have carried out a segmentation of their audience and found out that other than students, a lot of senior citizens and women have been listening to MUST. From the residents of the neighbourhood slums to the *panwallas*, and from taxi and auto drivers to the middle-class professionals are among the listeners of MUST. Endowed with a sensibility shaped within Mumbai's hyper-entertainment environment, the station management is conscious that the programmes should avoid being pedantic and pedagogical, while at the same time being socially conscious. Similarly for *Hamara* in Solan, people within the coverage area of the station are considered its community. Located in a semi-rural setting in the hills, the station maintains no clear rural-urban divide. There are young people who may be more inclined towards entertainment, as well as older people looking for information.

### Capacity Building

Capacity building for rural CR stations was carried out through short-term workshops by MARAA in the case of Bundelkhand Radio; and by independent media trainers in the case of DDS. For Bundelkhand radio, the community members selected as reporters underwent a five-day training programme before joining the station. The programme co-ordinator-cum-station manager, Anuja Shukla, belongs to the same state and is an experienced community development worker. She felt that technical training is inadequate for developing insight into making radio programmes on local issues, "The real grooming and expression of talent comes from on-the-job training. Slowly the analytical abilities of the reporters get sharpened and they are able to put across their perspective on different issues." After interacting with the reporters of Radio Bundelkhand our research team felt that the need for constant hand-holding by suitable development-cum-media organizations and short-term, technical, and confidence-building workshops cannot be underestimated. As P. V. Satheesh, Director of DDS, pointed out suitably, "those who have been disempowered for generations cannot develop journalistic aggression and confidence overnight – it is only with time, and opportunity to voice their opinion that they gradually muster courage to debate issues and express their points of view." Hence, capacity building of communities requires special sensitivity as well as responsibility, so as not to alienate them from their own identity and culture.

The campus radio stations (on the other hand) work with students who not only have (over) exposure to media, but also adequate access to platforms for self-expression. They are tech-savvy and have enough confidence to speak their minds. Many of the campus stations in fact run a parallel RJ course to train students who would eventually graduate to join the commercial FM sector. Given the social background the students come from, and the other professionals to whom the station is accessible, there is rarely a shortage of volunteers and freelancers walking into the station and taking care of the different functions. MUST radio is run with the support of several freelancers who generally engage in multitasking. Basic technical problems and operational issues

are also taken care by those working in the station. *Hamara* runs its RJ programme and the students who are trained there carry out the reporting, anchoring as well as production of programmes.

### **Levels of Community Participation**

The two rural CR stations that we visited are run mainly on the strength of reporters who belong to communities that lie within the broadcast area. They are young men and women from modest backgrounds, not highly educated, and have had negligible exposure to media production. The fact that they are the ones running the station and producing programmes is in itself the beginning of community participation. Interacting with them is clearly a revelation of how community radio has brought about a marked change in their confidence levels and a feeling of self-worth. They feel proud to have been associated with the radio from the time when, "there was nothing, and we helped in putting up this radio station." In an uplifting tone, they admit, "when we started as reporters, we had a lot of problems and we struggled for days together to make one programme – now we do all – research, scripting, recording, mixing and anchoring with ease" (discussions with reporters, Radio Bundelkhand). These reporters, who double up as producers/broadcasters of the programmes, were initially nervous to handle even the computer mouse and now carry out editing like experts using software such as 'Audacity'. The enthusiastic reporters of Radio Bundelkhand believe that young people like them "are always enthusiastic about the development work of our villages and as the programmes are regarding our own issues, we are more interested to put in extra effort." They speak about the villagers having expectations from them, and also contacting them if the community has issues or topics they want to be discussed on the radio, "We have realised that through this medium we can do something for our own people and also talk about our culture." They cheerfully recollect incidents when people from the villages they visit recognize their voices and want to talk to them. All reporters talk with a sense of ownership and authority about the programmes that are aired, reflecting their deep levels of engagement and involvement with what is broadcast on their radio station. In a short period of over a year, these stations have managed to generate enough enthusiasm for participation among these members of the local community, which is also potentially empowering for them.

The *Sangham* Radio is managed by two poor young Dalit women, General Narsamma and Algole Narsamma who have now become icons of self-empowerment for community radio reporters in CR stations across the country as these 'ordinary' rural women have overcome all barriers, including class, caste, gender, literacy and digital-divide to emerge as pioneers in CR broadcasting in India. For the young woman reporter of Radio Bundelkhand, as well as these radio women of *Sangham* Radio, it was not an easy road to becoming media women – they did face opposition from their families, who eventually came around after much persuasion. The women were certainly afraid of technology, and had not interacted with men as co-workers before, but that is a story of the past now.

The reporters of the rural CR stations also perform the task of mobilizing other members of the community to participate in the radio programmes. At DDS, the 16 *sangham* supervisors, six men and 10 women, are assigned the task of producing one hour each of radio programme every month. *Sangham* Radio is working keenly towards actualizing their resolve that every woman in their villages will have a chance to participate in the radio programme at least once a year. The supervisors as well as the two women station managers of DDS identify women who are singers,

healers, farmers or with other kind of knowledge and involve them in programme production. The listenership of *Sangham* Radio is not limited to only DDS women, and non-*sangham* women who occupy the same social-economic cultural position also find the issues equally applicable to them. The reporters of Radio Bundelkhand are seeking participation and feedback of villagers through phone-in programmes, drop-boxes and also through their narrowcasting sessions. Radio Bundelkhand still has an exclusive team for narrowcasting. The team organizes special listening sessions that allow them to interact directly with the community to elicit feedback and further ideas for programming. This group listening activity organised twice a week is also converted into a radio programme called '*Aaya Radio Aapke Gaon*'.

The listeners of Radio Bundelkhand in a village that we visited had a good recall of the timings of broadcast and some specific programmes. Some youngsters said that they look forward to job announcements on radio. Middle-aged people were particularly fond of Radio Bundelkhand because it was in *Bundeli*, which is their own language/dialect. Elderly listeners were dependent on the youngsters' choice of programmes since the latter would have the radio sets with them most of the time. Across the age groups, none listened to Radio Bundelkhand in groups or with their families. Nor were any discussions held vis-à-vis any issue-based programmes. Although they could not recall specific programmes, they mentioned that if programmes were made on the problems in their village, such as primary education (there was only a non-functional primary school), electricity, water, etc., and were repeated, they might reach the authorities and stir them into action. Thus they wish to articulate their demands through community radio since they feel it's a good sounding board. In the villages of DDS, the habit of participation developed among women out of the two decades of active *sangham* activities, makes them listen to the radio programmes "till the last word" and discuss them during the meetings. As the language is local, non-formal and conversational, the women we talked to find it easy to grasp what is broadcast and they came up with a list of programmes/topic they find entertaining or useful on *Sangham* Radio, which included, songs, stories, agriculture, village histories, health, alternative education, and others.

The levels of participation in the campus radio stations are directly commensurate with the popularity of the station; feels Pankaj Athavale of MUST radio. He adds that the effort on part of the production team is to make the programmes as attractive to the people as possible, while retaining the campus-community radio character of the station. For this, MUST radio resorts to infotainment i.e. making the programmes interesting while at the same time, intelligent and exciting. Pankaj says their endeavour is to catch the pulse of the people, "if you listen to our radio, it is very appealing in the sense people will not change the channel so very immediately because there are all sorts of things available right from educational to public utility to science, arts, commerce, history, geography, music, you name it and we will do a show on it - travel, living, careers, employment, everything." Steadily, MUST has been building on its assorted formats and diverse programming and people have started listening as well as participating. *Hamara* has managed to attract folk singers, talented students from local schools, women from local organizations and youngsters from villages to participate and make programmes. They have recently signed an MoU with DRISHTI and Mountain Forum Himalayas (MFH) through which six radio producers from MFH and four from Solan will be trained over a period of one year in community mobilization and participatory programme production. This is being seen as a step towards deeper commitment, towards community-based programming, and participation.



## Content Generation

While *Sangham* Radio broadcasts for two hours daily, Radio Bundelkhand goes on air for two and a half hours with fresh programming, and also a repeat broadcast. However, there is a steady demand from the communities to increase the time of fresh/new programming. This is easier said than done for the CR stations. There are essentially two concerns related to content generation. The first is: Are there adequate numbers of resource persons (community reporters) as well as resources for production of radio programmes? And the second is – does the personality and content of the station reflect the agenda of the NGO or is the programming community-driven?

The community reporters are the dedicated resource persons for the production and transmission of the programmes and if the broadcast time is to be enhanced, their numbers have to necessarily go up. This calls for training of more local people for this job. To think that the reporters would come out and work full-time without suitable remuneration is not a feasible option. The reporters, especially those from relatively deprived areas, look upon community radio not only as an opportunity to serve their own people, but also as a means of livelihood. Whether it is the local talent and artists of Bundelkhand Radio or the *sangham* supervisors of DDS, some amount of compensation is necessary to make them contribute regularly and enthusiastically to the radio programmes. There is a considerable gestation period before CR stations may be able to institute such a presence in the community, which will ensure a steady flow of volunteers. Many CR reporters have raised issues related to conveyance and commuting as they are expected to visit villages regularly. In addition, CR reporters have also articulated the need to be given identity cards as media persons so that they are able to get access to people in power.

The second issue in content generation relates to the potential for NGOisation of CR content i.e. the broadcast agenda reflecting the programmatic agenda of the NGO. DA was clear that although a substantial part of the programming of Radio Bundelkhand is based on the inputs by the community, it would also like to use the radio to disseminate research findings and knowledge generated by various DA projects. Manoj Mahanta, a technocrat with DA and also a member of the managing committee of Radio Bundelkhand explains, "Radio is an ideal medium to reach out to maximum people at minimum cost for disseminating the research findings of DA projects among rural beneficiaries." He adds that DA converts the technical language of the knowledge generated by experts into simple language so as to reach potential 'opinion leaders' who in turn are expected to take it to the grassroots levels in their idiom. DDS, however, claimed that it looks upon CR as "satisfying the intellectually-driven quest of DDS women, where they can talk about their vision to counter the aggressive nature of some of the neo-liberal policies prevalent today." At *Sangham* Radio as well as DDS, "every decision-making is participatory – there is very little DDS [ideology] over the community – the community has taken over DDS," affirms the director of DDS. Thus the content of *Sangham* Radio is an extension of the activities, beliefs, local culture and practices of *sangham* women. In our discussions with listeners as well as the two station managers we were told that programmes produced were about *balwadis*, green school, traditional crops, organic fertilizers, non-chemical pesticides, folk tales/songs, herbal medicines, bio-diversity *jatras*, shelter for women, legal counselling, and even village squabbles. All these have the fervour and flavour of the day-to-day lives of *sangham* women and reflect the kind of concerns, ideas and events that they have been involved with for years.

The two campus stations under study, MUST and *Hamara* are on air for 12–13 hours every day with about 25–30% repeat broadcasting. MUST radio does this without “any Bollywood music, without any Bollywood support, without any Bollywood gossip,” declares the station manager of MUST. They play free music in English, Hindi and Marathi that has been gathered from small independent musicians, college bands and slum groups. As MUST radio’s community is metropolitan and heterogeneous, programming at MUST is done in all three languages. Any given time slot may contain a mix of programmes in all three languages. This is specifically applicable to those campuses where the students may come from different parts of the country and speak in different languages with no one ‘language of the community’. MUST has financial backing from the university funds to dole out a modest honorarium for all those who contribute to or participate in the programming. They also go out for field recording sometimes, but prefer that members from the community walk into the studio to share their talents and make programmes. By broadcasting stories of students who have travelled abroad or to other places in India and those of taxi drivers, they attempt to bring the outside environment into the studio. *Hamara* also plays local, folk songs and Hindustani music but does not say no to film songs as their student listeners demand. Their languages of broadcast are Hindi and Bhagati spoken in those parts of Himachal. At the moment the programmes are produced by three men and three women, called radio coordinators – most of them students either at the Panwar Institute or colleges in neighbouring towns. Some of them are from relatively deprived regions of Himachal. One of the co-ordinators who specializes in presenting *ghazals* and the morning devotional segment *Vandana*, has a Masters’ degree in music. Asked why they preferred to work for *Hamara* instead of commercial FMs, each one had a reason. While one said it was because her parents belonged to this town, another said it’s a good platform for gaining confidence and learning about people and society. Most co-ordinators said their work at the station is an extension of the RJ course at the institute. But all of them admitted that they would move on if there were better opportunities. While each one seemed to have a specific programme to call their own, they were also prepared to step in for others when required. They all believed in the potential of radio to bring about change. The administrator in charge of *Hamara* claimed that the students had total freedom within the broad AIR Code and certain guidelines set by the managing committee, whose role is mainly advisory. They take care to avoid political content and personal attacks. They could not recall a single moment when a program broadcast got them into trouble.

## Management

Radio Bundelkhand is owned by DA, and managed by a station manager-cum programme coordinator along with a senior technical officer. The station has a management committee which is constituted by farmers and others from the local community, including a *Sarpanch*, representatives from DA and professionals like doctors, engineers and teachers. A meeting of the management committee is convened by the station manager once in every two months where the members give feedback and advice about the programmes. The main task of the managing committee is external review, auditing of programmes and providing strategic and policy guidance. Whenever a program has to be made on a specialized theme, the management committee members concerned acts as a resource person. It also ensures that ‘offensive’ content is avoided and AIR Code is followed rigorously. It was disclosed to the research team that there are problems faced in getting women to be on the management committee (as also for taking part in programme production) as the social milieu inhibits women from the villages to participate. This is true even in the case of women *Sarpanches*, who rarely come forward to speak. “It is their husbands who are

*Annexure 3*

at the forefront. We refuse to meet the husbands and insist that the real *Sarpanch* talks to us," asserts the station manager of Radio Bundelkhand. The story at DDS in terms of ownership is different and may perhaps serve as a model for others to follow. The organization slowly but surely succeeded in cutting the umbilical cord and created an autonomous Community Media Trust (CMT) that has ownership over the radio infrastructure. The *Sangham* Radio is managed by two Dalit women with advisory inputs from a radio committee consisting of the *sangham* women and *karyakartas* from other DDS projects. Other than some advice related to the legal implications of certain kinds of programming, there is no direct intervention from the DDS board members, making the station "more than 90% autonomous in its governance," claims the director of DDS. However, it is DDS that funds the salaries of the staff at *Sangham* radio as well as a major portion of its day-to-day operational, maintenance and production costs. The organization accounts for this through its annual budget.

The campus radio stations are owned by institutions/Universities and managed by professionals employed by them. Their advisory committees include as members, people from different walks of life from the listening committee apart from people associated with the institution.

### **Financial Sustainability**

DDS has instituted a financial plan in which all the 5000 *sangham* members from 75 villages contribute Rs. 5/- per month for running the station. However, they are able to collect only half the contributions every month, as some women are unable to pay even this meagre amount. The advertisements are not yet forthcoming from small local businesses. For government ads, an empanelment with Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) is required. As the NGO has been covering all costs of running the station through different heads of its budget, *Sangham* Radio has not yet ventured to convincingly move towards financial self-sustainability. Radio Bundelkhand finds financial sustainability as the "biggest challenge at this juncture" as DA has suggested that they work towards making the station more self-reliant. The funding for programming is mainly being drawn from short-term project grants by multi-lateral agencies. After a workshop on advertising and rural marketing, one young community member, Nitu Verma, was employed for collecting ads, following which "some commercials are slowly trickling in, most of which the station is expected to produce" says Nitu. Radio Bundelkhand is yet to evolve a written policy on the kind of commercials to be accepted for broadcasting. DA has been funding to cover the costs, which come to around Rs. 1.25 lakh every month including the salaries. However, there seems to be a dearth of funds to make frequent visits to villages, especially those at a greater distance from the station for relationship building or reporting. Radio Bundelkhand has not thought of asking for funds from the community itself as "the people are extremely poor. No one is willing to leave their work and come here to make programmes without an incentive. We have no funds for paying them honorarium but we try to give them conveyance allowance," explains Anuja Shukla. In case of exigencies (battery breakdown) as well as for maintenance costs, the station again looks towards DA, as the community may not be able to provide such finances.

Financial sustainability does not appear to be a major issue especially for the university-run CR stations as they are fortunate enough to be provided with an annual budget by the University. The annual budget for MUST radio station is Rs. 15 lakhs which is given by the University of Mumbai. The MUST team aims to recover 20% - 25% of the budget in the coming financial year through advertising

and wants the station to generate enough revenue in future that would cover the costs of running it, thus gradually moving towards its self-sustainability. To be able to do this, they believe, they need to offer a good, popular product (i.e. attractive programme mix) to advertisers as they will not come if the radio is not popular. And secondly, they feel a continuous round-the clock broadcast is essential to attract advertisers. Management students are being roped in to collect advertising as part of their project work. On the question of sustainability, the director of *Hamara* said, while the radio station had recently begun to receive commercials from the Public Relations department of Himachal Pradesh government, it is difficult to raise revenues through commercials in a small town. Emphasising local participation and community involvement, he was more concerned and confident of social sustainability of his station.

### **Social Change**

Although a much longer gestation period may be required before the benefits of a CR Station can be felt and realised, representatives of *Sangham* Radio are beginning to perceive positive indications as issues dear to the women in DDS villages are being articulated on radio and there is greater participation of women in programme production. Also, local language and local talent are being promoted through *Sangham* Radio. In terms of social change being brought about by CR, Radio Bundelkhand cites several success stories. For example, their programme on water scarcity in Jhijhora village led to the installing of a water tank there. In another case, after a story on unattended garbage was carried on Radio Bundelkhand, prompt action was taken to remove it. The station then also got a letter from the headmaster of a school in another village saying that there is garbage pile up in front of the school. He wanted them to report it, so that the garbage could be removed. However, though there are special programmes for women on Radio Bundelkhand, their involvement in programme making and even as listeners seems to be minimal.

On being asked what would happen if Radio Bundelkhand stopped functioning, the members of the community (including women) expressed shock at even such a thought. The reporters were also confident that the communities would not let Radio Bundelkhand shut down under any circumstances and quoted instances that reflected the popularity of Radio Bundelkhand. Similarly, in the group discussions with our research team, the *sangham* women of DDS were sure they will not let the radio close down, "We built it (radio station) with our hard work, and we won't give it up. We are ready to pay more than Rs. 50 a year, if required. Our children's knowledge will not grow and the local agriculture needs will be ignored in the absence of such a medium. Even after us, our children will continue the radio."

MUST is seeking to contribute to community life by broadcasting information from which the members of the community can benefit, such as health, traffic and pollution. They look at CR as a 'social business' rather than social service. For example, employment news is broadcast on the radio because it is beneficial to the unemployed, and also because it can bring in advertisements. They provide time to NGOs, helplines, promos, and to service organizations such as Rotary Club and Lions Club. The US Consulate has a show on students' visa issues and British Council is also being brought on board for a similar programme. In the case of *Hamara*, the Panwar Institute which runs it has a clear mandate "to work for development communication, not only in education but also in community networking and grassroots communication." So, the director of Panwar Institute is positive that the initiative taken by the institute to start this radio station was "to make alternative media to flourish in this region, with the mandate of doing social work."

## Conclusions

1. Although brought into being by the same policy, a close study of radio stations run by educational institutions and community-based organizations respectively reveals that there are distinct differences between the two. From the experience of obtaining a licence to the idea of community and the purpose for running the station, these two categories of CR have little in common. If you add the issue of resources for building/acquiring the infrastructure to set up and maintain the station, the disparities between the two become even more striking.
2. Clubbing campus and community run stations under the same policy has resulted in raising similar expectations from both, including the objectives of CR, content generation, volunteerism, sustainability, technology options and spectrum usage. This unfair comparison tends to be not only disadvantageous for community-based stations, but also places unreasonable demands on campus-run stations. The CR stations require much more specialised attention as well as support to be able to take off and play a significant role in the lives of the communities.
3. Ensuring participation of the community in programme production does not seem to be a matter of particular concern for the urban, campus stations as there is a steady flow of students and middle-class professionals in the listening area who freelance at the station. While one of the objectives that the rural community-based CR stations are mandated to achieve is enhancing participatory processes, for the poor and the marginalised, participation is much more challenging than simply walking into the radio station to talk. Much effort is often required to initiate, mobilise and build the confidence of the people that this is their medium which can be used to articulate their points of view. For people in poor, rural, non-literate communities to be convinced of the potential of CR as a tool for horizontal communication can be a long arduous process that has no parallel in the context of urban campuses.
4. While the urban campus stations can and probably choose to go 'the FM way' in their formats and approach (not necessarily content) to attract young students and also take the liberty of broadcasting what may be loosely called 'the popular', the CR stations struggle to generate relevant local content given the issues of cost and personnel. Also, CR stations that are on air currently, are struggling to produce programmes related to their problems, cultural identity, and language in formats that are not merely a copy of the mainstream media. Therefore, capacity building for communities needs to be sensitive to local specificities while giving space for innovation and adoption.
5. Ownership patterns and management structures of campus radio and CR stations are different. While both may be owned by organizations, an educational institution in one case and an NGO in the other, the imperative and possibilities for community ownership and management are not the same. With the stated intention of using CR as a tool for empowerment, and to provide a voice to the voiceless, community-based initiatives attempt, albeit to varying degrees, to create more participatory ownership and management structures. On the other hand, campus - run radio stations, with a largely transitory student population and the CR policy mandate of community outreach, takes on a pedagogical tone (in doing 'development' programming), along with some entertainment which reflects urban sensibilities. As in the case of many such stations, they are also treated as laboratories for training future media professionals.

The need for participatory ownership and management structure is, therefore, not felt as strongly as in the case of community-run stations.

6. As pointed out above, social sustainability is a major concern for rural community-based stations because they have to constantly mobilise participation, seeking symbolic as well as material support from community members whose resources are meagre. Whether it is social capital or financial, the campus stations are much better endowed compared to the rural CR stations. While there is an almost assured flow of funds, advertising, and volunteers in campus stations, the rural CR stations have to deal with the day-to-day insecurities of financial, technological and social sustainability. Unless liberal support – financial as well as human – is not forthcoming in the form of public and private funds and appropriate capacity-building initiatives, the CR movement in its original spirit may not be able to flourish in India.
7. The effectiveness of a rural CR Station is often measured on the basis of its contribution to poverty reduction, ensuring good governance, achieving development goals, empowering women, promoting gender equality, ensuring inclusion of the marginalized, effectiveness in conflict resolution and disaster management, enhancing cultural diversity, facilitating peace, and boosting citizens' participation in civic as well as political processes. The campus stations have the option not to be burdened by any of these lofty and long-term goals of social change. As long as they are able to capture the interest and imagination of their audiences through content that is politically correct, informative, and reflects some of the fast moving contemporary issues through stimulating radio genres, their purpose is accomplished. By not making a clear distinction between the community-based and campus-run stations as well as their unique roles and requirements in the policy we are doing a disservice to both these distinct forms of broadcasting and running the risk of comparing apples with oranges when we evaluate them.

# Annexure 4

## Working Paper on

# Community Radio Policy

Vinod Pavarala, Stalin K, Sajan Venniyoor

### Background

The current policy on Community Radio (CR) in India was announced by the Government of India (GOI) in response to and as an outcome of:

- a) The Supreme Court Judgment of 1995 that declared airwaves as public property
- b) Demands from civil society organizations to open the airwaves to communities
- c) Consultations with community-based organizations, media advocacy groups, and other stake holders

The policy announced in 2006 was an amendment of the earlier policy, and had gone beyond educational institutions to include community-based organizations (CBOs), State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) under its ambit. Now that this policy has been in operation for last four years, there are enough accumulated experiences and evidences to suggest that certain aspects of the policy guidelines need to be reconsidered.

### Spectrum Allocation for Community Radio

At the pace in which community-based organizations have been applying and obtaining CR licenses in the last four years, it is evident that while lack of awareness may be the obvious factor, it is a fact that community mobilization, capacity building, creation of participatory decision-making structure are time consuming processes. The rapidly diminishing spectrum for CR is a cause for concern. Already in certain urban areas, the ceiling has been reached for CR frequencies. By the time the communities feel ready to plunge into this sector, it should not be that they are left with little or no spectrum. It is therefore recommended that:

1. The government should prepare a comprehensive Spectrum Allocation Plan, if necessary by geographical zones, and reserve spectrum for CR in both rural and urban areas.
2. In such a plan, priority must be accorded to establishing community based radio stations.
3. Campus-run and farm radio stations should not be permitted to monopolise this reserved spectrum.
4. As per international experiences in this matter, the service provided by CR should not be evaluated in terms of opportunity cost or justification of the cost of spectrum allocation, but rather in terms of the social value it represents.

### Campus and Community Operated Radio Stations

With a three-year head start that the educational institutions got from the CR policy and also the relatively longer time being taken by CBOs to obtain a license, today we have an overwhelming number of

operational stations that are campus-based and run by educational institutions [of the nearly 100 stations licensed under the policy, two thirds are campus run]. While efforts to promote awareness of CR among marginalized groups, especially in rural India, and to build their capacities are continuing, the policy in action seems to be under-serving the purpose for which it was originally put in place.

The civil society campaign for opening up air waves was intended to provide a platform for the marginalized communities who did not have adequate access to mainstream media outlets. There is no doubt that in a country's overall broadcast environment, there is scope and a valid place for campus radio stations, but it is problematic to confuse such stations with those run by CBOs.

Institutions of higher education primarily cater to already privileged communities, mostly urban, whose access to a whole range of media outlets is unlimited. In addition, being well-endowed with both social and financial capital, they have been able to obtain licenses more easily and managed to set up their stations. Many of these stations have been recruiting professionals to manage their stations and using tech-savvy students to produce content. While some of the campus-run radio stations have managed to define for themselves a community development mandate, many are struggling to cater both to their immediate (the campus) community and to an adopted, amorphous community outside the campuses. In the process, many stations find their immediate listenership either switched off or disinterested, and the community beyond finds itself being talked down to by experts without any genuine participation from them. This dual dilemma arises directly from the content guidelines given in the policy that the emphasis of the programming "should be on developmental, agricultural, health, educational, environmental, social welfare, community development and cultural programmes." Ideally, whether a radio station run by educational institutions would like to produce and broadcast programmes related to the broader community development issues, should be best left to their own wisdom and decision and not insisted upon through policy.

The other category of license applicants in the last few years has been South Asian University (SAUs) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs). These institutions, as is well known, have a communication policy that is framed within the extension philosophy, i.e. the famed 'lab to land' approach.

Their radio stations and the programmes aired by them tend, therefore, to be expert-driven, offering professional advice on matters of agriculture to a farming community that is seen as being deficient in that knowledge. Philosophically, as well as structurally, it is difficult to imagine stations run by these institutions adopting any of the core principles of CR, such as local participation in content generation and a management structure that is inclusive and accountable to the larger community. While there is a historic state-sponsored development mandate that these stations reflect, their inclusion within the same CR policy should be questioned. Similar is the case with some nascent efforts to have other government institutions, such as Rural Development and Panchayat Raj entities to start CR stations, directly or by proxy. All of these agencies have had access to the more powerful and stronger radio networks of the state, such as All India Radio (AIR), and continue to do so. We, therefore, recommend the following options for revising the policy:

- Option 1: Separation of the CR Policy from that of campus radio, with clear set of guidelines that identify their respective mandates, listening communities, and programming. It should be adequate to say that both of these types of stations should broadcast programmes that cater to the needs of their respective communities, with local participation in both programme production and management structure.



*Annexure 4 a*

- Option 2: Continuation of both the campus and CR stations under the same policy, which would now be renamed as: Campus and Community Radio Policy. The guidelines for the two should be given separately where they are different. This would involve removing the mandate of doing development programming through campus radio stations.
- Option 3: Inclusion of radio stations run by SAUs and KVKs either under the Campus Radio Guidelines as in Option 1 above or creation of a separate sub-category to be called Farm Radio.

## Licensing Processes and Procedures

From the experience of applicants for a CR license in the last four years, it was found out that most organizations took between 2 to 2½ years to clear all formalities and go on air. The time schedules announced in the official guidelines are being observed more in the breach. While it needs to be acknowledged that the process at MIB has been streamlined to a great extent with the setting up of a dedicated CR Cell, the procedures at the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (especially the WPC wing) are proving to be erratic in their operation and opaque in their functioning, contributing to interminable delays. Applicants are rarely informed promptly about the decisions taken on their applications. Instances have come to light where applicants have not heard from the relevant ministries for more than two years.

It has also come to the notice of the Community Radio Forum (CRF) and other agencies advocating the cause of applicants, that applications from certain regions of the country are being rejected on the grounds that they are from areas affected by extremist activities. We would like to observe that many of these so-called extremist activities are predominantly in regions that are deprived economically and socially. It is in these areas that the development imperative is more urgently felt and also where mainstream media scarcely serve the needs of the people. CR as a medium of horizontal communication to articulate local developmental needs and cultural identities is most required in these deprived regions of the country. Terrorism and extremism normally seem to breed under conditions of under-development and a medium for articulating local development needs may be seen as a solution. Moreover, taking care of the law and order situation in any part of the country is the responsibility of the government.

Another procedural issue we would like to raise here is the requirement for conducting a baseline listenership survey (not in the original guidelines, but added later by the MIB) before license applications could be processed further. The pro forma given for the survey reflects a particular, narrow quantitative approach to research and not tailored in the context of particular communities. This clause has not only created needless complications in the process, but has also encouraged creative ways of cooking up the data. While the sentiment behind the survey is appreciated, there are a whole range of methods (including local-level meetings, focus group discussions, PRAs) by which grassroots organizations could ascertain the needs of the local communities with whom they work.

On basis of the above observations we recommend the following:

- i. Streamlining of licensing procedures at Wireless Planning and Coordination (WPC) wing of the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. A separate CR Cell, on the lines of the one at MIB, may be set up at WPC for better coordination. Online application procedures for such things as SACFA clearance must be simplified.

- ii. Creating of transparent procedures for tracking the status of applications. Organizations whose applications are not being considered favourably should be informed at the earliest because of the considerable social and financial investments that go into the preparations for the launching of a CR Station.
- iii. Licensing of CR stations in relatively deprived areas should be given priority on the basis of their developmental needs and not rejected on the grounds of extremism or terrorism.
- iv. The standardized survey requirements for licensing ought to be dispensed with immediately. If necessary, the Ministry may seek information about the community's need for a radio station from the applicants who have been working in that area.

## Content Guidelines

The primary content guideline in the existing policy that programmes should be "of immediate relevance to the community" must be the guiding principle of any station licensed under this policy. In that spirit, and in light of what has been said above about not burdening campus radio stations with the development mandate, the guideline on development programming may be reconsidered for campus radio stations.

A survey of CR policies around the world indicates that news and information, albeit of local nature, forms a key ingredient of programming. The ban on broadcasting news and current affairs programmes on CR stations in India is undoubtedly a restriction on the freedom of expression. In areas where people find negligible coverage of events and issues in their communities, it is important that CR stations serve this vital purpose. Therefore, we recommend the following:

- a) Inclusion of development-related programming to be made optional for campus radio stations.
- b) All stations must be measured only against their ability to cater effectively to their particular communities of listeners
- c) The prohibition on broadcasting of news and current affairs on CR stations must be lifted immediately

## Funding and Sustainability

While social sustainability in the form of community mobilization is vital for the success of CR, financial sustainability is the key to survival. With the central idea of providing a not-for-profit service to the community, there are hardly any viable commercial options for CR stations. Many organizations that are keen on entering this sector are deterred by what appear to be prohibitive start-up costs and high operational expenditure. While the larger NGOs manage to reallocate parts of their other programme grants for CR, many smaller Community-based Organizations (CBOs) are hampered by lack of funds. It is important that the Government supports the infrastructure needs for enabling the voices of poor and marginalized communities with appropriate public investments. Internationally, there are several examples of Governments setting up an autonomously administered Community Radio Support Fund to which people could apply for grants, both to help in establishing a station as well as for meeting operational expenditure. In some countries, these funds are sourced for capacity-building and upgrading of equipment. Such a dedicated fund is created by the Government

*Annexure 4 a*

and is replenished with contributions from development and welfare ministries, licensing fee from the consumers, and from mainstream media revenues.

The current policy is unclear about source of sponsorship for programmes. Apart from programmes sponsored by Central and State Governments, it should be possible for CR stations to tap sponsorships from larger NGOs and Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) wings of private companies. Therefore, we recommend the following:

- a) The creation of a dedicated, autonomous CR Support Fund by the Government for providing financial support towards setting up and operational costs.
- b) Permitting of sponsorships from organizations other than Government agencies.

### **Technology Options**

The CR Policy must enable the promotion and adoption of affordable technologies that are user friendly. Greater access to broadcast technologies and demystification of the techniques of production should be among the primary objectives of both the Government and Civil Society. A detailed working paper on technology was presented separately by CRF.

# Working Paper on Sustainability of Community Radio

Arti Jaiman, Stalin K, Ashish Sen

## Background

The current policy of Community Radio (CR) in India was announced by the Government of India (GOI) in response to and as an outcome of:

- a) The Supreme Court Judgment of 1995 that declared airwaves as public property
- b) Demands from civil society organizations, to open the air waves to communities,
- c) Consultations with community based organizations, media advocacy groups and other stake holders

Shortly after its announcement, in March 2007, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) along with UNESCO, UNDP and UNICEF organized a National Consultation in New Delhi to discuss and to take forward the policy guidelines and also to facilitate an enabling environment for CR which would also ensure its sustainability. Many of the concerns that were articulated included the following:

- 1) Human and Social Sustainability
- 2) Programme Sustainability
- 3) Technology Sustainability
- 4) Financial Sustainability

The experiences of operational grassroots based Community Radio Stations (which were markedly absent in 2007) have deepened the relevance of these concerns.

Side by side with these, CR today has also to grapple with changing development priorities and shrinkages in the overall funding climate, the challenges of digital versus analogue and vulnerabilities of "NGOisation". At the same time, we need to recognize that the CR sector has limited financial resources which in turn throws out more challenges in terms of sustainability.

All these factors underline recommendations for the policy guidelines as well as suggestions for NGOs and CBOs that are desirous of setting up CR stations. These have been accordingly compartmentalized as *Policy Recommendations to the Government and Guidelines to CBOs on sustainability of Community Radio Stations at the end of this paper.*

## Human and Social Sustainability

The 2006 Guidelines for CR were inspired by the goal of CR as a platform to promote the "voice of the voiceless." Implicit in the policy guidelines is the need for CR stations to be of, for, and by the community and not driven by mandates of NGOs.

In practical terms, this is easier said than done. Questions pertinent to community participation and management have increasingly come into play in the operations of CR stations, even as the

*Annexure 4 b*

stations have voiced difficulties in sustained interest/participation of "volunteers" and members of the community which are also compounded by the absence of programme and project funds.

While revenue generation (discussed in the financial sustainability component of this paper) is an important factor towards ensuring sustainability, CR Station applicants and license holders need to adequately demonstrate the correlation between the station and the local community. This cannot be restricted to just representation in programme and management committees which could be vulnerable to "tokenism", but find expression in the daily rhythm life of the CR Station. The CR stations needs to be an integral part of the community life and reflect the aspirations of the community as against an NGO mandate. This involves building and reflecting synergies between the CR stations and the school, the medical services, the local income services etc. These synergies, in turn, need to be integrated in the daily voice, volunteers and management of the station. Finally, the community needs to regularly ascertain the credibility and worth of the CR Station in their lives. This has been practiced through community audits in some countries.

### **Programme Sustainability**

The credibility of a Community Radio Station is not merely dependent on content generation, but the process of content generation. While the content regulation and monitoring guidelines emphasize that the "programmes should be of immediate relevance to the community", it needs to also provide/suggest mechanisms that can promote and strengthen programme sustainability.

There needs to be a minimum quantum of original programmes in the daily broadcasts comprising at least a couple of hours (with provision for re-broadcast during the day) of the Community Radio Stations. This needs to be gradually scaled if the stations are to achieve programme sustainability and a dynamic community engagement.

The experience of "On Air" CR stations, have indicated that programme and content generation has been underestimated. This was echoed by several participants during the recent Community Radio awareness workshops conducted in Goa (June 2010) and Budhikote (September 2010). There have also been instances where applicants have received their licenses, but have not been able to sustain the rhythm of daily broadcasts – undercutting the sustainability of their operations at the onset.

In order to remedy this, appropriate capacity-building and training need to be provided on several fronts. These include:

- 1) Capacity-building for programme sustainability needs to commence at the earliest prior to the license application process, and not when the license is granted.
- 2) The training design needs to encompass both programme formats and mechanisms of dissemination. Rather than relying on pre-recorded programmes, CR stations need to have more live broadcasts on a daily basis that involve community participation in the station. Simple but interactive formats like phone-ins need to be integrated into the programme structure of the CR stations. These formats need to engage the community by focusing on issues that involve their daily life, needs, rights and aspirations.

- 3) Mechanisms like narrowcasting through loud speakers and cable are useful preparatory and first steps to build content dissemination, strengthen community participation and familiarize the community to the idea and rhythm of daily broadcasting.
- 4) Capacity building programmes should incorporate these mechanisms into their design, so that the license applicants are in a state of readiness to broadcast when the license is sanctioned.
- 5) Programme sustainability not only requires a trained bank of volunteers and producers, but a process where the training is on going. This is vital to build and sustain a viable bank of volunteers and producers.

This apart, programme sustainability could also be addressed through the development of a content sharing mechanism like an internet portal that could be coordinated by a network like the Community Radio Forum. This also assumes relevance given that the policy guidelines require 50 percent of programmes to be created locally. Experiences from other parts of the world like the PULSAR Community Radio News Agency in Latin America or SIMBIANI news agency in Africa are efforts in this direction which could be adapted and appropriately developed in the Indian context.

### **Technology Sustainability**

The issue of technology sustainability has been substantially discussed in a separate paper. However, it is important for this paper to reiterate that CR stations are characterized by low-cost infrastructure and equipment. This needs to be adequately reflected and emphasized in the guidelines. Given that CR stations are envisaged as a voice for poor communities, their sustainability is also determined by the limited resources of these communities. The reality check therefore is to facilitate and promote technology that is affordable, rugged and whose maintenance costs are minimal. While the range of technology options available for CR stations have now increased, there should be more effort invested towards disseminating and spreading awareness about them through Community Radio Training and Capacity Building Programmes. In this context, the policy needs to also take cognizance of new technologies that are both affordable and easily accessible like cell phones and encourage efforts to deepen the linkages between mobile telephony and radio.

### **Financial Sustainability**

An adequate financial base is vital to enable both the survival and the growth of a CR Station. The experiences of a few grass-root CR stations –despite the fact that they began operations only a couple of years ago –demonstrate the power of self-sustainability mechanisms to promote income and revenue generation and which are rooted in community ownership structures. These examples include both shareholder/cooperative and self-help group models that are demonstrable and merit replication. These need to be documented and disseminated through an appropriate learning-sharing platform.

However, self-sustainability by itself is unlikely to completely address the issue of financial sustainability. CR, as the policy guidelines articulate, provides a platform for the voiceless and the marginalized sections of society especially in poor and remote parts of the country. These communities and the NGOs that work with them are unlikely to have the requisite financial resources to meet the infrastructural and support costs of setting up a CR Station. It is in this context that the relevance of CR subsidy fund assumes significance. Several examples and good practices from different countries support this view. For instance,

*Annexure 4 b*

France demonstrates the effectiveness of a regulatory and funding framework to support CR through a mechanism of cross-subsidy. Commercial radio stations pay a levy on their commercial revenue into the Support Fund for CR. CR stations are eligible for support from the fund provided they do not take more than 20 percent of their revenue from commercial sources.

Apart from a CR support fund there are other examples of CR legislation that strives to reduce costs by waving or limiting payment for radio spectrum to a minimum as exemplified in countries like Mali and Colombia.

The policy guidelines provides for revenue generated from advertisements and announcements. This has yet to be constructively harnessed by CR stations to generate adequate income. The suggestion that the Community Radio Forum (CRF) negotiate with the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity (DAVP) on behalf of all CR stations to finalize advertising rates warrants due consideration and action.

While the guidelines allow advertisement revenues, it prohibits transmission of sponsored programmes except those sponsored by Central and State governments. This needs to be reviewed. Many CR stations have begun to deepen their engagement with development issues and include them as a vital part of their broadcasts. These broadcasts are likely to receive programme sponsorship and support from multilateral agencies and donors that work in these areas.

## Policy Recommendations to the Government

### **A) Technology sustainability:**

- 1) The guidelines explicitly encourage and emphasize the importance of low cost and appropriate technology options in setting up CR stations.

### **B) Financial sustainability:**

- 1) The creation of a CR support fund where a percentage of the earnings of private FM radio could be channelised to subsidize the infrastructure and capacity building costs of CR stations. In this context, the policy guidelines could also revisit the Amit Mitra Committee recommendations of 2004.
- 2) Sponsored programmes should not be restricted to Government sponsorship, but also include support from development agencies and other organizations that are committed to broadcast public interest information.
- 3) The government should expedite empanelment of all CR stations for DAVP advertisement support.

## Guidelines for CBOs on Sustainability of CR stations

### **A) Human and Social sustainability:**

- 1) CR stations should not only have an ownership and management structure that is reflective of the community it seeks to serve, but the structure should also demonstrate its correlation with the local community life and development.
- 2) Regular/Annual community audits should be held where the community measures the

credibility of the station in terms of community content, participation and impact. These could be in the form of public hearings – as exemplified in countries like South Africa.

- 3) Simultaneously, it is important to develop mechanisms that allow for the preservation and furtherance of technical and production skills acquired by community members during initial capacity building processes such as a training cascade where more and more community members are trained by the initial pool of trainees goes a long way in ensuring sustained programming.

***B) Programme sustainability:***

- 1) Training programmes addressing programme sustainability should be an integral part of the CR stations strategy and developed at the inception stage prior to license application.
- 2) The training programme design should incorporate an appropriate mix of formats and dissemination mechanisms that will promote community participation and programme sustainability.
- 3) CR stations should explore the viability of web-based exchange portals promoting content-sharing. Such a mechanism could be coordinated by a representative association like the CRF.



# Working Papers on Broadcasting Technology and Infrastructure

N. Ramakrishnan, Hemant Babu, Aaditeshwar Seth, Vasuki Belavadi

## Background

The famous 1995 Supreme Court judgment declaring airwaves as public property and a 10-year long campaign by Community Based Organizations (CBOs), activists and academics all over the country resulted in what is today known as the Community Radio Policy (2006).

The policy makes it possible for CBOs and educational institutions not excluding agriculture universities and Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) to apply for a Community Radio (CR) licence. The government had declared that the policy would result in the setting up of 4,000 CR stations all over the country. Four years after this policy was implemented, a little over 80 CR stations, including CBOs, educational institutions & KVKs have obtained licences.

What is slowing down the setting up of CR Stations in the country? Is the policy itself responsible? What technological hurdles do CBOs face in setting up CR stations? Accumulated experiences and evidence from various quarters suggest that certain aspects of the policy guidelines vis-à-vis technology need to be reconsidered.

## CR Licence: The application procedure

Once a CBO applies for setting up of a CR, the application needs to be cleared by relevant ministries and only after allocation of frequency is a Letter of Intent (LoI) issued. Once a LoI is issued, the applicant needs to apply online for Standing Advisory Committee for Frequency Allocation (SACFA) clearance before approaching I&B Ministry to sign the Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA). Once the GOPA is signed, the applicant is again required to approach the Ministry of Communications & IT for a Wireless Operating License (WOL).

It is observed that while WPC has made it mandatory for all applicants to apply online for SACFA clearance, the application process is complex and cumbersome. The application takes a long time, to load and complete. To make online application mandatory for CBOs operating in remote areas with unreliable internet connections is unfair. Despite the best efforts of Community Radio Forum (CRF) members to help out applicants in filling up the same (a manual has been compiled in association with UNESCO), the application remains a tough nut to crack.

Secondly, there is an urgent need for online applications for SACFA to be separated from those seeking clearances for other wireless applications. Once the application is filled up, checking for the status of the application is an excruciating procedure since the applications are combined with numerous other applications of other wireless licences. Most times, the status is never revealed, thanks to the erratic functioning of the website.

When the online application procedure was introduced one assumed that it would result in speedy clearances. Inordinate delays in some cases, over a year, mostly caused by either erratic functioning of the SACFA website put the CBOs in a difficult situation.

The case of WOL application is no different. On the one hand, while the WPC wing causes inordinate delays in processing applications, on the other hand the delays result in expiry of the fees that the CBO has paid and the latter are forced to pay additional fees with penalties.

## Community Radio: Technological Options

Several technology options are available in the market for setting up of a CR. These have been well documented and are available as resources on various websites including that of I&B, UNESCO, Community Radio India, etc.

Organizations like BECIL, WEBEL manufacture equipment like transmitters as well offering turn-key solutions for setting up a CR Station. Of late, a number of private enterprises have also begun advertising themselves as offering turnkey solutions including setting up of the studio, supplying equipment (both studio and field) and integrating them all even while offering to get the necessary clearances at every stage.

Nomad India Network (Mumbai) is probably the only other private enterprise providing locally manufactured transmitters specifically designed for CR stations.

Post-production has been simplified and can now be executed on simple desktop computers, thanks to readily available software—both open source and proprietary. However, recording equipment, particularly field-based recorders, audio mixers to meet studio needs and microphones in most cases require importing, although a couple of brands (like *Ahuja*) are available for purchase off the shelf. Given the absence of indigenous manufacturers, dependence on imported equipment including transmitters is very high.

There are several options available for acoustic treatment of studios from very low cost options like using curtains, egg crates, thermocoal and foam to the conventional acoustic treatment using gypsum boards and fibre to the more recent spray-based fire-proof treatments. However, the latter options are expensive. The spray-based treatment also needs to be imported.

CBOs often tend to withdraw their idea of setting up a CR stations on getting an impression (often created by agencies promoting turnkey solutions) that technology costs are very high. While there are several technological options, CBOs need to be aware of the start up solutions with enough redundancy while still making it possible to upgrade/scale up at a later date.

It may be noted that the import duties on such equipment is exorbitantly high. Take the case of a transmitter. There is not a single RF transistor manufacturer in India. However, the import duty on transistors stands at 30%. Similar is the case of duties and taxes on import of other equipment like field recorders, audio mixers and transmitters. The current regime only seeks to ensure that most pieces of equipment are priced very high.

Incidentally, not much research has been done in the area of reducing the costs of transmitters. The existing transmitters in the market are way too expensive deterring even interested CR stations from

venturing into it. There is an urgent need to look at alternative cost-effective technologies in building transmitters.

Similarly, the policy provides for a transmitter of greater power (up to 200 Watts) in extraordinary circumstances depending on the terrain. However, this option does not seem to have been exercised either by applicants or the Ministry. One is not sure if the online application provides applying for a transmitter of higher power in case of hilly terrains.

On another count, commercial FM stations are allowed circular broadcast polarisation in transmission. This enables non-static reception (while in cars, etc). However, CR stations are only allowed vertical broadcast polarisation making non-static reception difficult. Considering that CBOs in sub-urban and urban areas are also eligible to apply for CR stations, not to mention universities and also the fact that their transmission is already limited by a 50W transmitter, one feels that the policy is unfair on this count.

### **Integration of Mobile Telephony & Capacity-sharing**

A number of CR stations seem to be limiting themselves to producing objective programming like interviews, narratives although some of them have been experimenting with new formats and genres. Very few CR stations in the country seem to be taking advantage of the mobile telephony in the country and integrating it with their stations.

CR is an ideal medium for voicing day-to-day civil society issues on human rights violations, employment opportunities, public services, state of the infrastructure, etc. However, few CR stations actually run programs on such issues. Most stations rather prefer to create informational programs on topics such as agriculture, health, or setting up of micro-enterprises. While informational programs are relevant and locally produced contextual programs have been seen to be quite effective solely focusing on such programs restricts the impact that CR can actually have. With the wide proliferation of mobile phones, however, it has become very easy to engage with the community. Technology which smoothen the interface between radio and mobile telephony, and makes it easier for the community to air their concerns, can help CR create larger impact.

Many CR stations commission technicians for regular maintenance and upgradation of existing infrastructure. There is acute shortage of manpower having knowledge of running diagnostics, pinpointing small issues and fixing them at their level without having to wait for a technician to arrive at their doorstep. There is an urgent need for capacity-sharing and networking on service and maintenance of CR equipment.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Online filling of the SACFA and WOL applications should be made optional. Alternatively, the application should be completely revamped to make it easier to fill.
2. The CR online application needs to be separated from those of other wireless licences.
3. The WPC wing should set up an effective mechanism to provide quick feedback to the applicants on their applications and relevant documents.

4. Besides taking necessary action to simplify the process and revamping the application process itself, the WPC should set up a separate dedicated wing to process CR applications.
5. The Ministry should provide concessions for higher transmitter power in difficult terrains. It could also consider provision of repeaters in extreme conditions.
6. The current duty structures need to be reviewed to make it more enabling for CR stations. Given the absence of indigenous manufacturers of electronic equipment there are no options besides waiving existing duties and taxes for CR applicants to bring down the prices. Same is the case with acoustic treatment imports.
7. A simple certification process with checks and balances in place for agencies wanting to access transmitter kits from abroad is the need of the hour. In addition to this, more agencies should be allowed to manufacture transmitters. This is bound to decrease the costs on transmitters.
8. Most agencies propagate high-end technologies that might prove difficult for CBOs and even some educational institutions to invest in. Start up CR stations must be encouraged to explore low cost technology options too.
9. Circular broadcast polarisation should be allowed for CR stations being set up by CBOs and educational institutions too under the CR Policy.
10. CBOs should explore the option of integrating mobile telephony into their radio stations to provide for increased interaction and effectiveness in terms of programming.
11. There is also an urgent need to start a maintenance and technology infrastructure upgrade skill building network, where CR stations can share notes on simple fixes, rate equipment for durability and performance - and perhaps even share repair-capable manpower.
12. There is also a need to create a platform for exchange of success stories, day-to-day experiences so that other CR stations can learn from them.
13. Government and donor agencies could look at setting up a grant for Research and Development on cost effective technologies. Similarly, there is also need for a grant for capacity-sharing, particularly in terms of technology inputs, maintenance, servicing and repairs of CR equipment.

## A very low-cost CR technology model:

(All costs mentioned below are indicative & not prescriptive either. Applicants are advised to explore options and contact people with know how for suggestions. The following estimate is also exclusive of the building costs.)

Very Basic Community Radio Station				
S. No.	Equipment Description	Brand/Model	Qty	Approx. Price
1	Audio Mixing Console	Behringer, Eurorack, UB502, Soundmaster	1	10,000
2	Microphone (dynamic)	Shure, SM 58	3	24,000
3	Professional headphones	Behringer HPM1000 or Panasonic	4	4,000
4	PC Computer - Intel Core 2 Duo 2.93/2GB RAM/250 GB HDD/Combo drive/17" CRT monitor/Creative Audigy 256 Sound card/Intel motherboard/ATX cabinet/Creative speakers/Windows XP SP2	Assembled  One for recording in studio, second for audio editing & the third for playback during transmission	3	75,000
	Audacity: Audio Editing Software	Open source <a href="http://audacity.sourceforge.net">http://audacity.sourceforge.net</a>		Free
	Compact Digital Field Recorder	Sony ICD series	4	20,000
	50W VHF FM transmitter		2	2,00,000
	Dummy Load	Nomad India	1	
	5/8 Vertical Omni Directional Antenna		1	
	RF Cable		50 mtrs	
	Compressor Limiter D&R		1	
	UPS with backup maintenance free batteries	Microtek	1	30,000
	Antenna mast/tower with guyed wire	--	1	15,000

S. No.	Equipment Description	Brand/Model	Qty	Approx. Price
4	Audio connectors XLR, RCA, Phono Jacks, etc.	---	50	2,000
	Audio cables	---	50 mtrs	800
	Acoustic treatment—simple curtains, carpets, foam, etc.	---	As per requirement	10,000
	Miscellaneous—USB connectors, transmission monitors etc	Mixed	As per requirement	5,000
	GRINS (Gramvaani Radio Inter Networking System) for playback, archiving, integrating mobile telephony, etc.	gramvaani.org (Additional if mobile telephony & other features are required). Else, one can use the media player that comes with the operating system.	1	50,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: Rs. Four Lakh Forty Five Thousand Eight Hundred only				4,45,800

# Working Paper on Capacity Building & Knowledge Sharing

Ekta Mittal, Rajen Vaarada, Ram Bhat

## Background

The Government of India (GOI) released guidelines on Community Radio (CR) on November 16th 2006, whereupon three key sectors were allowed to apply for FM licenses, i.e. agricultural centres, educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. These guidelines stemmed from the 1995 Supreme Court judgment that airwaves are public property, as well as from consistent policy advocacy by various individuals and civil society groups from the late 1990s.

As of today, there are close to 100 CR stations on air, a mix of educational institutions, agricultural centres, as well as NGOs. Over the coming years, it is expected that the growth of this sector will be exponential and will reach out to many more marginalized communities.

It is in this context that knowledge-sharing and capacity-building become extremely important concepts which must be discussed from all perspectives. It is not sufficient for an incremental growth in numbers alone. What is essential is that CR stations need to fulfil their promise as agencies which provide a voice to communities and individuals who have not been able to get access to or ownership over media in the country.

Further, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building, as important elements of the road ahead, can really address the issue of how these CR Stations are being used by their communities, across contexts of:

- Making governance a transparent and accountable process.
- Providing non-formal learning to its listeners and aiding the process of formal or informal education to the children of their communities.
- Being instrumental in improving the health of its communities by advocating best practices in health, identifying locally relevant issues.
- Assisting local farmers to voice out best practices in agriculture as well as discuss key issues which prevent agriculture from becoming a sustainable way of life.
- Dynamically documenting and keeping local cultures and traditions alive.
- Generally improving quality of life for all community members who fall within the coverage of its transmission by taking up all other locally relevant issues on its behalf.
- Equally if not more importantly, by giving a voice for community members to speak about their lives, cultures, issues and contexts.

## Knowledge Sharing

One of the growing areas of focus has been the understanding that the evolutionary process of building an informed society can be accelerated by enabling a process of creating a system of using information and enhancing it with experience which enable it to become a "knowledge" component. Radio plays a crucial role in rural communities and can become a store house of information which can house knowledge repositories for communities to tap into.

However, CR cannot exist in isolation but needs to evolve to become a crucial player in enabling an informed citizen as rural communities try to catch up with the information advantaged urban societies. CR can become a powerful tool and can play a central role in information dissemination. When coupled with new Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones, CR stations can become a new model for knowledge sharing and building knowledge communities. This leads us to accept and underwrite the importance of a knowledge repository which can become a central "brain" for all CR stations and communities to tap into. CR stations need to perceive themselves as knowledge managers rather than as simple CR stations.

With the growing numbers of CR stations, there is also a danger of the core understanding of the purpose of CRSs being diluted. It is therefore important that CRF focus on creating mechanisms for knowledge sieving and dynamic knowledge repositories which will be a clearing house of information to the societies they serve. A typical example would be the dissemination of information through CR, the collection of feedback by mobile phones and a repository of the best content managed by a committed station for further enhancement. (Note: mobile phones today have also become receivers of FM stations). It is also imperative that all CR stations should provide their best content for analysis and subsequent inclusion into a national repository.

Within the Community Radio sector, there are multiple domains of knowledge which are being produced and shared at specific levels. These are:

1. Media policy – What is the basis of the community radio policy, where is it stemming from, how does it connect to our constitutional rights, and so on?
2. Technical information – What is the technology through which Community Radio works; what equipment is required, what technology is relevant, and so on?
3. Content development – What are the various methods through which content can be developed; how can these methods be inclusive in terms of participation and ownership; practical ways of using air-time allocated to radio stations; thematics for which Community Radio can be used as a tool, and so on?
4. Research and evaluation – How is Community Radio being used, which sections of communities benefit from this technology, how is it empowering; how is it documenting local cultures and knowledge streams; how is it being used as an educational tool; what are the methods of evaluating impact, and so on?

All these streams of knowledge systems are being simultaneously produced and shared at various levels. The urgent priorities in this field are:



*Annexure 4 d*

1. Sourcing and Authenticity – As more CR Stations start operating at a grassroots level there is a whole new body of knowledge which is being produced at the level of the CR stations themselves. Those who are involved as facilitators need to encourage practitioners to start documenting, articulating and sharing some of this knowledge to their peers. This will bring about a radical shift in the way stations adopt best practices, as examples of community-to-community linkages have proved to work better than external facilitators attempting to transfer knowledge to practitioners.
2. Collation – Various stakeholders need to put in a process of systematically collating their experiences and ideas, and make them available in an open and accessible way.
3. Sharing – Technologies and methods need to be imagined through which these various knowledge streams can be shared amongst all the stakeholders.

## Capacity Building

Capacity building today needs to include the building of awareness of the larger role of radio and its ability to provide a wide range of services. There is a need for CR stations to become mainstreamed and used by multiple organizations on the ground. The sustainability of CR stations will depend on how many organizations collaborate to use the infrastructure. The sharing of CR stations to suit different organizations for delivery of content to their stakeholders needs to be promoted. This will enable a wider range of content going on air. It will on one side make the station sustainable as users will pay for the time and on the other provide a wide range of content to be broadcast to different age groups.

From the experience of both existing CR practitioners as well as potential applicants, capacity-building is an area which needs urgent support. Demand has by far outstripped supply in this area. The broad areas under which capacity-building needs to be undertaken are:

Policy literacy – Many institutions are not aware that such a policy even exists. Even some of them who know are sometimes not clear in terms of what is a framework for this policy, either in terms of communications for development or freedom of speech and expression. There have been some limited number of workshops undertaken by various organizations, but there is clearly a need for many more such workshops at the regional level. Further material needs to be developed in terms of translating complex notions of freedom of speech and expression into easily understandable modules which can be internalized and acted upon by community groups.

Technology – Community Radio implies usage of specific audio and transmission equipment. Most often, the equipment is outsourced through various consultants or institutions. This means that communities who will subsequently use this equipment do not have an intrinsic understanding of the technology they use on a day-to-day basis. There is a lack of good training modules where communities on the field can familiarize themselves with radio-related technologies, both conceptually and practically. Each step of the technological process which makes CR a reality needs to be well-documented and then made available to communities. Most of all, technology-based capacity-building needs to go into a direction where community members are able to use locally available resources and expertise to ensure technological sustainability from within, and not become dependent on outside resources and expertise.

Production – CR stations need to have basic production skills both in the studio and in the field to be able to develop content effectively on a daily basis. This particular area has led to confusion because

various trainers teach production skills for different kinds of equipment. What is needed is a centralized resource base which documents production skills training for all kinds of equipment which are commonly used in India. This way, trainers and various CR stations can access what is relevant to them. Further, an emphasis on live programming and interactive programming integrated with mobile phone and internet tools needs to be given in capacity-building programmes, so that Community Radio stations occupy more air-time and provide a greater percentage of air-time to voices of community members rather than to those of experts and internal staff.

**Management** – The policy specifically states that the CR stations should have a management structure which is reflective of the community which it seeks to serve. The training programmes need to be more explicit about how to constitute a management committee; how to develop its mandate; charter and rules and regulations, so as to ensure a management body which is accountable, transparent and also reflective of the community it seeks to serve. The capacity-building programmes in this area need to show CR stations a clear path wherein power of management can be handed over in a transparent and legal way to community representatives, i.e. representatives of the community in which the station is located.

**Sustainability** – There are various options for technological, financial, social and human sustainability. Again, there is confusion because different trainers recommend different solutions. A centralized open resource base could be created where various sustainability options, along with case studies need to be made available, so that trainers and CR stations can access what is relevant to them. Further capacity-building programmes need to chart out examples and case studies from CRSs who have adopted best practices from all over the world, especially countries like Australia, Canada, Nepal, and South Africa. Capacity-building programmes related to sustainability also need to focus on aspects of social sustainability, so that CR stations can look at the issue holistically from an early stage, rather than merely focusing on financial sustainability.

Finally, as a concluding observation, we note that there are many small capacity building organizations, which have emerged across the country. However, we rarely acknowledge CRS stations themselves as capable trainers. More opportunities need to be given to CR stations to train their peers at a regional or local level. This will not only address aspects of financial sustainability for these stations, but also promote and encourage peer-to-peer networking of such stations, leading to a genuine grassroots movement. The other organizations, which are not practitioners but yet practice capacity building as a part of their work, have a valuable role to play. Organizations or forums such as CRF, Ideosync, Gramvaani, MARAA, Solutions Exchange, and CEMCA, can bring in valuable international experiences that could provide for comparative learning and offer insights that may escape the communities themselves as insiders.

## Policy Recommendations

Community Radio practitioners at the grassroots level should be recognized and encouraged as capable trainers. Peer-to-peer capacity sharing workshops need to be subsidized by government support, so that practitioners are further equipped as trainers. Knowledge sharing should be encouraged and promoted not only in English but also in regional languages so that community members at the grassroots can actively contribute and participate in the process.

An open repository of CR content should be maintained by the relevant government agency, which can demonstrate the possibilities of knowledge sharing through CR.

*Annexure 4 d*

As a best practice, it could be recommended that, knowledge produced in the domain of Community Radio be released under the range of Creative Commons licenses (<http://creativecommons.org>).

Peer-to-peer sharing at a local, regional, national and international levels should be promoted for Community Radio practitioners. To achieve this, field visits amongst CR practitioners can be subsidized through government support. Community based as well as external models for monitoring and evaluation of CR in an Indian context need to be developed, collated, documented and shared amongst practitioners through various mechanisms such as workshops, conferences, consultations and seminars.

Policy literacy, research and documentation are areas of emphasis for capacity building. Live programming should be emphasized within production skills to enable CR stations to increase their programming qualitatively and quantitatively.

Technology related capacity building needs to empower community members to make technological choices which are locally relevant and sustainable. Ideally, communities should be able to make these choices before operationalizing their CR stations.

Legal specificities need to be outlined and built in to the policy to enable communities to realize ownership and management of their CR stations.

Knowledge sharing and capacity building in terms of social sustainability holds the key to the future of CR. Examples from around the world need to be shared with our practitioners urgently. Further, tools such as public community based social audits should be included in capacity building programs.

## Annexure 5

### Papers Presented by Panelists

# Response to the Issue of Sustainability

David Melzer, Community Broadcasting Association of Australia

I want to thank the organizers of this consultation for inviting me – UNESCO and CRF.

So far at the conference, I have heard about some good Indian examples of grassroots radio – and a national organization, the Community Radio Forum (CRF), that is capable and a government that appears willing to listen and act.

Australia has a unique and highly developed community broadcasting sector with over 300 licensed community broadcasting stations and the involvement of over 20,000 volunteers. Licenses were first issued in 1972 to not-for-profit organizations to provide alternative and complementary broadcast services to those provided by the commercial and national sectors and access to the community in generating local media content.

The sector is extremely diverse with licenses allocated both geographically and according to specific communities of interest. Approximately 70% of stations are located in regional and remote areas. In capital cities there are both metropolitan-wide services and sub-metropolitan services. Communities of interest include indigenous, ethnic and multicultural, educational, youth, religious, specialist music, print handicapped, and a broad range of general Community Radio (CR) services servicing local communities.

I work with the national organization for CR in Australia, the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA). In addition to providing services for the 300 member stations, it manages projects of benefit to the broad community broadcasting sector. The CBAA is a not-for-profit company based in Sydney. The CBAA employs 17 people including the secretariat and those managing sector-wide projects. (Visit [www.cbaa.org.au](http://www.cbaa.org.au) and [www.cbonline.org.au](http://www.cbonline.org.au))

There are other national groups in Australia for Community Radio – for ethnic broadcasters (NEMBC) and indigenous media workers (AICA) and Radio for the Print Handicapped (RPHA).

I will talk briefly about the history of community broadcasting in Australia– it has been going since 1972 – because it says something about sustainability – then I want to talk about the current structure and obstacles to sustainability.

Broadcasting started in Australia, like India, in the 1920s. Australia is a big country and when it became obvious that commercial radio would not cater to the rural areas, in 1932, the government established the national broadcaster, the ABC.

Forty years later it became apparent that the national broadcasters were not serving the interests of other significant parts of the community.

### *Annexure 5 a*

Six different and unrelated groups—all lobbied for access to the airwaves at similar times, because they believed their interests were not being met by government nor commercial broadcasters. These groups were ethnic, indigenous, education, social justice, classical music and RPH.

The groups successfully lobbied with the national government from the 1970s. They pushed for legislation to recognize community broadcast as complementary and equal to public and commercial broadcasting – with equivalent power output and transmission range.

The Government set up mechanisms so that the starting point for obtaining a licence was based on a need, and a desire – a civic movement, community groups, anyone who could organize, anyone who could articulate a need and a capacity to run a station could apply.

Licences based on a geographical community or a community of interest, these groups need to establish an independent organization and set up constitution, not as a part of another group, and be completely independent.

Definitions are critical in Community Radio. "Community" means that the organization has to encourage participation in its operation, including its management, by members of its community.

The CR movement established regular reviews of the Codes of Practice. These are agreed to through consultation with all stations. The Codes establish the movements guiding principles about access, participation and diversity. ([http://cbaa.org.au/News\\_And\\_Publications/Code-of-Practice/Code-of-Practice](http://cbaa.org.au/News_And_Publications/Code-of-Practice/Code-of-Practice))

In Australia, after 40 years of community broadcasting, we have more than 350 stations. Commercial stations have 250 licences and the national and public broadcasters have 70.

Australia has more licensed Community Radio Stations than the number of government and commercial stations combined.

Seventy percent of community stations are outside big cities but each of these have diverse programs and diverse participants.

People need to be engaged with their stations and their participation needs to be meaningful. They need to be invited to make decisions, including management decisions. The essence of CR is access and participation in all aspects of station operations.

## **Sustainability**

The CRF's paper on sustainability lists 4 key areas. I would like to respond from an Australian perspective.

### ***Human and Social***

Encouraging participation is the foundation of a station's sustainability. Participants need skills in order to participate. People need training to acquire skills that enable participation. Not just skills in broadcasting but in management; how to run a station well; how to engage the community; how to make a station accessible to schools, NGOs, medical services; how to market the station; and how to raise funds.

## **Program**

Again, diversity is essential and being part of the community means getting out in the community saw yesterday successful examples of this from many Indian stations. For program exchange, I'd argue that the Australian model for program distribution to stations via satellite is efficient and relatively cheap. Internet is fine for occasional program sharing but expensive if you are moving around a lot of audio on a regular basis and sound quality is an issue.

## **Technology**

I have also worked in East Timor for a while. Low cost reliable equipment is important for them. They use solar and generators because of unreliable power supply. They will be dependent on NGO and government funding for some time. Similarly, in remote Australia, where indigenous stations operate in small impoverished communities, stations operate with government funding.

## **Financial**

For funding to be sustainable it also needs to be diverse for most stations in Australia. There are independent sources of funding, not just government and NGO funding, less than 20% of funding in Australia is government funding. Nationally an average of 40% of station income comes from the sale of airtime. As is the law in Australia, 5 minutes per hour is a reasonable time limit for sponsorship.

Diverse income includes: recording, audio services, studio hire, sale of training, products (radios), raffles, ticketing services, concerts, partnership, and contra.

Sustainability for all stations is assisted by a good national body. The CBAA started some years after the first stations – it set up a separate funding body, the Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF – *cbf.com.au*) which gets funding from different government departments, philanthropic groups and NGOs to distribute to stations and the CBAA. The CBF receives approximately \$13 million per annum to distribute. The government supplies \$12million per annum separately for indigenous media.

In Australia, the National CBAA, the organization is recognized in the national broadcast legislation. It lobbies for stations and also runs services, like program exchange, training, national music distribution and research. Every second year the CBAA is funded to do major research into audience and station operations. It is important that the sector has control and ownership of this research and doesn't leave it to the regulator altogether.

This year we lobbied all national political parties to support a vision where community stations become a hub for digital literacy in communities. If the government doubled the funding, the CBAA could provide training for anyone in the community in computer use and digital production techniques.

A strong national organization is important for knowledge sharing. The government has to trust communities, it is the essence of democracy ; you cannot live in fear trying to prevent a small mishap and end up blocking a worthwhile service to millions of people. If you trust people there will be some failures, you will be disappointed, but the successes far outweigh them.

I argue that Australia CR is sustainable because the government accepted diversity and the CR sector lobbied for a position of strength and equality with the other sectors. I urge the CRF not to argue for positions of weakness. If you see the obstacles to sustainability, avoid them.

*Annexure 5 a*

eg: Transmission Power: if cost is not an issue, why accept low power – Australia has parity.

Australia has 40 community stations that have city-wide transmission power of up to 50 kilowatts. These are all sustainable stations with little government funding.

Program restrictions such as no news, make no sense. The Nepalese example illustrates how nonsensical this is.

All countries needs functioning, community based and community controlled media for long-term social, economic, cultural and politic development. India leads the world in many ways, not just cricket. It is encouraging that it is now embracing community broadcasting – which is a vehicle that can enrich democratic societies not just for impoverished communities but for all communities.

## Papers Presented by Panelists

# Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building for Development Education

Ian Pringle, Commonwealth of Learning

First, by way of an introduction, allow me to share something about the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and our interest in community media. We are a small intergovernmental agency working in the 54 countries of the Commonwealth. Our mandate is to build the capacities of governments, institutions and organizations to use appropriate technologies to expand the scale, scope and quality of learning for development, spanning the formal to the informal. My own focus is the role of local, community and social media in learning for community health and related development.

My remarks will touch on both parts of the session title, namely knowledge sharing and capacity building.

### Knowledge Sharing

I am going to focus on knowledge sharing *using* Community Radio (rather than *among* Community Radios), specifically the sorts of processes and programmes that enable the sharing of experience and knowledge about priority issues at the community level.

Sharing knowledge across communities is an important part of moving discussions about Community Radio (CR) beyond the more common focus on freedoms associated with expression and speech to those associated with access to information and the right to education.

I have four points to make concerning local knowledge sharing. Each represents a critical success factor that has emerged from our work with educational programming using community media. At present COL is working in twelve districts or provinces in different parts of the developing Commonwealth. Each success factor is illustrated with examples from our work in the Mchinji District of Malawi, specifically a learning programme called *Bag of Life*; it is about maternal and child health and targets primarily pregnant women, new mothers, and their families.

The four areas are closely interrelated and together they reflect a participatory approach to communication and education, what we at COL refer to as *learning for development*. Each is a priority for capacity development, which leads to the second part of this talk, in which I will also make a pitch for a new approach, namely distance training.

### 1. Dialogue not dissemination

Conventional educational and developmental programming tends to gravitate towards information dissemination as a model. For various reasons, dissemination seems like logical approach and it is relatively cheap and easy to do. If the issue is health, you get a doctor or nurse to come to the studio and tell people the right information. People don't know, the experts do, and radio allows you to reach many people at the same time.



*Annexure 5 b*

The problem with dissemination of this sort is that it is essentially a one-way, top-down approach to sharing information. It assumes that people are simple receivers of information and knowledge and it tends to overlook the importance of context, situation, lived experience and local knowledge. Solving problems is rarely as simple as, say, using condoms, eating well, or going to the hospital for the delivery of babies. While it is essential to have the right information it is also critical to have an exchange about the issues, ideally between and among a wide range of stakeholders, e.g. the people directly concerned, local decision-makers and community organizers, etc. Experts may know the solutions, but they don't understand the problems the way the people do. To share a joke, one of our partner representatives in Malawi says "If we do a programme about teenage pregnancy, we don't talk to *experts* we talk to pregnant teenagers".

Perhaps the best way for people to dialogue is to share stories of how the issues play out in real life. Simone, one of our workshop participants in Jamaica shared something that her grandmother used to tell that sums it up well: "Smart people learn from experience, smarter people learn from other people's experience". It may seem like common sense but a dialogical rather than didactic approach to educational programming is rare among CR in South Asia and, in a nod to the second part of this presentation, it requires capacity both to understand and to execute.

As an example, the best way to describe the *Bag of Life* community learning programme, which is centred on a 30-minute weekly radio show about maternal and child health, is that it is like a conversation. Fifty to sixty percent of the programme is women sharing their experiences of pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood. As Gladson, one of the trainers, puts it "The best way is the story, storytelling: an individual talking about him or herself as an individual, for example *what she went through when she took the drug which was injected giving birth, how she was saved, what she remembered most, etc.* People are moved by these stories; they are moved by shedding tears". The majority of episodes feature at least five sometimes as many as eight or ten community members sharing their experiences in relation to a specific topic. Their real life stories are mixed with information from health experts.

## **2. Participation**

The second success factor in local knowledge sharing is active participation of the people. Participation needs to start with decision-making, for example what local priorities programmes will deal with, and continue through design, implementation and evaluation. Although CR is closely aligned with the theory of participatory communication, in practice participation is difficult to achieve. Involving people in decision-making means having systems in place, e.g. conducting assessments and surveys; holding workshops to design specific new programmes; and having representatives of different community groups as part of management groups. It can also be expensive, for example because of transportation costs.

The origins of the *Bag of Life* programme actually lie with the women's health groups who identified media programming as a strategy for improving maternal and child health in the district. Elected representatives of the maternal and child health network participated in the design workshop and continue to sit on the programme management team. As above, the programme makes interviews with mothers that bring out their experiences of maternal and child healthcare the key priority for programme content. The programme is field- rather than studio-based and the producers spend at least two days in a fortnight out in the villages recording. Literally thousands of women and their families are involved in collective listening, discussion and feedback.

### 3. Collaboration for synergy

The third point is that at a community level, where resources are often scarce and scope and capacities for innovation are generally limited, educational programming is most effective when it is based on the collaboration of different groups. A CR does not have health experts, nor is it likely to have a network of grassroots health groups. Ideally, educational programmes are driven by win-win collaborations among groups that bring different, complementary assets to the process, specifically health experts, community networks, media and policy groups.

Collaboration is more than loose associations or partnerships, the occasional interview or update. Collaboration requires a major investment of time in joint planning and implementation; it involves compromises and can often be frustrating. It is extremely challenging to develop and maintain. Collaborative partnerships at the community level have proven – perhaps surprisingly not – to be *the* most challenging aspect of our work. Ultimately, however, our experience shows that if they are focused and well coordinated, collaborative arrangements can be exceptionally effective and efficient.

In Malawi, the community learning programme is a collaboration of the local CR Station, the district hospital, a health NGO and an associated network of 200 grassroots women's health groups that have their own representative structure. All four groups are involved in the design workshop and meet fortnightly to manage the ongoing implementation of the programme. Each brings particular expertise and each has specific responsibilities. The health experts ensure the accuracy of information, the community representatives provide insights on the real situation in villages, the NGO advises radio producers on which villages to visit for field recordings and coordinates the listening groups, the radio provides the staff and facilities to produce and broadcast the programme.

### 4. Blended and multichannel learning

The fourth success factor is the use of radio in combination with face-to-face interaction, for example discussion groups that take up specific radio programme content and other media, such as mobile telephones. Such strategies help offset radio's shortcomings; for example discussion groups can interpret terminology used on the radio and relate it directly to the experiences of individuals; they are a place to easily ask questions and get answers; groups can also provide collective feedback to the producers about various aspects of the programme. Mobile phones can be used to remind people of programme times and topics, to register them as listeners or to supplement on-air content with short messages via SMS or voicemail. Mobiles can also be used to track listenership; to assess what people are learning from the programme; and what sort of actions are being taken as a result. One of the main objectives is to facilitate interaction among learners and with experts and to reinforce participation.

In Malawi, for example, 130 maternal and child health groups, with an average of 30 members each, listen to the weekly programmes and then discuss them, highlighting the key messages and suggestion what can be done. The discussion helps to clarify terminology and to put the messages into real, lived contexts. Group members digest the messages together and are able to propose collective actions, among as many as 3000 group members and more widely among their families, neighbours and other community members. In the *Summer for All* programme in South Africa, which is a bi-weekly show about HIV/AIDS, the programme team sends out reminders the day before and the day of each episode using SMS. After the programmes end, they send a short quiz, with a prize of mobile airtime for the winners. Periodically they also phone listeners to investigate further what they've learned from the programme

## Capacity Building

My first point about capacity building is that the four areas I've outline above should all be considered top priorities. Far too much of what passes for capacity building is, in fact, short term technical training and too focused on how to use technology rather than what to do with it. Absent is support for putting in place the sort of mechanisms that make genuine community participation or real collaborative partnerships possible. Community media groups need to have a solid foundation in participatory communication and support needs to be available for organizational development that will enable communication for development in the medium and long term.

My second point, recognizing that skills are needed, but training too often reaches the wrong people, is to encourage groups concerned with training to look at online "distance" training approaches. Distance training provides access to large numbers of learners with high-quality materials and in-depth courses; it by-passes the use of training workshops as *perks*, reaching those staff and volunteers who are motivated primarily to learn new skills; and it integrates broad networking directly into training delivery.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Farm Radio International, with the support of a consortium of international partners, including UNESCO and COL, has in just two years trained over 600 broadcasters in scriptwriting skills through the delivery of two courses, the first on scriptwriting to promote smallholder farming innovations, the second community health. The courses, comprising 8 modules, were run over the course of 10 weeks using Moodle, an open source online learning management system. Learners, many of whom are in rural areas, could opt for a CD version of the course, which mitigated limited internet connectivity, and were supported by a course facilitator and tutors.

# Papers Presented by Panelists

## Broadcast Technology and Infrastructure

H. O. Srivastava

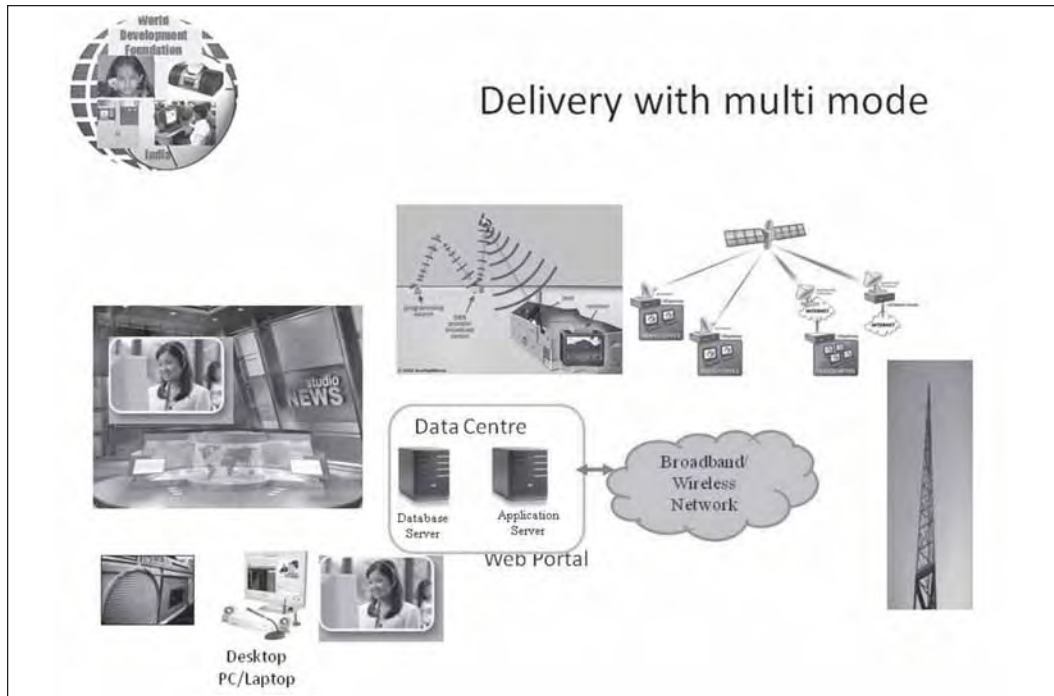
### 1. Introduction

The broadcast service deals with the point to multipoint communication. Broadcasting traditionally encompassed radio and television broadcasting. Radio and television broadcasts provided entertainment, information and education to the masses. Traditional broadcast used to be 'one-to-many' system where audience had to be a passive listener/watcher. Thereafter the concept of data broadcasting as a value-added service was introduced. In recent times broadcasters are considering multimedia broadcasting which consists of delivery of audio, video, data and text through a host of distribution system viz. terrestrial broadcast networks, satellite, ATM, SDH, fibre cable and Internet.

Community Radio Station is a low power FM Broadcast in a localized geographical area to serve the informational and educational needs of the poor and marginalized. Therefore the technological infrastructure needs to be simple, robust and maintenance free. It plays an important role at the time of natural disasters and calamities. It also helps in raising awareness and leads to the development of a particular area.

### 2. Present Broadcast Technology

Radio and television broadcasting are the oldest and most successful electronic mass media. Traditional broadcasting services are universally available throughout the world, generate the largest advertising revenues among electronic media; and occupy about a third of the average person's waking hours. Even so, the broadcast technology is undergoing a phenomenal change in recent times. Over the last ten year sound and television broadcasting are undergoing a revolutionary change from the established analog to digital technology. New services, including High Definition Television (HDTV), Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB), Digital Video Broadcasting (DVB), Direct-to-Home (DTH) and new Direct Broadcast Satellite Services (DBS), are augmenting and in some cases competing with existing AM and FM radio, VHF and a UHF television. The advent of digital technology, with possibility of non-linear editing, virtual studios, disk-based storage, signal processing, multichannel transmission, multiple delivery systems (Fig.1), and television-commerce etc., points to a very fascinating era. Recently a new service of Cyberspace broadcasting has emerged which is being tried by a number of broadcast organizations. The service provides flexibility of interactivity where listener /viewer can get the audio /video /animation, etc. on-demand. Enhanced and Interactive TV (eTV and iTV) are other emerging market. They can control the type and timing of viewing/listening. New projects are constantly being taken to devise a consumer receipt system, which may be a lingua franca of education, entertainment, commerce, education, research and personal information. The "set-top" box may if not completely dual as TV and a computer, then certainly it will perform certain functions of computers.



Broadcasting continues to change every day as the information and media industries plunge through a very dynamic and volatile era. Familiar market sectors are converging and breeding new sectors including the Internet marketplace. The convergence of media technologies is throwing open many potentials for new channels of revenue stream. The broadcasting is emerging into a system with many players and partners for the delivery of end products with enormous possibilities of commerce via Radio and TV system. However, the present consultation arranged by UNESCO is for the Community Radio Station and as such we have to restrict to hardware and infrastructure related to this only.

### 3. Community Radio station Infrastructure

A block diagram for a CR Station is given in Fig. 2. This basically consists of a simple studio, transmitter, tower with antenna and cable.

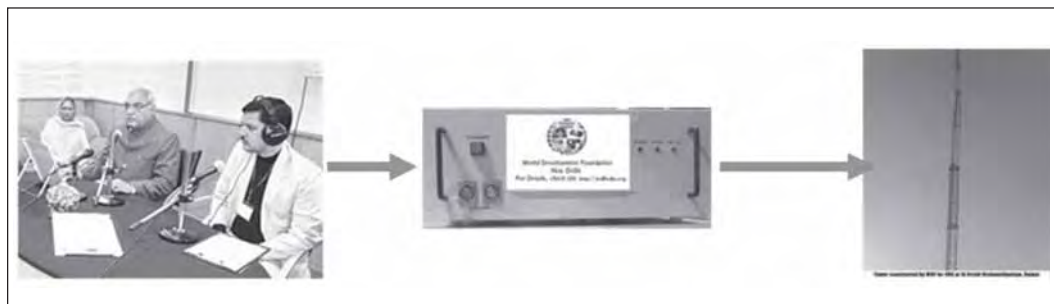


Fig.2A CR Station set up, Courtesy, World Development Foundation

The equipment used is also simple. (Fig. 3). A few microphones, a mixer, a PC, power stabilizer, a basic analogue transmitter, etc. are required. Any person with training can install and run the system.



Fig.3 Equipment in a CR Station, Courtesy, World Development Foundation

## Key Considerations

Key considerations while budgeting for the CR Station are:

- Objective
- Reliability
- Maintainability
- Life Cycle costing
- Feedback

The objective for CR Station differs for campus radio, farm radio and true sense Community Radio. Similarly reliability of the equipment, tolerance on outages etc are to be decided. The equipment should have easy operation and maintenance facilities. In certain cases twin or redundant equipment can go a long way. A little more investment and better planning shall help a long and trouble free life and therefore life cycle costing should be considered. The feedback mechanism has to be devised to know the effectiveness of the CR Station.

## 4. Conclusion

The hardware infrastructure for CR Stations should be robust and should provide a trouble free printing for its entire life cycle.

---

*\*M.Sc. (Electronics), Ph.D. (Info. Systems), Ph.D. (Chemistry), Former Chief Engineer, All India Radio & Doordarshan President, World Development Foundation, New Delhi*

## Papers Presented by Panelists

# Community Radio Station - An Appraisal and Demystification of the Technical Issues

R. Narasimha Swamy

*Abstract: Even though the rate of growth of Community Radio (CR) in India is slow, now-a-days, it is steadily getting recognized as an important communication tool for empowering the community by the Civil Society due to its inherent virtues. However, the rate of growth of CR in our country is not as expected, considering the bewildering diversity of culture, language, size, etc. and also, most importantly our oral traditions. Another important issue which has hindered the healthy growth of the CR is the technical issues concerned with its establishment and maintenance. The reasons for its slow growth are several which include appreciation of the spirit of CR and all important content and sustainability issues of the medium itself. Government and other institutions are making sincere efforts to demystify the concept of CR and have been successful to a great extent. Unfortunately, the technical issues are either looked as some mysterious science which can be tackled only by some "experts" or "consultants" or on its flip side, try to oversimplify or trivialize the technical issues. Both extreme postures hinder the healthy growth and sustenance of CR. The former posture leads to the exploitation of the gullible CR promoters, later one leading CR not operating to its full potential or becoming sick or defunct as many have become already. This situation has arisen due to lack of understanding or appreciation of the technical issues of radio broadcasting viewed in perspective with the CR both by promoters of CR as well as Broadcast Engineers. This paper tries to apprise the general public about the basic technical features of CR setup, its importance, and also how to successfully setup and manage the CR within the limited resources without compromising the quality of broadcast.*

## 1. Introduction

This paper discusses the essential setup, technical equipment, and its features of a CR Station to provide an idea of its working for CR promoters and help them in right choice of the equipment considering their budgetary constraints. The block schematic of the equipment is provided at the end of this paper.

## 2. Location and infrastructure requirements

2.1 Considering that FM broadcast signals are transmitted in Very High Frequency (VHF band II) from 88 MHz to 108 MHz, in which communication that takes place is strictly in line of sight distances over space wave, the station needs to be located at the highest altitude within the activity zone of the NGO. In view of the convenience of the community, Community Radio Stations should be located close to the populated localities but, again away from all traffic and crowd noise for obvious reasons. All contrasting requirements! If the CR promoter is an educational institution they have very little choice but to setup the station within their campus.

As far as space requirement is concerned, it can be as modest as two or three rooms of 200 to 300 square feet size or bigger with good height. Rooms of more than four sides of unequal size and angle and shape are preferred over conventional rectangular spaces. The square rooms of equal length and breadth should be avoided at all times to prevent and exaggerate the resonance of the sound waves and resulting

flutter echoes which are very difficult to control. The bigger the room it is, the better but, the expenses for treatment will go up proportionately. It is preferred to select the space at the higher floors as the noise from outside will be relatively less. This also helps in reducing the cost of setting up of transmission tower, as it can be erected on the roof top itself like many mobile telephone towers, provided the roof is strong enough to take the weight of tower and its foundation. Government stipulates that the height of the tower be not more than 30 meters from the ground level. Hence, if the building is in a 10 meters height, then the roof top tower will be of 20 meter, thus economizing on the cost of the tower.

2.2 Ensuring reliable and clean power supply for the entire CR Station is of great importance. Unfortunately, this is the most neglected segment of the CR Station. Electronic equipments particularly transmitters which employ MOSFET solid state devices in their power amplifier are susceptible to failure for transient surge voltages of the mains power supply. Surge voltages on mains can occur due to lightning, thunderstorms, discharges due to operation of HT/EHT breakers on the power system, switching transients etc. To protect the sensitive equipment against these transients protective devices are available. These devices can be installed in the mains power supply distribution panel. On-line good quality UPS of reputed make is a must for powering the Workstations, Audio Mixer, and Transmitters. Another important requirement of CR Station is providing good earthing to electrical switchgear as well as equipments. The transmission tower has to be protected against lightning hits by providing lightning arrester.

At least two separate earth pits are to be provided for the transmission tower by running separate copper strips or wire of at least 6 SWG as earth strips from the lightning arrestors to the earth pits. All the joints of the earth strip are to be brazed for continuity. Using galvanized wires or using the tower itself as conductor can lead to disastrous effects. Similarly, at least 6-8 SWG copper wire is to be provided between the electrical and RF equipments. Earth pits for the transmission tower should be different from the electrical switchgear and other equipments. It is highly advisable to provide two earth pits for transmission tower and one each for electrical and other equipments.

It is understood that, all the equipments in at least three functioning CR Station are totally destroyed due to lightning hits. Obviously, these stations did not have properly laid out lightning protection scheme as explained above.

### 3. Studios

Studios are the interior spaces where the production and transmission activity like playout happens. All activity of CR Station take place in this place. This is the place which is visible for the community.

3.1 Basically, at least two studios viz On-air Studio from where the transmission originates and another for recording the programs like talk, interview, group discussion take place are required. The recording studio can also be utilized for recording the music items provided it is of slightly bigger size and the furniture can be organized appropriately. In addition, it is preferred if the station can have a waiting room or lounge or even open space for general purpose use.

3.2 In any closed spaces like rooms, auditoriums, sound recording studios etc, the sound waves undergo physical phenomenon like reflection, refraction, diffraction etc obeying the laws of Physics. Hence, the sound what one hears in a closed space is not only the direct sound but, also due to above referred physical phenomenon which cannot be wished away. Unfortunately, these phenomenon



*Annexure 5 d*

leads to unpleasant effect generally termed as echoes. (Even though actual definition of echo is totally different from the one generally understood or perceived in closed spaces) These echoes can be characterized by acousticians as flutter echoes due to resonance and standing waves caused by the parallel walls, reverberation due to multiple reflections etc. Considering the size of the rooms normally utilized in CR stations, the earlier phenomenon dominates and reverberation is a characteristic of larger sized halls like auditoriums. All these phenomenon leads to coloration of the direct sound waves leading to loss of intelligibility of the spoken word spoken or recorded in such spaces. The situation can be grave for classical music due to change in the perceived pitch and coloration of the music itself.

To reduce the effects of these phenomenons and also to insulate the studios from external noises, measures like "*sound proof treatment*" is carried out. This treatment is basically to prevent the undesirable external sound like traffic noise, general crown noise or chatter entering the studio and reducing the ill effects of flutter echoes to a large extent and reverberation to some extent.

3.3 For propagation of sound waves, physical medium is essential. The sound we generally perceive, is the one which is propagating over all prevalent medium of air. Hence, to effectively insulate the studios from external noise, the interior of studios should be really made air-tight and hence, to be sealed off from the external space. This is really very difficult to achieve. Sound from even small openings of few square mm apertures like the window and door fissures, cable entries, etc can allow external sound to penetrate into the interiors. If the CR stations is situated in a crowded locality, then it becomes essential to insulate the studios from external noises. Even though, it is not much difficult to create air tight space for studios, it leads to several problems particularly in tropical countries like India where the ambient level of temperature and humidity is quite high. Human beings for their comfort and well being need continuous supply of fresh air. Also closed spaces without proper air circulation breeds fungus due to rise in humidity levels as our respiration process throws lots of moisture into our surroundings leading to health problems.

3.4 Hence, for closed and air tight spaces, air conditioning becomes essential not for human comfort alone but from health point of view also. Four essential features of a good air conditioner are - it should maintain comfortable temperature, right humidity level, provide air circulation without introducing considerable machine noise and most important and essential to provide proper mix of fresh supply of air with the air being circulated by it. The recent trend in air conditioner is to use split AC units due to certain reasons.

Split ACs produce very less noise as the noise making machinery like compressor and condenser are mounted outside and also they are easy to install and maintain. Even though split AC take care of the first three features of good AC very well, it miserably fails in the last important one from human health point of view i.e. providing proper mix of fresh and circulated air. Hence, split ACs work similar to that of refrigerator circulating same air over and over again. As the studios are made air tight, without provision of fresh air like windows and ventilators, one can imagine the health hazard split ACs can cause to the inmates of the studios. The better option is to go for window AC which has built-in provision to bring in adjustable proportion of fresh air in the total circulated air. Of course, the best option is to go for either ductable split or centralized AC with package unit. The initial investment for the last option is high, but the operation cost is much less compared to other two options due to much higher electrical efficiency hence reduced monthly electricity bills. Also, during winter months, only blower can be operated without running the compressors. Hence, if the resource is a constraint, it is better go for window AC or in worst case no AC at

all and retain or provide good quality, properly closeable windows so that, it can be opened whenever recording or transmission is not in progress!

3.5 To reduce the ill effects of flutter echoes in small sized interiors like CR studios and offices, it is sufficient if walls absorb the sound waves incident on it rather than reflecting it back to the interiors which gives rise to flutter echoes when combined with direct sound wave. Normal cement plastered walls are very good reflectors of sound. To make it as good sound absorbent, walls need to be treated with sound absorbent material. Even though several sound absorbent materials are available, one has to consider other important properties of these materials like fire retardation, inflammability, ruggedness for normal human activities and use, resistance to fungus growth, health hazard, maintainability etc. Even though many organic materials like paper, foam, thermocol and husk based materials exhibit reasonably good sound absorbent capability, considering that they are organic in nature, usage of them as sound absorbent can be dangerous for use indoors due to inflammability and least resistant to fungus. Glass wool is very widely used and universally recognized as by all acousticians as the best and most economical material for sound absorption. It has the best sound absorbent characteristics among all known material. Of course, glass wool needs to be handled with care. Fortunately, these days, glass wool is readily available in fabric covered panels hence it is safe for handling and use. Utilizing glass wool as sound absorbent can be slightly expensive. Rather than using paper or husk based materials, one can use thick curtains, if the budget is the issue. Thick curtains or drapes exhibit similar sound absorbent characteristics as of paper or husk based materials.

3.6 Studio electronics basically consist of good microphones, audio mixer, telephone hybrid and work station for transmission and production apart from non-critical items like headphones, speakers, etc. These equipments are available in various configurations, features and with obvious price tags. As these equipments are of critical nature, they are discussed here.

3.6.1 Good and rugged quality microphones are available freely in the Indian market. Considering the requirement, it is sufficient to choose good quality dynamic and cardioid patterned microphone for voice applications. Condenser microphone should be avoided as they are sensitive hence may accentuate the limitations of a CR setup on air. Hence, before buying the microphone, one has to read and understand the datasheet of the selected model for these characteristics and applications.

3.6.2 Probably, this is the most critical equipment of the studio. This equipment is always in use at the time of recording and playout. Even though it is an electronic equipment, it has a very important electro-mechanical component; *fader*, built into the mixer. Faders are operated for controlling the audio level (fade-in and fade-out) at the time of recording and playout of each item. Due to continuous usage, unlike electronic components, all electro-mechanical components are bound to fail over a period of time due to wear and tear. Just to cite an example, it is known that in ordinary radio receiver the component - rotary volume control is the one which fails quite often due to wear and tear, resulting in crackling noise when we turn on or off the volume of the radio. Similar phenomenon happens to the faders of the mixer after couple of years resulting in crackling noise in the audio broadcast by the station, if the faders are not of good quality. All low cost mixer employ fader based on carbon track and professional quality mixer employ faders based on plastic film. Faders of later type provide satisfactory service for millions of operations whereas, the carbon track type is bound to fail after few thousand of operations. Obviously mixers with plastic film based faders are expensive. Hence, one has to have tradeoff between the quality and long term stability.

*Annexure 5 d*

3.6.3. Considering that, radio is no more a one way communication medium, but can be very effective two way communication medium due to popular phone-in programs. This application is more relevant in the context of the CR broadcasts considering the active involvement of community and subject expert in radio broadcasts. The voice quality of the caller or subject expert broadcast by the station is of great importance for the successful broadcast of such content. The quality of phone in program depends on the technology used in phone-in equipment. Equipment using simple analog technology employs very inexpensive telephone ICs costing just few thousands and also equipment employing advanced digital signal processing (DSP) technology is available. DSP based telephone hybrid has important features like high level of cross talk cancellation, equalization, AGC to even out the level variation of the caller's voice, etc.

Hence, it becomes essential to go through the brochure or the datasheet of the equipment to understand the technology employed and applications recommended by the manufacturer before deciding to buy.

3.6.4 Thanks to spectacular advancement in technology of ordinary desktop computers, today we can employ these machines as audio work stations for recording and playout without any problem. Even though desktops are equipped with built-in sound electronics for playback and record, there can be number of issues regarding the interface between the audio mixer which provides professional line quality audio level format (+4 dBm, differential) whereas the desktop built-in sound electronics provide consumer level audio format (-10 dBm, single ended). Hence, it is better to use low cost sound cards which support line level audio formats for hassle free interconnections. The desktops can be either branded or assembled ones also, but it is better to ensure sales after support from the supplier is available on call.

3.6.5. Workstations need two types of application software for CR. The basic software is required for creating the playlist for playout of the recorded content. Windows have built-in basic *Media Player* for creating the playlist. This has all necessary basic features for such application. One can also use freeware like *Winamp* or *ZaraRadio* etc for this purpose. For the purpose of recording, editing, creating effects etc, one can use freeware like *Audacity* or the licensed one like *Adobe Audition*, etc.

## 4. Radio Frequency (RF) Equipment

RF equipment consists of FM broadcast transmitter with or without standby, RF coaxial cable, and antenna and transmission tower to support the antenna. Considering its criticality in success of CR, special care and precautions needs to be taken by CR promoters for choosing and maintenance of the equipment. Failure of many licensed CR stations can be attributed to the failure of either all or any of the RF equipment discussed here.

4.1 Broadcast Processor is not essential for CR functioning, but can make tremendous impact on the coverage and quality of the transmission. CR promoters can introduce this piece of equipment at any time for improving its services. This equipment that is to be introduced between the audio mixer and transmitter, processes the audio output of the mixer and evens out level variations occurring at the time of recording, editing etc and ensures loudness, punch, and clarity of the sound broadcast by the station within legal limits. It employs sophisticated DSP based algorithms for improving the audio quality of broadcasts. All broadcasting stations employ this equipment in their transmitter chain to improve the technical quality of their broadcasts. The quality of the CR stations broadcast can be as good, if they can introduce this equipment. Fortunately, low cost Broadcast Processors are available in the market.

4.2 Transmitter is one of the critical and expensive equipment of CR Station. This equipment generates modulated RF power to be radiated by the antenna. Transmitter employs complex electronics design and hence difficult to service at the field as it needs sophisticated debugging equipment for fault finding. Hence, in case of breakdown, the transmitter may be required to be shipped back to the manufacturer for servicing at his factory. Hence, if the budget permits, CR promoter are advised to consider having 1+1 configuration i.e, one circuit and another standby transmitter with automatic RF change-over switch to select one of them for transmission. With this configuration, one can ensure that the transmission is not affected due to the failure of the circuit transmitter. The RF change over switch equipment ensures that if the circuit transmitter fails due to any reason, it will automatically switch the audio to the standby transmitter and its output to the antenna. The defective transmitter will be automatically terminated on a dummy load, so that, it can be tested when other transmitter is on antenna and radiating the broadcast.

Even though the FM transmitter are designed to operate either in mono or stereo mode, considering the content produced by them which is invariably in mono format and also in view of the small power and reach of the CR Station, transmitter should be operated *only in mono mode*. When operated in stereo mode, transmitter has to introduce additional sub carriers for carrying pilot and stereo component, thus sharing and wasting precious power of the FM transmitter which otherwise would have carried the main FM carrier. Due to this reason, when transmitter is operated in stereo mode, the coverage also shrinks to a great extent. Further, reception of stereo broadcast is prone to multipath reception problems then in mono mode, thus affecting the quality of service in fringe areas. Hence CR promoters are advised to operate their service in mono format only.

It is found that, some of the unscrupulous manufacturers/suppliers are marketing their transmitter to gullible CR promoter with higher power to an extent of 70 to 80 Watt instead of stipulated 50 Watt to make their brand "popular" and claim that their product is better compared with others. In this regard, it is impressed upon on CR stations promoter that as per the Government regulations and agreement made with them, CR operators are allowed to operate their transmitter with maximum 50 Watt output power with a maximum gain of 3 dB for the transmitting antenna. Infringing this condition will not only lead to cancellation of the license, but, Government may initiate legal action against the erring CR operator under the relevant wireless act. The onus of responsibility of operating the transmitter with licensed power rests with the CR licensee and not with the supplier of the equipment. Hence, it is essential to get a signed and authenticated test report of the setup from a reputed firm using standard test and measuring equipment.

4.3 RF coaxial cable carries the RF power from the transmitter to the antenna hoisted on the top of the transmission tower. The choice of cable is important for effective transmission. Different sizes of RF coaxial cables are available in the market. All coaxial cables do have inherent attenuation (loss). Hence, some of the power when flowing from transmitter to the antenna gets dissipated in the cable as thermal loss.

Hence, it is absolutely necessary to select the cable with minimum loss called *low loss cable*. Low loss cables are expensive for obvious reasons. Hence, CR promoter has to make a tradeoff between the cost and performance.

4.4. Transmitting antenna is the most critical equipment of CR Station. The reason being that it is hoisted in open all the time irrespective of whether transmission is happening or not and hence exposed to extreme weather conditions like rain, wind, sun and dust. Antenna is a pure metallic structure and

*Annexure 5 d*

hence subjected to easy weathering. Cheap quality transmitting antenna is made of aluminum which are easily susceptible to weathering and hence fail. Good quality transmitting antenna is made of copper which is much more rugged and weather resistant compared with aluminum and hence more reliable. Further, antenna is mounted on the top of the 30 meter and hence not easily accessible for inspection by CR staff. In case of problem, one has to requisition the help of experienced mast technician to inspect and set right the antenna.

The characteristics and performance of the antenna decides the contour and coverage of the CR stations.

Considering all these critical factors, CR promoters are required to be extremely cautious while choosing the right antenna for their station.

4.5 To obtain reasonably effective line of sight propagation for the CR Station, the antenna can be hoisted to a maximum height of 30 meter as per the regulations stipulated by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting – *broadcast regulators of our country*. Transmission tower is purely a mechanical structure and it has no other function other than supporting the antenna on its top and also ensure that the tower is strong enough so that mast technician will be able to climb and return to safety. Like antenna, the tower is also exposed to extreme weathering conditions like rain, wind, sun, and dust. The structure of the tower is made of easily available and not so expensive mild steel sections that is prone to rusting. Hence, to prevent rusting, a layer of zinc is electroplated by a process called galvanization for all the parts of the tower like sections, nuts bolts etc. Basically two types of transmission tower are employed, one is called mast which is supported by stainless steel guy wire ropes, and another type is self supported one.

Today, masts are not used, as it needs around 1000 square meters of open space for laying the guys all around the mast. Also, there is no cost benefit in selecting the guyed mast over self standing tower. CR promoters will have to bear in mind that, in case of problem with the antenna, the mast technician weighing 65 to 75 Kg has to climb up the tower for rectification and climb down safely. Hence, the tower has to be robust and strong enough to take this much of load in addition to its own weight for the safety of the mast technician. Hence, for the success and durability of CR on a long term basis, one has to go for a robust transmission tower which does not rust and become weak due to weathering. Hence, it is absolutely necessary that one does not compromise with the quality of structure of the mast and further, necessary preventive measures are taken like periodical painting to prevent rusting so that the mast remains in good condition for years.

## 5. Selection of hardware for CR Station

Selecting right equipment within the budget is always a challenge. To make a decision on this matter, following information can be considered.

5.1 Insist for printed detailed specification of all the equipment mentioned in this document along with datasheet, operating manual and service manual. If the equipment is from a reputed Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) and not amateurish attempts like developed from a kit, etc., the buyer will invariably be provide with all the necessary technical details. This will ensure genuineness of the equipment.

5.2 Ensure that, after installation of all the equipment, the consultant or integrator checks and provides a detailed test and measurement report on the performance of the audio equipment, the output

of the power of the transmitter and the measured field strength of the RF signal to ensure proper contour and coverage of the station using standard test and measuring equipment to be arranged by him.

5.3 Ensure that, the equipment adopts latest technology so that it will not get obsolete soon. Equipments like transmitter developed by adopting latest technologies are not only stable and rugged but also will be sleek and efficient.

5.4 Get to know about the past track record of the company in manufacturing equipment of similar nature, list of clients using their equipment, support and service arrangement etc. If necessary speak to the users to get to know about their experience of their products and their support.

5.5 Carefully go through warranty and guarantee terms and insist on terms for extended warranty which may be for a price in addition to mandatory warranty period.

## **6. Operation and maintenance**

Operation of CR equipment is quite simple and straightforward. However, it is a good practice to make a detailed study of each aspect of the user manual provided with each equipment to understand the working and the manufacturer's recommendation for operation and maintenance. Dust and heat are the biggest threats for smooth and long term operation of electronic equipment. As most of the equipment of CR like UPS, workstations and transmitter are provided with built-in fans, the space around all equipments should be kept clean. A good practice is to clean the floor, tables, and all other equipments with a soft and wet cloth to remove the dust on daily basis. Vacuum cleaner can be used to suck the difficult to remove dust. Only sucking arrangement of the vacuum cleaner is to be used and it should never be used in blowing mode. If necessary, workstations transmitter rack can be opened once a quarter to remove the dust carefully from the interior of the equipment.

## **7. Conclusion**

The success of CR not only depends on sincere efforts in setting up of the station, involving the community in its operation, producing good content etc, but also on careful planning and understanding the issues connected with the choice of technical setup and its maintenance. This is essential for the success of CR. It is hoped that this paper will help the CR promoter in getting an idea of CR setup and dos and dont's. In case of clarification, they are advised to consult right kind of people and make CR movement a great success.

## Papers Presented by Panelists

# Community Radio and Development Concerns

Steve Buckley

I thank UNESCO for the invitation to take part in this National Consultation on Community Radio Policy. Over the last eight years I have had the privilege of serving as President of AMARC, World Association of Community Broadcasters. AMARC has closely followed the Community Radio (CR) developments in India and I have personally had the opportunity to visit several community radio projects as they have prepared to go on air. I am delighted to see the progress made and congratulate all those community radio stations who are now on air, many of whom are participants in this Consultation. I would also like to applaud the work of the Community Radio Forum (CRF) of India whose role and continuing development is a crucial part of this Community Radio sector.

The focus of this session is the role of CR in development. Most would agree that broadcast media have profound impact on human development, yet the nature of that impact is complex and multi-layered. This presents challenges at the level of analysis and in the formulation of strategies to strengthen development impact. Much evidence of the development impact of community media is anecdotal, based on local stories and case examples, but we are also able to draw on sector surveys at national and international levels, and on thematic reports in areas such as climate change and disaster response.

Taken together, a pattern emerges in which community media can be seen to have both intrinsic value –meeting the basic human need to communicate and extending the capability to do so – and instrumental value—facilitating access to information, contributing to value formation and social cohesion, and enabling people to assert their rights and hold decision makers to account.

This is an important distinction. Development impact is most often measured in terms of income, health and education and there is a tendency to discount the intrinsic value of providing community media - its contribution to strengthening people's capability to communicate, which is central to our self identity and to recognition by others. By discounting this intrinsic value we also diminish, for example, the important role of music and cultural expression in CR.

Turning to the instrumental effects of community media we find multiple levels – psychological, social, economic and political. Much of the early discourse on development communications reflected a psychological perspective – one that is still to be found in the language of marketing – in which media is understood in one way terms, as the dissemination of messages and getting information across that would lead to changes in people's understanding and behaviour.

Yet, and in particular, with the emergence and growth of community media have come new perspectives rooted in a social model of communications, in which the media are a means not only to access information but also to take voice and to be heard. In this perspective social impact lies in processes of dialogue that enable value formation and knowledge development leading to social change. As community media has

grown in presence and assertiveness it has also been seen to have significant political impact, contributing to the accountability of public servants and decision makers and the transparency of elections.

These new perspectives can be illustrated by the role of community media in responding to particular development challenges. I want to look at two areas that can assist a deeper understanding : climate change and natural disaster.

It is becoming clear, when we talk about climate change communications at the grassroots that the challenge is not, by any means, simply one of getting the message across. Community-based media and communications at the local level are far more integrated into the lives of their communities. They have multiple roles to play – providing a forum for discussion and debate, facilitating the appropriation of knowledge and information into local contexts and cultures, and facilitating influence and advocacy. They enable local communities to hold decision makers to account and to call for action where it is needed.

Although raising public awareness and understanding of climate change is important, this is also a two way process. Local people and communities—who are highly sensitive to changes in their own environment—are among the first to observe and comment on climate change, long before scientists and other experts can compile their empirical data. In the Peruvian Amazon, CR stations like *Radio La Voz de la Selva* (which means Voice of the Rainforest) are monitoring and promoting action against illegal logging and defending indigenous people's livelihoods. In Northern Quebec, Inuit communication networks are providing advice on safety as hunting routes across sea ice become increasingly precarious. In Mali, rural CR stations are assisting farmers adapt to changing seasonal patterns in order to maintain and increase their harvest. In Bangladesh, coastal NGOs are building CR stations to assist early warning and disaster management in the face of inundations that result from rising sea levels. We can see, from these and other examples, that community media are the frontline reporters of climate change.

Now let me turn to my second example. The earthquake in Haiti brought again to the fore not only the importance of communication when natural disaster strikes, but also the challenges when the impact of disaster includes destruction of communications infrastructure. CR has been present in Haiti for more than 15 years and has experience in responding to previous emergencies such as floods and hurricanes, but nothing at this scale. Many media organizations suffered damage – radio studios and transmissions towers were destroyed, others were unable to broadcast because of damage to buildings, the risk of aftershocks causing further damage, or staff being too busy engaged directly in search and rescue. AMARC organized an emergency response mission to assess the impact on Haiti's CR sector and to provide support to community media activists. In the immediate aftermath we found that most of the CR stations had been remarkably resilient and although several had suffered damage and had diminished their programme output, they had continued to broadcast, aware of the vital importance of doing so for their communities. Some had even increased their programme hours. Most had made significant changes to their programming – assisting to mobilize community response, providing information on missing persons, publicizing requests for information, explaining the causes of the disaster and the risk of aftershocks, advising on precautions to take, signposting to welfare and supplies, providing psychological support and so on.

What is notable in the response of community broadcasters to disaster is that they can be a focal point for local organization, receiving as well as imparting information, working with local community leaders,



*Annexure 5 e*

facilitating dialogue and assisting people to understand and come to terms with what has happened. They should not be considered simply as a relay for information from public agencies, but also a means by which those directly affected can engage in disaster response.

This is particularly important in remote and rural communities. In Haiti, much of the international emergency response focused, inevitably, on the capital and other urban centres of population with the greatest concentrations of people affected. Essential services were slower to reach smaller and more isolated communities which were consequently more reliant on self help in the emergency phase. Community media are among the first responders in times of disaster.

In the post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, the participatory and interactive nature of community media takes on further importance. Affected communities need the means to speak out and have their concerns heard. They need to be consulted about the reconstruction process and engaged in its implementation. Public authorities and international agencies need to demonstrate transparency including by being accountable through the media.

From this we can see that it can be useful to frame the communication needs of disaster affected communities in terms of communication rights. Traditional approaches to disaster response have tended to treat those affected as passive victims which can lead to a double disaster – first the natural disaster and then the displacement of local economies and social relations with the disaster industry. A rights-based approach starts from the recognition that the people most affected by disaster are also the most important agents of recovery. Their communications rights—of voice and expression of opinion, of access to information, of transparency and accountability of public agencies, and of the means of dialogue within and with the community—are also the means by which other rights—to food, water, shelter, health, economic opportunities, etc.—can be asserted and defended. Community media provide one of the tools by which the communication rights of disaster affected communities can be assured.

I would like to finish by taking this opportunity to comment on some of the contentious issues that have been a focus of discussion during this National Consultation and to offer a perspective from the international experience of community broadcasting. First of all I have to say the ban on news and political reporting in the Community Radio Policy (CRP) is unjustifiable. It also no doubt diminishes the ability of CR stations to contribute to development. News reporting is an important part of the functioning of CR stations, ensuring people are able to take informed decisions and to participate in daily life. There are examples of CR stations elsewhere in the world facing restrictions on news reporting. But these examples have been in countries under a state of emergency. For example in Honduras, after the military coup in June 2009, CR stations came under pressure not to broadcast news about the evolving situation. In Nepal after the King declared direct rule in Feb 2005, there was a ban placed on news reporting by Community Radios, but this was subsequently overturned by the Courts as being unconstitutional. India is not under a state of emergency and I am sure if the ban on news reporting on CR was tested in Court it would be ruled as being contrary to the constitutional right to freedom of expression. It would be better if this rather embarrassing part of the Policy could be quietly removed as part of the review.

The second area of contention I would like to comment on is the distinction between campus and CR. Around the world there are many and diverse examples of campus radio as well as CR including campus stations that are owned and operated by student associations and that very effectively serve their student community as well as a broader audience. What is clear in internationally accepted definitions of CR is

that CR should be owned and managed by the communities they serve and be independent of the state and of state controlled institutions. In India there is clearly a diversity of ownership models among both the campus and CR stations. What is important, in the context of community radio sector development, is that CR stations based on this participatory ownership model, whether operated by NGOs, community-based organizations or other entities, should not face discrimination in the licensing process such as additional bureaucratic hurdles but should be guaranteed equitable treatment.

Finally let me comment on the proposals for an independent funding mechanism to support the sector. There are several good examples now of public funding mechanisms to support CR that contribute both to the start-up and the operational costs and that operate free of direct political interference by government. Examples can be found in Denmark, France, Austria, Australia and South Africa, among others. I would particularly highlight the South African model which is the Media Development and Diversity Agency, a public agency with an independent board whose mandate, explicitly, is to meet the needs for development and diversity in the media sector with a priority for media access and inclusion of groups facing disadvantage and discrimination. By establishing an independent body to manage public funds for community media, the problem of government control or political interference is removed, with the fund overseen by a management board drawn from stakeholder groups and civil society. I hope this idea for an independent fund can be taken forward in India where I am sure it can contribute both to the sustainability of the sector and to its social impact.

*Comments and feedback appreciated. (sbuckley@gn.apc.org)*

## Papers Presented by Panelists

# Listening to Ordinary Voices

Jo Tacchi

For me, Community Radio (CR) is essentially all about horizontal communication, diverse information sources, dialogue and debate.

Community media represents a movement away from the easy to control and vertical communication models of one to many mass media, to difficult to control and unpredictable communication characterized by a many to many model; a shift, in the hierarchy of knowledge itself, from top down 'delivering a message' to bottom up 'asking a question'.

In Professors Pavarala and Malik's book on community radio in India, CR itself is the very manifestation of democratic process and principles.

During these three days we will hear a lot about what CR in India is in practice and in different places, as well as, how it is facilitated and, perhaps, in some views debilitated through regulation and legislation and in policy.

I want to take a moment to think a little more about what Community Radio is.

It serves ordinary interests in everyday contexts.

And yet, it has the potential to be incredibly powerful - symbolically and in everyday practice.

It allows for ordinary issues from ordinary people to be voiced in ways that is extraordinary in the opportunity it provides.

I was recently in Gujarat, and was struck by the way some women that I met talked about the importance, the *life-changing* importance, of being able to *speak* their name in public, and for people in positions of relative power to *hear* their names (and this was in f2f situations, nothing to do with the media which can magnify such experiences).

CR exists because it performs an important function in democratic societies.

How this is done, across space and time varies enormously, there are many different models out there, but there are underlying imperatives.

CR responds to the fundamental need for people to communicate on matters that interest them, or affect them; on matters that they decide to organize around and share.

Having a voice, and being recognized, can be a powerful and transformational thing.

CR Policy sets out a government's principle for action, a course for achieving what it believes is a purposeful goal. It should therefore focus on opening up rather than closing down opportunities for voice – it needs to be about setting up what I call enabling processes for voice.

'Voice' is at once about the agency to represent oneself and the right to express an opinion. These are literal meanings of the word, in common understanding.

But voice as I understand it is more than this, it has two dimensions:

1. voice as a process and
2. voice as a value (Couldry 2010)

By voice as a process, we mean the process of giving an account of one's life and its conditions. To deny value to another's capacity for narrative – to deny her potential for voice – is to deny a basic dimension of human life. By voice as a value, we refer to the act of valuing, and choosing to value, those frameworks for organizing human life and resources that themselves value voice. It is about 'recognition', or 'listening'.

Combining process and value results in what I term 'enabling process', and it is to provide 'enabling processes' for voice that should be the purpose of CR policy.

This is a highly significant thing, and a manifestation of democratic principles.

I'd like to stress the need to pay attention to research, monitoring and evaluation of this emerging sector. This is necessary in order to understand its significance. What difference is CR making in local communities? Research is also necessary to grow the sector.

How can we ensure policies are 'enabling processes' rather than a set of debilitating rules and requirements?

These particular questions cannot be answered by the kind of monitoring of content and audience research that takes place for commercial media – their commercial imperative means that measurement and audience size is their 'currency', which is fundamentally different to the community media sector.

In Australia a national qualitative study of CR audiences was undertaken in the mid 2000s by Michael Meadows, Susan Forde and colleagues. This happened more than 30 years into the sector's development. Australia has a mature, well-established and diverse sector, and can perhaps provide a glimpse of a possible future for CR here.

The research found that CR fulfills four broad functions:

1. Provides alternative sources of news and information (I think about this as vernacular information sharing and discussion around local interests and by the way, this is not political, as seems to be assumed (that news = politics) in the Indian policy) *code of practice*
2. Offers diverse audiences varied music program formats and styles (I think this is key to the sector's success, because of the lack of commercial imperative it can be experimental, take innovative

*Annexure 5 f*

approaches. In the UK and Australia mainstream broadcasters often pick up on new program formats once they are incubated, tried and tested in the community sector)

3. Enables community members to 'connect' – either socially or by engaging with radio programming – thus 'creating communities' (this I understand as a networking, social and solidarity function; about senses of identity and belonging)
4. It more accurately represents Australian social and cultural diversity than other media outlets (this is a function that is about recognizing diversity and difference, and doing it in a way that provides recognition by the State through adequate and protective legislation, and accessible and enabling processes)

I know that over these three days we'll hear accounts of how CR in India is or could be serving the same functions, and no doubt others in addition.

How we go about rigorously evaluating the sector in meaningful ways, against meaningful measures can provide useful and important feedback for further policy development aimed at building enabling processes. It can provide guidance grounded in local experiments, experiences and learning. In an emerging sector with new players learning new skills, this is extremely important for both practice and policy.

### **References cited**

Couldry, N. (2010) *Voice that Matters: Culture and Politics after Neoliberalism*. London: Sage.

Meadows, M., S. Forde, J. Ewart and K. Foxwell (2007). *Community Media Matters: An Audience Study of the Australian Community Broadcasting Sector*, Griffith University: Brisbane, available at [http://www.cbonline.org.au/media/Griffith\\_Audience\\_Research/reports/CommunityMediaMatters\\_final.pdf](http://www.cbonline.org.au/media/Griffith_Audience_Research/reports/CommunityMediaMatters_final.pdf).

## Papers Presented by Panelists

# Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing in Community Radio

Kalinga Seneviratne

There is much confusion in India and in many parts of Asia about what exactly is Community Radio (CR). There are of course many definitions of CR and many models. Thus, it is difficult to give an universal definition of community radio, but, in my opinion the most basic definition of CR must be 'RADIO BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE'.

I have attended a number of Community Radio Forums (CRF) in India recently, also conducted a workshop in Dehradun in association with Himgiri Nabh Vishwavidyalaya, and had a few consultations with radio practitioners here. What I have noted is that there is not a clear understanding about what CR is. The reason for this seems to be that All India Radio (AIR) has been broadcasting development communication programmes for over four decades now, many of them very innovative programmes to take the development message to the people. In the last decade or more NGOs have also produced development oriented radio programmes and used 'windows' on AIR regional stations to broadcast these programmes.

From my observations, these programmes have been mainly radio for the people but not by the people. When CR licenses became available in India, many of the tertiary institutions and lately NGOs, which have started CR, have largely adopted the same strategy used by AIR's development communication programmers. They seem to be looking at CR as a service for the people, not necessarily a service run by the people for the people.

How could you establish the 'BY THE PEOPLE' model for Community Radio in India? Let us first look at some of the definitions of Community Radio.

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) in a declaration of principles adopted in 1988 said:

Community Radio responds to the needs of the community it serves, contributing to its development within progressive perspectives in favour of social change. Community Radio tries to democratize communication through community participation in different forms in accordance with each specific social context.

UNESCO gives this definition:

UNESCO sees Community Radio as a medium that gives voice to the voiceless; that serves as the mouthpiece of the marginalised and is at the heart of communication and democratic processes within societies. With Community Radio, citizens have the means to make their views known on

*Annexure 5 g*

decisions that concern them. The notion of transparency and good governance take on new dimensions and democracy is reinforced<sup>1</sup>.

Louie Taging, the founder of Tambuli Community Radio in the Philippines has this definition of Community Radio:

A Community Radio station is one that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. The community can be territorial or geographical – a township, village, district or island. It can also be a group of people with common interests, who are not necessarily living in one defined territory. Consequently, CR can be managed or controlled by one group, by combined groups, or of people such as women, children, farmers, fisher folk, ethnic groups, or senior citizens. What distinguishes Community Radio from other media is the high level of people's participation, both in management and program production aspects. Furthermore, individual community members and local institutions are the principal sources of support for its operation<sup>2</sup>.

A principal component of CR is that people it aims to serve must have access not only to the media product but also to the media facility. They should be able to come into the station and go on air to express their viewpoints or cultural expressions such as singing, playing music or reading poetry. The radio station must be a feedback channel and open for full interaction between the producers and the receivers of the message. Participation in production and management of the media after access is a logical step in the evolution of true CR.

There is much India can learn from the experience of CR in the Philippines in the past two decades. I have had the good fortune to visit the Philippines a number of times in recent years, and observe the workings of CR there. There are over 25 functioning Tambuli CR stations, plus another 12 Genpeace community radio in the southern Philippines island of Mindanao. In addition there are over 50 provincial radio stations operated by the Catholic Broadcasting Network that are mainly run as community-based radio.

In the mid-1990s Tambuli introduced the 'Neighbourhood Production" concept called "*Barangayan Sa Himpapawid*". It is a production, which is recorded outside the studios in the village. The community decides what's going to be in the programme and in a typical two-hour programme they would have singing and music (performed by the villagers), discussions of social, political or cultural issues and interviews. The station staff only acts as the facilitator. Even the host of the programme is provided from the village. The Tambuli station will broadcast this recording on the radio so that other communities will listen to them as well. By rotating their productions among various communities in the broadcast area the communities come to know of each other. They may even share their music and culture.

Some Tambuli CR stations have been set up in provincial towns in collaboration with tertiary organizations, usually an agricultural college (university). One of the most successful such station is DYMT in Banga, Aklan which is located at the Aklan Agricultural College. The government-

<sup>1</sup> Claude Ondobo, Director of Communication Development Division, UNESCO in Preface to *Community Radio Handbook, 2001*.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with author 2008.

funded university covers part of its operating expenses by providing them the building, and three staff including the technician, station manager and production manager. All of them are full time employees of the university's Agricultural Extension Studies Department, with the latter two academic staff who perform their station duties as additional functions. Their agricultural extension students use the station during term time as a laboratory to communicate with farmers. In the evenings and weekends, the local community gets access to the station to broadcast their programmes.

As a station of the Tambuli project, the station is managed by a Community Media Council (CMC), which is multi-sectoral committee of community representatives. The university is also represented in it, so are various community groups such as the market vendors, women, farmers, police and even the local church. The president of the market vendors association, who sells pork at the local market is the radio station's business reporter – who visits the market each morning at 6 am when it opens and then come to the station to broadcast the business news from 7.15 to 7.30 am. The programme covers market and farm prices on the day. In the evening, two police officers come into the studios to broadcast the crime report. They compile the report from the police log book and even interview people from the community live to air on law and order issues. On Sundays, the local church gets 2 hours airtime in the morning to broadcast live the church service and the sermon. The church pays the radio station for airtime, while the business and crime report is done on a voluntary basis. There are also many other volunteers from the community who are able to come into the station and do their own programmes. The programmes have to be approved by the CMC before they are allocated airtime.

The above Tambuli model could be easily adopted in India as both countries are thriving open democracies where people are not afraid to express themselves publicly. CR stations operated by universities should not see radio as a medium where students do programmes about the community. While it is important for students to use the radio station as a laboratory to do this, at the same time, air time could be allocated for community members to come and do programmes where the students could be facilitators or even trainers of the volunteer broadcasters from the community.

One model that could be adopted by tertiary institution based CR is a "Programming Collective" (PC) model, which is widely used by tertiary community radio in Australia, where I broadcast for over 15 years. At the university CR Station 2 SER-FM in Sydney, I was involved in a number of programming collectives over the years. Volunteers from the community could join a PC at the radio station that covers areas you are interested in. It could be youth music, politics, community arts, current affairs, religion, and so forth – even the gay and lesbian community has a PC as did senior citizens. Once you join a PC, you can get free basic radio production training from the radio station, which has a training programme where you will attend weekly sessions for 8 to 12 weeks. After that you will be able to produce contents or get involved as a presenter on the programme broadcast by the PC. Each PC will have an allocated regular air-slot.

Applying this concept to the Indian context, a CR Station in a urban environment could have PCs for senior citizens, ethnic or minority groups (such as a Delhi station providing airtime for a Tamil programme for South Indian professionals working in the capital), special interest (such as travel, astrology, yoga), non-mainstream community artistes, migrant labourers (such as Biharis in



*Annexure 5 g*

Mumbai), domestic helpers (yes, what about training domestic helpers to form a PC and broadcast a weekly programme?), *Rikshaw Wallahs* (they could be traffic reporters using mobile phones), Market Vendors (they can be the business reporters), and in rural settings you could have the farmers, tribal communities, women, etc. I think, the scope for forming PCs are immense in the Indian context.

It is not only CR stations that could use the PC model for community broadcasting, AIR's local radio stations in the villages and provincial towns may also try it out. AIR has given NGOs airtime to broadcast programmes which are produced outside and funded externally. So, why not extend this privilege to the community? AIR staff can train the collective members in radio production and provide equipment for them to record interviews and programmes in the community. But, beyond this, they should allow the community to express themselves and give them airtime free of charge. After all, public service broadcasting is serving the community and this is the best model to produce radio by the people for the people. AIR may especially play a leading role in helping to preserve and nurture local cultural expressions this way.

In Sydney at radio 2SER-FM in the early 1990s, I set up a PC that consisted of migrants from developing countries of the South such as Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Kenya, Korea, Argentina, Lebanon, Jordan and Malaysia. We got a weekly 30 minute peak-hour slot on a Wednesday night to broadcast a programme called 'Voices from the South'. The programme reflected a "Third World" perspective of international affairs, which is not usually heard on Australian radio. We did not talk too much on conflicts, poverty and floods or train crashes, instead we talked about the unfair international trading system, bias in the western media, racism, stereotyping of non-Christian religions and cultures, lack of recognition for migrant skills and qualifications and so forth. The programme was broadcast in English and our voices reflected a real non-Anglo Saxon view of the world or in other words, voices of Third World migrants who usually don't have access to the Australian mainstream media. Radio 2SER-FM was actually "giving a voice to the voiceless" by allocating us airtime during peak listening time-slot. The programme was very popular with student listeners and Anglo-Saxon listeners with a liberal internationalist outlook. We even had feedback that some political science students were quoting from interviews broadcast on our programme in their assignments.

During a visit to Denmark recently, where I visited a number of CR stations in Copenhagen, I noted that a similar process is happening there. Many radio stations are not owned by one organization, but by a consortium of community based organizations, representing ethnic, religious or special interest groups. Each group has its own regular allocation of airtime and they tend to operate independent of each other. Some don't even come to the station's studio to broadcast. They produce the programme outside and send it via email to the station computer from where it goes to air. I understand that in India, such a consortium approach to ownership of broadcasting license may not be possible at present without a change to the CR licensing legislation.

A major problem faced by CR everywhere is economic sustainability. CR cannot depend forever on donor funding – be it international such as UNESCO, DANIDA or UNDP, or domestic – and also volunteer enthusiasm. Recently I did a study for UNESCO on the economic viability of community radio in the Philippines and at the end of the study I decided to title the report "Maintaining the Enthusiasm".

*Annexure 5 g*

What I noted both at Tambuli and Genpeace stations is that after the initial enthusiasm, many community members have slowly drifted away. When the stations were first started with UNESCO, UNDP or UNICEF funding, there was money to train the people – where external trainers (sometimes foreigners) came in to conduct the training. But, once the initial enthusiasm waned or those volunteers who were trained moved out of the community (in the Philippines context many go overseas to work) there were no funds available to train a new batch of volunteers. Thus, stations that were started with 45 trained volunteer broadcasters, were now running with just 6 or so and their programmes are also irregular sometimes. As a result the listener base may also have dropped.

One of the models which has overcome this is the CR run in conjunction with Local Government Units (LGU), these are the equivalents to the Panchayats in India. Where the mayor is a democrat this system works very well. The community is able to come in and broadcast as volunteers in their community affairs programmes or form PC type programming groups to produce local cultural or religious programmes. As part of their work the LGU officers such as agricultural officer, information officer and community development officer have been trained to broadcast programmes related to their field of work. The mayor and vice-mayor also get regular slots to broadcast to the community and even take on-air questions from them via phones or sms (text) messages. The radio stations are located in the LGU building and they make an annual allocation in the budget to subsidise the community radio. This model is not free of political interference, but, it does allow the community access to the airwaves and also a model, which could be financially sustainable.

In terms of financial sustainability, it is important to set up at the outset a national community radio fund where both government and non-governmental bodies such as foundations, may contribute. In the Philippines, lack of such a fund, I think is a major reason for some CR stations struggling to survive after the initial enthusiasm has waned. Also this means that the central government virtually ignore this sector. In fact, there is no national law in the Philippines to license CR.

I hope India will avoid this situation occurring in the future – may be 10 years down the line – by setting up a government supported CR fund. It should be seen as community development in the context of helping to improve community cohesion and eradicate poverty. In Australia, there is a Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) to which the federal government makes annual budgetary contributions. CR stations and programme collectives can apply to it for funding. The important thing here is to ensure that such a CR fund is transparent and there is a commitment by the government and large foundations to make ongoing contributions (perhaps on an annual basis).

In Thailand, the ThaiPBS, which was set up by a military government about 5 years ago is funded by the allocation of some 3 percent of the annual tobacco and alcohol tax, which comes to a huge amount. This allocation is automatically siphoned to the TPBS each year by legislation, which can only be changed by a parliamentary vote. Thus, they are able to function independent of the government or a ministry, to provide a public service. Both a television and radio network, TPBS has been able to produce programmes with the community and trained many community people, especially in the marginalized north and east of the country.

While the Thai example involves one particular network, perhaps the same principle could be used in

*Annexure 5 g*

India, so that a set percentage of tax revenue could be siphoned to community broadcasting by federal legislation, and the setting up of a community broadcasting fund, overseen by a Board of Trustees who are respectable non-corruptible members of the society.

These are some of the ideas I would like to present to you and I hope you will find this useful as India embarks on its path to establish a Community Radio sector which will be economically viable and produce radio 'FOR THE PEOPLE BY THE PEOPLE'.

# हर दिन नई चुनौती से जूझने का नाम है रेडियो बुन्देलखण्ड

**अनुजा शुक्ला**

रेडियो आज दो से ज्यादा उम्र का हो गया है। दो साल में कई बार अपने काम को पीछे पलट कर देखने का मौका मिला है। सामुदायिक रेडियो की राष्ट्रीय बैठक में अनुभवों के सारे सिरों को एक बार फिर से सब तरफ से खींचकर एक जगह लाने का मौका मिल रहा है। यह पूरी यात्रा को पलटकर एक बार फिर देखना है।

गए 23 अक्टूबर 2010 को रेडियो की दूसरी सालगिरह थी। हमने पूरे दिन 'लाइव फोन इन' किया। अपने दो बरस के श्रोताओं से रेडियो के साथ उनके दो बरस के रिश्तों पर बातचीत का दिन था। रेडियो के लिए खुशी की बात यह थी कि श्रोताओं को भी यह बात याद थी कि यह रेडियो की सालगिरह का दिन है।

रेडियो का प्रसारण हमने 4 घंटों से शुरू किया था और जल्दी ही इसे हमने 5 घंटों का कर दिया। यह पूरा दौर हमारे लिए गहन अनुभवों का दौर रहा है। रेडियो की 13 लोगों की आन्तरिक टीम, रेडियो की प्रबन्धन समिति व रेडियो के श्रोता, जो दरअसल भागीदारी भी निभाते थे, सभी के लिए यह पूरा दौर अत्यन्त उत्साही और प्रयोग करने का दौर रहा है। दौर अब भी वही है पर कुछ अनुभवों के साथ। आज रेडियो में 6 फ्रीलांसर भी हैं जिनमें 4 लड़कियां हैं। रेडियो रिपोर्टर्स की टीम में भी 2 लड़कियां हैं जिनमें से एक रेडियो के लिए स्थानीय बाजार से विज्ञापन जुटाने का भी काम करती हैं। शुरूआती दौर में रेडियो के पास केवल एक लड़की थी—प्राची। महिलाओं को बाहर लेकर आना एक बहुत चुनौतीपूर्ण काम था। पर आज यह संभव हो सका है। रेडियो केवल प्रसारण ही नहीं करता बल्कि रेडियो नैरोकास्टिंग भी करता है। रेडियो में दो लोगों की एक टीम है जो नैरोकास्टिंग करती है। नैरोकास्टिंग छोटे समूह को कार्यक्रम सुनाने, कार्यक्रम पर फीडबैक लेने तथा मुद्दों पर समूह चर्चा कराने की प्रक्रिया है।

यह शुरूआती दौर काफी संघर्ष का था। हमारे सामने कोई एक आकार नहीं था जिसके आधार पर हम रेडियो का कोई एक निश्चित स्वरूप बना सकें। बस इतनी समझ थी कि यह वर्तमान प्रचलित विभिन्न रेडियो के स्वरूप सा नहीं होगा। कुछ फॉर्मेट थे, कुछ मुद्दे थे, जिन पर लोगों की राय थी कि बात होनी चाहिए। तो, इस तरह ये सब कुछ एक नई शुरूआत थी। यह एक साझी मॉडल बनाना था, लोक की साझीदारी के साथ लोक का रेडियो। 'समुदाय का, समुदाय के लिए और समुदाय के द्वारा चलाया जाने वाला रेडियो', यह बिल्कुल नई परिभाषा थी। लोकतंत्र को लोक तक ले जाना, लोक के आखिरी आदमी तक ले जाना, अपनी क्षेत्रीय पहचान और निजता को बचाए रखना। यही है

## अनुबंध 5 h

सामुदायिक रेडियो की परिभाषा! स्टालिन इसे प्रसारण की स्वतंत्रता से जोड़ते हैं पर यह केवल प्रसारण की नहीं, अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता का सवाल है। न केवल अभिव्यक्ति की स्वतंत्रता का, बल्कि सूचनाओं को जानने का अधिकार, संस्कृति, संगीत और कला को बचाने और उसे दूर दराज के पास रहने वाले लोगों तक पहुंचाने के अधिकार का सवाल है। यह अपने अधिकारों व कर्तव्यों की सूचना व जानकारी पाने का सवाल है। यह भटकते मुख्यधारा मीडिया के दौर में समानान्तर मीडिया की रचना के अधिकार का सवाल है।

रेडियो बुन्देलखण्ड गए दो सालों से इन सारे सवालों पर काम करने की कोशिश में है। रेडियो के प्रसारण क्षेत्र के आखिरी आदमी तक उसके मतलब और जरूरत की सूचनाएं पहुंचाने, क्षेत्र के भाषा, संगीत, कला व संस्कृति को संरक्षित करने, क्षेत्रीय पहचान को जीवित रखने, अपने देश, काल, परिस्थिति व पर्यावरण के प्रति सचेत करने के काम में संलग्न है।

बुन्देलखण्ड भौगोलिक रूप से एक पठारी, पथरीला व सूखा क्षेत्र है। सामाजिक व रूप से यह एक सामंती इलाका है, सांस्कृतिक रूप से योद्धाओं, कलाकारों व साहित्यकारों और ऐतिहासिक रूप से यह प्रथम स्वतंत्रता संग्राम का केन्द्र रहा है। इस क्षेत्र में काम करना और अतीत को वर्तमान से जोड़कर विकास की मुख्य धारा से जोड़ने का प्रयास किसी चुनौती से कम नहीं था। रेडियो की शुरुआत करते ही पहली चुनौती थी कि रेडियो के लिए मनोरंजन कैसे जुटाया जाए। रेडियो के नाम से लोगों के मन में पहली बात यह आती है कि थोड़ा टाइम पास, थोड़ा गाना बजाना वगैरा। रेडियो का मैनडेट भी है—'इन्फोटेन्मेंट' ..... यानि सूचना, वह भी मनोरंजन के साथ।

तो मनोरंजन भी स्थानीय भाषा में जरूरी था। समुदाय की भागीदारी यहां काम आयी। रेडियो की एक पुकार पर अनेक गायक, रचनाकार, संगीतकार अपने वाद्य, गीत व प्रतिभाएं ले रेडियो के साथ आ खड़े हुए। आज रेडियो के पास 1000 से ज्यादा मौलिक बुन्देली गीत हैं और 400 से ज्यादा गायक-गायिकाएं। हालांकि ये सब इतना सरल नहीं था। आम आदमी अलग अलग रेडियो के फर्क को नहीं समझता है। उसके लिए तो यह भी 'आकाशवाणी' ही है और इससे उसे वही उम्मीदें हैं जो आकाशवाणी से। खासतौर पर पैसे के मसले को लेकर। गाना गाने के आकाशवाणी में पैसे मिलते हैं तो यहां भी मिलेंगे। मिलने चाहिए। उनके लिए रेडियो उनकी कुछ आर्थिक मदद भी करेगा। उनकी उम्मीद है कि रेडियो सिर्फ उन्हें सूचना ही नहीं देगा बल्कि उनकी समस्याएं भी सुलझाएगा। यह सामुदायिक रेडियो है और उनका अपना रेडियो है, समुदाय को यह बात समझाने में बहुत समय लगा और आज भी अक्सर समझाने की जरूरत पड़ती है।

रेडियो विभिन्न विषयों पर कार्यक्रम बनाता है। रेडियो कार्यक्रमों का केन्द्र कृषि, पशु प्रबंधन, रोजगार, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, स्वच्छता, महिला, पर्यावरण, बैंकिंग व स्वयं सहायता समूह, विभिन्न सरकारी व गैर सरकारी योजनाएं, संस्कृति व इतिहास, संगीत, व बच्चे आदि विषय हैं। इन सारे विषयों पर रेडियो कार्यक्रमों को विभिन्न रेडियो फॉर्मेट, जैसे रेडियो टॉक, साक्षात्कार आदि में ढाला जाता है। इसके

अतिरिक्त बच्चों के कार्यक्रम में मैगजीन फॉर्मेट, रेडियो नाटक व रेडियो कहानी फॉर्मेट का भी इस्तेमाल किया जा रहा है। रेडियो का एक लोकप्रिय कार्यक्रम है आस-पास। यह एक खुला मंच जैसा कार्यक्रम है जिसमें आस पास होने वाली किसी घटना, किसी कार्यक्रम या किसी मुद्दे पर बात होती है। इसमें कई बार सामयिक कार्यक्रमों व उत्सवों की रिपोर्ट भी जाती है। तो इस तरह रेडियो रिपोर्ट एक अन्य फॉर्मेट है जिसे हम इस्तेमाल करते हैं।

रेडियो के दो सालों के इतिहास में कुछ माइल स्टोन अभियान हैं, जिसमें जलवायु परिवर्तन, मनरेगा, जल प्रबंधन व संरक्षण, चुनाव, हमारा सरपंच कैसा हो व बुन्देली आईडल मुख्य हैं। पानी बुन्देलखण्ड का एक बड़ा मुद्दा है। पानी का संरक्षण, प्रबंधन व वर्षा जल संरक्षण पर रेडियो ने क्रमवार अभियान किया। इस कार्यक्रम श्रृंखला ने केवल श्रोताओं को ही प्रभावित नहीं किया बल्कि कार्यक्रम देने वाले रिपोर्टरों को भी प्रभावित किया। 'अब कहीं पानी बहता देखकर बुरा लगता है,' अजेन्द्र कहता है। पर्यावरण व पेड़ को लेकर हमने जागरूकता के कई कार्यक्रम किए। श्रोताओं ने अनेक बार फीडबैक में रेडियो से यह बांटा कि उन्होंने रेडियो के कार्यक्रम सुनने के बाद पेड़ लगाए। रेडियो की दूसरी वर्षगांठ के मौके पर हुए लाइव फोन इन कार्यक्रम में एक महिला जो रेडियो की नियमित श्रोता है, ने बताया कि उसने अमरुद के अनेक पेड़ लगाए हैं। इनसे पर्यावरण को तो मदद मिलेगी ही साथ ही अगले मौसम में वह अमरुद बाजार में बेचकर कुछ आर्थिक लाभ भी कमा लेगी। श्रोताओं को संवेदित करते करते रिपोर्टर भी इन मुद्दों के प्रति संवेदनशील हो गए हैं। रामपाल कहता है कि अब किसी पेड़ को कटते देख उसे दर्द होता है। अजेन्द्र किसी सार्वजनिक स्थल पर किसी को धूम्रपान करते देख विचलित हो उठता है। प्राची महिलाओं के मुद्दों पर काम करते इतनी संवेदनशील हो उठी है कि अक्सर उसके मन में यह सवाल कौंधता है कि औरतों के साथ ही इतना अन्याय क्यों होता है।

इन सारे अभियानों में हालांकि कोई भी किसी से कम नहीं है पर अनुभव यह रहा है कि जो कार्यक्रम लोगों के भविष्य व स्वास्थ्य से जुड़े हैं, लोग उन पर तुरंत प्रतिक्रिया देते हैं। मनरेगा पर चार माह के अभियान के बाद जो 22 फीडबैक आए उनमें से 3 ऐसे थे जो एक्शन मोड में थे। इन फीडबैक्स में लोगों ने बताया कि उन्हें तो पता ही नहीं था कि जॉब कार्ड मजदूर के पास रहते हैं। जानकारी मिलने के बाद उन्होंने सरपंच से अपने कार्ड वापस लिए। कुछ लोगों ने जाकर सरपंच से काम मांगा और अपने आवेदन दिए। मजेदार बात यह कि इस अभियान में महिलाओं ने भी फोन करके मनरेगा में महिलाओं के लिए काम की संभावनाओं व सुविधाओं पर जानकारी मांगी। हमारा सरपंच कैसा हो .....कार्यक्रम श्रृंखला पंचायत चुनाव के एक माह पूर्व शुरू की गयी थी। इस कार्यक्रम में लोगों ने न बढ़-चढ़ कर भाग लिया। सरपंच से अपनी अपेक्षाओं पर बात की। इस कार्यक्रम में भाग लेने वाले कुछ लोगों को सरपंच की घुड़की भी सुननी पड़ी मगर रेडियो पर बात करने का असर यह हुआ कि गांव की टूटी सड़क अस्थायी तौर पर ही सही, बनायी गयी। महिलाओं की आवाज को बाहर लाने के लिए रेडियो ने उनकी कहानी शुरू की थी और आज कई बार महिलाएं खुद अपनी कहानी सुनाने के लिए रेडियो से आग्रह करती हैं।

‘बुन्देली आईडल’ एक स्थानीय संगीत प्रतियोगिता थी। इसका उद्देश्य था कि स्थानीय प्रतिभाओं को सामने लाया जाए। क्षेत्र के गायकों व गायन मंडलियों ने इसमें खूब भाग लिया। कुल 180 लोगों ने इसमें हिस्सा लिया और ऑडीशन दिया। प्रतियोगिता के विभिन्न चरणों से गुजरते हुए क्रमशः 3 प्रतियोगी बुन्देली आईडल बने। रेडियो ने क्षेत्र के लोगों को आय अर्जन में भी मदद की है। आस पास के गांवों से जो गायक रेडियो से जुड़े हैं अब तक और जिन्होंने बुन्देली आईडल में भाग लिया है उनमें से अब तक लगभग 10 गायकों को कई जगहों से गाने का ऑर्डर मिला है जिसने उनकी आय में वृद्धि की है।

रेडियो में फीडबैक लेने के कई माध्यम हैं। चिट्ठी, फोन कॉल्स, सीधे सीधे फील्ड से फीड बैक रिकार्डिंग व नैरो कास्टिंग। रेडियो के पास चिट्ठी सीधे डाक से भी आती है तथा रेडियो द्वारा लगाए गए फीड बैक बॉक्स से भी रेडियो को श्रोताओं की चिट्ठियां मिलती हैं। रेडियो के फरमाइशी बुन्देली गीतों के कार्यक्रम में भी श्रोता अपने फीड बैक देते हैं तथा रिपोर्टर्स जब कार्यक्रम के लिए फील्ड में जाते हैं तो अपने कार्यक्रमों पर उन्हें फीडबैक मिलते हैं जिन्हें वे रिकार्ड करके लाते हैं। नैरोकास्टिंग भी फीडबैक का एक सशक्त माध्यम है। नैरोकास्टिंग के दौरान किसी भी कार्यक्रम पर श्रोताओं की व्यापक राय मिल जाती है जिससे कार्यक्रम पर फिर से काम करना संभव होता है। ऐसे कई कार्यक्रमों पर फिर से काम करके प्रसारित किया गया है जिससे उनका लाभ भी लोगों को मिलना संभव हो पाता है। रेडियो पर कई बार ऐसे भी फीड बैक मिलते हैं जिसमें श्रोता खासी नाराजगी जाहिर करते हैं कि रेडियो उनके यहां नहीं सुनाई पड़ता और वे रेडियो से आग्रह करते हैं कि रेडियो की रेंज को बढ़ाया जाए जिससे वे रेडियो को ठीक से सुन सकें क्योंकि उनके गांव में बस यही रेडियो आता है। इससे उन्हें जानकारी भी मिलती है और मजा भी आता है। यह उनका अपना सा रेडियो है क्योंकि यह उनकी ही तरह बात करता है।

इसमें कोई दो राय नहीं कि इस क्षेत्र में लोगों को सूचनाओं व जानकारी के लिए एक ऐसे माध्यम की जरूरत बेहद जरूरत थी। रेडियो उनकी इस जरूरत को काफी हद तक पूरा भी करने का प्रयास भी करता है। रेडियो ओरछा से 10 किमी दूर गांव में बैठे आदमी को ओरछा में हो रही मकर संक्रान्ति या पुष्य नक्षत्र के उत्सवों की गतिविधियों के बारे में बताता है, तो नदी को स्वच्छ रखने और नदी में उतरते समय बरती जाने वाली सावधानियों के बारे में आगाह भी करता। सार्वजनिक स्थानों को स्वच्छ रखने का निर्देश भी रेडियो श्रोताओं को देता है और 26 जनवरी, 15 अगस्त पर दूर दराज के गांव में झण्डारोहण के उत्सव की कहानी भी सुनाता है। रेडियो को कई बार यह भी स्पष्ट करना पड़ता है कि यह एक राजनैतिक मंच नहीं है। शायद यही वजह है कि सरपंचों को रेडियो से जोड़ना आज भी एक चुनौती बना हुआ है।

इन सारी उपलब्धियों के संतोष के बावजूद रेडियो का सतत स्थायित्व आज भी प्रश्नचिह्नित है। काफी कोशिश करने के बाद भी सामुदायिक अनुदानों, सहकारिता अथवा स्थानीय विज्ञापनों के प्रयोग क्षेत्र में सफल नहीं हो पाए हैं। रेडियो बुन्देलखण्ड आज भी विभिन्न मुद्दों पर चल रही परियोजनाओं में जागरूकता की सूचनाओं के प्रचार प्रसार की जरूरतों को पूरा करके अपने खर्चों को पूरा कर रहा है।

*अनुबंध 5 h*

राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर विज्ञापनों के लिए भी रेडियो ने काफी प्रयास किए व स्थानीय सरकारी विभागों में भी कई परियोजनाएं प्रस्तुत कीं पर आज भी कोई परियोजना आगे नहीं बढ़ सकी। अधिकारियों का तर्क है कि सूचना, शिक्षा व संचार में आबंटित राशि की गतिविधियां निश्चित व पारिभाषित हैं। इनमें रेडियो की किसी गतिविधि के लिए किसी तरह की कोई राशि निर्धारित नहीं है। कुछ अधिकारियों का कहना है कि उन्होंने तो इस बारे में सुना तक नहीं है। ऐसे में स्थानीय स्तर पर इस तरह के आर्थिक संसाधन जुटाना निःसन्देह काफी मुश्किल काम है। निस्सन्देह इस तरह के सामुदायिक प्रयासों की आज सब जगह जरूरत है मगर उनके स्थायित्व व निरंतर काम करते रहने के लिए आर्थिक संसाधनों की व्यवस्था करने की भी जरूरत है अथवा उसके उपाय किए जाने की भी जरूरत है।





United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

B5/29, Safdarjung Enclave  
New Delhi - 110029

India

Phone: +91-11-26713000

email: [newdelhi@unesco.org](mailto:newdelhi@unesco.org)

website: [www.unesco.org/newdelhi](http://www.unesco.org/newdelhi)