

The role of Community Radio in development-A study of Namma Dhawani and Sangam, CRSs

Dr. B. Sunil,

Asst. Professor, SCMC, Symbiosis International University, Pune, Maharashtra,
Email Id: sunil.belladi@scmc.edu.in

ABSTRACT

Community Radio is a medium of sharing views, ideas, and problems of rural, disadvantaged, vulnerable and hard to reach population. The present study focusses on the role of Community Radio in development by studying two CRSs namely Namma Dhawani CRS in Karnataka State and Sangam CRS in the State of Telangana. The study revealed that, though both the CRSs has similarities, they differ in their focus, Sangam CRS is more concentrated in programming on agriculture and allied fields, whereas Namma Dhawani CRS airs more of health-related broadcast. There seems to be a significant difference among the listeners of the two lingual types, i.e., Kannada (Namma Dhawani) and Telugu (Sangam). The consolidated values of listeners under various attributes are presented in the data analysis.

Keywords: Community Radio, Sangam, Namma Dhawani, Listeners, Perspective.

1. INTRODUCTION

Community Radio (CR) has been playing a significant role in airing the voice, thought, problems and issues of those people who either do not have access to mainstream media or have been not attributed much attention. Guy Bessette (2004) states that one can clearly spot two varied trends form the past fifty years that have employed communication for development. If using mass media in large scale for development of a vast population is one perspective, the alternative approach employs community media for grass root development, he clarifies. CR facilitates the right to information, promoting the right to communicate and assist in the entire process of development. Discussing the role of Community Radio and its purpose, King (2017) states that, the primary obligation of CR is to sever the informational needs of its listeners. He recalls that CRs at instances cater to under-represented people or community that is marginalized either by state or Private Media entities. Community media is described as an independent, civil society created media that function for the benefit of the society and not for any commercial gains, opines Buckley (2011). Community Radio helps the community to become aware of utilities and amenities for various development aspects of the society like, education, health, water and sanitation, protection from natural disasters. Community Radio Station (CRS) as well act a tool to address social issues at the community level and connect rural population with the government.

2. ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF COMMUNITY RADIO

The first community-based radio station licensed to an NGO (as distinct from campus-based radio) was launched on 15 October 2008, when Sangam Radio, licensed to Deccan Development Society, in Pastapur village, Medak district, in the then undivided Andhra Pradesh state went on the air at 11:00am. The GOI (Ministry of Information and broadcasting) has only allowed CR to be setup in specific sectors and by chosen stakeholders of the society. The Educational Institutes where the first in country to be permitted to start a CR, these radio stations run by Educational Institutes is popularly dubbed as 'campus radios.

One of the first CR to be set up in India was in 2004. Anna University, had applied for license to establish CR, at their campus, however, it was IIT Kanpur that was the first Education Institute to seek permission to set up CR on its campus. It has to be noted that between 2002 to 2007, i.e.in five years only eleven CRSs were been operational in the country. The Department of Mass Communication at Jamia Millia Islamia, The Indian Institute of Mass Communication, at Delhi, and the Film and Television Institute of India at Pune had their CRSs operational by 2007.

Sangam Radio was granted license to operate CR Station in Zaheerabad District and this is the first of its kind in the country in the NGO's space. Namma Dhawani switched from narrowcasting to broadcasting in 2004. The various KVK, Krishi Vigyan Kendra, with the focus on farming and allied agricultural practices started their own CRSs. The State funded Agricultural Universities followed suit by establishing CRSs.

According to the data offered by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting there are over 218 operational CRSs in the country as on 2017. Of which 100 are run by Education Institutes, 80 by various NGO's working in specialized domains. About 15 out of the 40 KVK, Krishi Vigyan Kendra have been broadcasting over the CRSs. Few of the State Agricultural Universities are operating CR Stations. There are about 15 CRs of State Agricultural Universities going on air.

3. DEVELOPMENT

In December 2002, the NDA Government approved a policy for the grant of licenses for setting up of CR Stations only for well-established Educational Institutions including IITs/IIMs. Thus, eligibility to own and operate the CR was restricted to only these Educational Institutions. On 1 February 2004, Anna FM was launched as India's first campus "community" radio station and was operated by the students of Anna University. However, by that time, the marginalized and voiceless communities remained outside of the CRs. In his seminal work, Rural Development: Putting the Last First, Robert Chambers(1997) states that over the past few decades the main issues concerning development have been plainly ignored. He goes on identify the reasons behind it and blames it on people with power dominating the process of development.

The Civil Societies kept working towards convincing the Government to expand the mandate of the CR sector to include communities living in rural, remote and hilly areas of the country. In 2006, the Government released a new CR Policy which allowed the Agricultural Universities, Educational Institutions and Civil society institutions such as NGOs to apply for a CR broadcasting license under the FM band 88–108 MHz by 2008, some 40 CR Stations started in India owned either by the Educational Institutions or by the NGOs.

4. GROSS ROOT PARTICIPATION

The role of Community Radio in development-A study of Namma Dhawani and Sangam, CRSs

Much of the literature available on use of community participatory communication comes from the west and much of the experiences and success of Community Media in the southern hemisphere is much ignored states, Gumucio, Dragon (2001). The most important issue of a CR is the community participation by which the community really owns and controls the station. The involvement of community members in many different ways that reflects the interest of the community it serves. The requirement of community participation ensures that members of the community are involved in the station with following activities:

1. Election of Board Members
2. Making policy for the station
3. Management of the station
4. Selection and provision of content and programming
5. Production of different programme reflecting the community
6. External representation of the station etc.

Beck and Purcell (2020) in their book *Community Development for Social Change* document the various practices and underpinning theories that have been applied with special reference to United Kingdom. Social change encompasses not only economic development but also all-round development in terms of upholding human rights and values leading to providing much needed social justices.

5. COMMUNITY RADIO AS AN AGENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

CRs play a paramount role in the development of the community. CR allows people to fulfil their informational need in their own dialect and language, echoes the then Information and Broadcasting Minister, Venkaiah Naidu (2017). He goes on to describe the importance of CR and says it can facilitate development particularly in the rural areas. CRSs have been highly engaged in addressing, social, economic, cultural, educational, health, environmental, sanitation, and disaster issues effectively and strategically using local languages in a context. Downing (2007) states that; the language spoken by the people should be at the heart of human communication. Other basic people's communication like music, visuals, need to be reengineered. The level of audience participation in the media have increased, however there is no match to the degree of participation as provided by the community media and its relevance to the audience, observes UNESCO (2008). It goes on to reiterate that radio as a community media is best suited to developing countries as it is economical, easy to access and overcomes the literacy barrier.

6. NAMMA DHAWANI, SANGAM THEIR IMPACT

Namma Dhawani CRS is located at Boodikote Village Kolar District, Karnataka where the community speaks a mix of Telugu and Kannada Languages, as the place borders with the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. Namma Dhawani in literal translation into English language means 'our voices' is a CRS which is integrated along with thrift groups and goes by the name Community Managed Resource Centre. This entity was sponsored by MYRADA and is backed by UNESCO. All this started in the year 2001, and is now broadcasting for six hours in a day by members of the community. Namma Dhawani CRS began airing radio programme with narrowcasting and cable casting. Programmes related to health, importance of sanitation, sending girls to the schools, dowry elimination, preventive care of children, leadership which lead to a significant change in the socio economic and cultural development of the people of that region.

Namma Dhawani CRS which is managed by local community and over twenty villages are covered through its broadcast. The CRS airs vital knowledge related to practices in agriculture, important medical information and the much need cultural-binding. Various stakeholders who include the members of the community, men and women alike of various age groups participate in their own capacity in providing the software for the CR broadcast. Some of the programs include educating the girl child, hygiene and sanitation to keep the surroundings clean, identifying ways to generate income, and importance of the literacy amongst the adults.

In Namma Dhawani CRS eight workers are engaged for audio production and broadcasting of the programme and various important issues like health, organic farming, water harvesting, HIV/AIDS, drip irrigation, information about goods being sold, crop prices, social messages and birthday greetings etc.

Namma Dhawani CRS also train rural local women groups in the region where literacy is low among women. The production Centre is linked to the local school used by the teachers to produce and narrow caste educational programme. Namma Dhawani CRS was inaugurated on 21st December 2001. It produced audio cassettes and broadcasts the programs over local AIR Station. The Namma Dhawani CRS is well equipped with recording Station, computers, cameras, photocopier and has a cable connection in the village with transmission facilities.

Pathra Prabhada one of the prominent programme of Namma Dhawani CRS periodically receives letters from the radio listeners, which acts as vital feedback on the programme that were broadcasted. The letters at times also indicate ways to better the broadcast content and suggest concerns to be given prominence in coverage of broadcast. Namma Dhawani Community Radio Station is located at Boodikote Village, two hour's drive from Bangalore and it has three local trained staff to run the Centre and several volunteers help the production of programs to narrow caste and to air by All India Radio. Namma Dhawani CRS attempts to provide people more timely and local information and is nonprofit making organization in nature allowing community participation. The programs are tailored in such a way that they meet the educational needs, covers developmental issues, health related concerns and cultural requirements of the members of the community it serves. The community feels that the Radio Station is ours because it speaks about us in our language and in our own accent. In 2001 UNESCO made funds available to MYRADA to setup Community Radio Station and Namma Dhawani Management Community is overseeing the Community Radio Operations. Each self-help group made one-time contribution, to cover the cost of running the Community Radio station.

SANGAM

Sangam CRS is located at Pastapur Village, Zaheerabad, Medak District, Telangana State. This is the first Community Radio Station in India which is ten kilometers from Zaheerabad Town, established under Deccan Development Society (DDS) a NGO working on the issues related to farmers, for the poor, land less Dalit population, with a special consideration for women. With an idea to bring about development in the region with regard to agriculture, & education, Sangam Community Ratio Station has started narrowcasting in 1999 and recordings were made on tape to broadcast for limited audience at a place where community can gather. This was also supported by UNSECO. On 15th October 2008, following the judgment of Supreme Court by Justice P.B. Savant that, Airways were public property and accordingly the Govt. of India has given permission to Sangam Community Ratio Station. Around seventy-five villages are covered under Sangam Community Ratio Station which broadcast in Telugu Language. There are over

The role of Community Radio in development-A study of Namma Dhawani and Sangam, CRSs

3,000 active women members in the Sangam Community Radio Station and they contribute Rs. 5/- per head to meet the expenditure on Radio Station. The broadcast is between 7 pm and 9 pm.

Sangam Community Radio Station is run by Dalit Women Farmers and the broadcast is prepared with local colloquialism and slang. About 2000 songs sung by the members were collected with instrumental accomplishment. Deccan Development Society supports Sangam Community Radio Station financially for its functioning.

Certain programs broadcast by Sangam Community Radio Station includes songs, farming practices, observation of festivals, health tips, birthday wishes etc., The Sangam Community Radio Station reviews people's problems which affect their agriculture, crops, livestock, food production, seeds and management. Broadcasting in their own language Telugu, and in dialect which is unique to the region, Sangam CRS makes an effort to reflect the lives and cultural identity of the people. It acts as one of the ideal platforms to address problems and concerns of the people of the region. The CRS allows its members to express themselves through participation in programming content creation through their talk, songs and music. The community members feel it as their pride. Sangam Community Radio Station creates awareness and provides important information to the community.

The broadcasters will collect the information in the villages by meeting different people, discuss and record their observations on various issues of the village, collect the information from elders about their experiences regarding farming and other related issues and also to know the songs during weddings and festivals and while working in the fields. The listeners are given an opportunity to call Sangam CRS to share their views with Radio broadcasters. For example (a) Missing cattle are reported and traced with the help of listeners (b) Cattle owners will be expressing thanks to the radio and listeners in locating.

The programmer content includes interviews, discussions, songs, plays and details of agriculture, health issues. Eighty percent are women and Dalits who participate in the Sangam Community Radio Station. Elder community members are encouraged to actively participate in the radio station. Sangam Community Radio Station is unique in the country which has financial stability. The villagers are encouraged to visit Sangam Community Radio Station to take part in various programmers.

7. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the profile of the NammaDhawani and Sangam CRSs.
2. To analyzed the perceptions of listeners, i.e., Nammadhawani and Sangam under various attributes.

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In view of the objectives of the study, descriptive research design has been adopted along with a touch of casual analysis in order to relate between different variables/factors. The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data is collected by using questionnaire methods and interview method. In selecting the samples from the population, 'Simple' Random Sampling' method was adopted. Sample size for the present study is 200 out of which 100 from listeners of Namma Dhawani and 100 from listeners of Sangam. The data was collected from three villages of Sangam (Jhara Sangam, Digyal and

Jeerlapally), and from three villages of Namma Dhawani (Banahalli, Gajaga and Kumbhanalli) to see whether there are variations in the attributes among the listeners of the two CRs. The data has been subjected to χ^2 analysis and the results are shown in the subsequent Tables. The demographic data and questionnaire were analyzed by Chi-Square test for testing the various attributes of the listen

9. DATA ANALYSIS

The consolidated values of listeners under various attributes are presented in Table 1 to 48.

χ^2 value of the Respondents of the Listeners

Table 1: Consolidated cross tabulation and χ^2 value of the Respondents

Table	Attributes	χ^2 Value	Degrees of freedom	P- Value at 5%	Conclusion
1	Village	200	6	0.000	Significant
2	Gender	15.394	1	0.000	Significant
3	Age	9.208	4	0.050	Significant
4	Edu. Qualifications	60.381	5	0.000	Significant
5	Occupation	47.058	7	0.000	Significant
6	Family size	3.263	2	0.196	Non- Significant
7	Monthly income	20.954	5	0.001	Significant
8	Languages known	106.278	6	0.000	Significant
9	Presence of CR in the area	48.025	1	0.000	Significant
10	Whether knowing the name of CR	18.116	1	0.000	Significant
11	Whether owning a radio set	24.000	1	0.000	Significant
12	What is NammaDhawani and Sangam	139.063	5	0.000	Significant
13	How did you get to know about Radio Station	105.844	7	0.000	Significant
14	Timings of CR	12.562	1	0.000	Significant

The role of Community Radio in development-A study of Namma Dhawani and Sangam, CRSs

Table	Attributes	χ^2 Value	Degrees of freedom	P- Value at 5%	Conclusion
15	How many hours CR Broadcasts	23.106	4	0.000	Significant
16	Can you recall the timings	105.030	6	0.000	Significant
17	How do you listen to Radio Broadcast	6.697	1	0.010	Significant
18	How often do you listen	72.990	5	0.000	Significant
19	How long do you listen	5.798	3	0.122	Not Significant
20	When do you listen	8.610	3	0.035	Significant
21	Where do you listen	30.522	2	0.000	Significant
22	Kind of program you listen to	59.408	4	0.000	Significant
23	Is the programme of any help	9.879	3	0.020	Significant
24	Which programme useful	48.187	4	0.000	Significant
25	How programme is helpful	32.587	2	0.000	Significant
26	Whether programme content is liked	17.890	4	0.001	Significant
27	The kind of information being provided	1.077	3	0.783	Not Significant
28	Preferred programme format	49.719	5	0.000	Significant
29	Whether choice asked	160.360	1	0.000	Significant
30	How was that asked	79.830	4	0.000	Significant
31	Whether CR was visited	.224	1	0.621	Not Significant
32	Whether asked to participate	.000	1	1.000	Significant
33	Have you participated	159.200	1	0.000	Significant
34	If yes how many times	178.054	4	0.000	Significant
35	What was the programme	25.440	6	0.000	Significant

Table	Attributes	χ^2 Value	Degrees of freedom	P- Value at 5%	Conclusion
36	What was the role	7.022	3	0.071	Significant
37	If no, the reason for that	61.861	2	0.000	Significant
38	Sound quality	64.387	2	0.000	Significant
39	Whether suggestions were given	0.515	1	0.473	Significant
40	If yes, how	32.537	5	0.000	Significant
41	Was there a discussion about the radio programme	9.684	1	0.002	Significant
42	If yes, what issues were discussed	14.825	3	0.002	Significant
43	If no, why	28.097	5	0.000	Significant
44	Contribution to CR	35.426	3	0.000	Significant
45	Whether the CR is providing local content to the listeners	60.028	4	0.000	Significant
46	If in charge, what would you do?	50.674	5	0.000	Significant
47	Did you ask for CR	1.592	1	0.207	Non-Significant
48	Other means of communication	11.169	4	0.025	Significant

REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The outcome and findings from present research gives an objective perspective to the CRSs and will help them in greater understanding of the audience base and enable the CRSs to devise strategies for maintaining, and increasing the Listeners to the CRS. Mohan Dutta (2015) suggests that the best way to counter the top- down, liner method to social change is to incorporate culture of the people to whom the communication is designed and make the process a culture centric approach.

Rather than requesting CRSs to send their nominations through Speed Post for participating in the awards given by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the same can be called over using digital platforms like email, or Google drive applications. This does not incur any expenses for the award of

The role of Community Radio in development-A study of Namma Dhawani and Sangam, CRSs

participants and is almost free. The CRSs are equipped with computers and internet facility is available at almost all CRSs.

As Fraser and Sonia Estrada (2021) suggest, both Namma Dhawani and Sangam CRs should use the concept of 'Edutainment' as it is most effective way and format to create awareness amongst the receivers. Though impersonal interactions take place amongst the members of the CRs and listeners, a well organized and periodically designed a schedule has to be drawn for personal interaction with the listeners' of the radio programme. Communication alone cannot increase awareness on issues. It should be re-enforced by community members, family, peers through social interactions.

REFERENCES

1. Buckley, S. (Ed.). (2011). *Community media: A good practice handbook*. Paris, France: UNESCO.
2. Chambers, R. (1997) *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the First Last*. London: Intermediate Technology.
3. Dave Beck, Rod Purcell (2020) *Community Development for Social Change*. New Delhi, India: Routledge.
4. Downing, J. (2007). Grassroots media: Establishing priorities for the year ahead. *Global Media Journal Australian Edition*, 1(1), 1–16.
5. Dutta, M. J. (2015). Decolonizing communication for social change: A culture-centred approach. *Communication Theory*, 25(2), 123–143.
6. Fraser, Colin and Estrada, S. Restrepo (2001). *Community Radio Handbook*. UNESCO.
7. Gumucio, Dragon A. (2001) *Making Waves, Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change: A Report to the Rockefeller Foundation*. New York: Rockefeller Foundation.

8. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/media/ib-ministry-to-promote-community-radio/articleshow/57895167.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst (last accessed on Dec 2020)
9. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/events/prizes-and-celebrations/celebrations/international-days/world-press-freedom-day/previous-celebrations/worldpressfreedomday2009001/themes/the-role-of-community-media/> (last accessed on Nov 2020)
10. King G., (2017) “History of Struggle: The Global Story of Community Broadcasting Practices, or a Brief History of Community Radio”, *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 12(2). p.18-36.