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GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY RADIO: DRAWING INSIGHTS ON COMMUNITY, COMMUNICATION, AND PARTICIPATION

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ABSTRACT

Perceiving Community Radio (CR) as a tool of development communication, this article poses two essential questions: (1) Does CR successfully adopt the approach to influence not only the life of marginalized groups but eradicate deep-rooted issues affecting its growth? (2) How CR manages to communicate sustenance through active and comprehensive participation from the community? To address these questions, Case Study (Participant Observation, FGDs, In-depth interviews, Survey, Content Analysis) of two Rural Indian Community Radio Stations (CRSs) was carried out – dividing the structure of this study into three segments. The first segment investigates the community in community radio and elucidates the term audience in order to measure the listenership and feedback. The second segment profoundly analyses the correlation between the nature of content and content production methods. The participatory content production is analyzed through the empirical data and content analysis. The third segment argues the patronage of NGOs to CR. From the sustainability perspective, present article also opens a new discussion on whether the community radio adopts a sustainability framework or incept sustainable behavior in rural population. This segment evaluates the relationship between CR and the local community and understands the interdependence.

Understanding the holistic nature of community radio, two prominent observations emerged from the achieved results: First, the interface between the marginalized communities and community radio is established and opened. However, participation and communication are interrelated yet distinctive terms. Second, CR may act, or in this case, had been acting as a tool of grassroots development. However, efforts lack consistency and perpetuity. Local community requires the existence of CR in their life as much as CR needs them to participate and produce content.

Keywords: Community Radio, Participatory Content Production, Development, Community, Programming, Social Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

This paper emerges from the founding principles of community radio and comprehends the outline and idea of community in niche broadcasting. The primary interest of this article is to identify the development challenges that exist within the operational area of particular community radio; fathom the mechanism of community radio in addressing these challenges; to articulate the anecdotal records of community members. The latter is found imperative to establish a brief overview of the collective perception of local reality (Fraser and Estrada, 2002).

This paper neither builds a useful CR model with innovative approaches in the operations nor assess the selected community radio stations with a structured agenda. The insights drawn by understanding the functioning of selected community radio stations provide an overview of ground reality and actualities.

As we proceed towards the rationale behind the idea of CR as a tool for social change and development (Fraser and Estrada, 2002), the holistic nature of CR mandates us to acknowledge the three interlinked domains – Community, Communication, and Participation. What constitutes these domains with one another is less important than finding the active contribution of rural people in the processes. However, Dagron (2002) explicitly stated that though communication and participation are separate words, they share the same concept. While Dagron reinforced this statement with etymological evidence, remaining inferences should also be studied. Concerning the debate on the intricate relationship between participation and communication, the differences between community and audience must be illuminated. In doing so, participators or contributors concealed in the mass can be imparted, and their participation can be evaluated in CR programming, decision making, ownership, and management.

Dagron (2002) categorized the sustainability of CR as Social, Financial, and Institutional. He demonstrates that financial and institutional sustainability is built upon social sustainability. Participation and Content Production are both integral parts of social sustainability. Based on this framework, the sustainability of CR is assessed throughout the developmental and rural areas of the world (Busolo, 2013; Arora, Ramakrishnan, and Fernandez, 2015). Between the process of designing CR sustainability framework by potentiating

empowerment through participation and expanding already existed inclusive environments (Rute, Jorge, and Manuela, 2019), this study has spurred the argument of whether to work on the sustainability of CR or incept sustainable behavior in rural people (Shahzalal and Hassan, 2019).

Community Radio – Redefining the Vision

In the 20th century, social scientists and policymakers experienced the potential and influence of media and communication. Models denoting the powerful effects of mass media with a detailed account of the communication discourse facilitated the process of manufacturing consent (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Whereas, the extensive use of mass media for propaganda in the world wars had already shown society the vicious side of communication mediums. At the same time, the term for developing nations – ‘Third World’ emerged along with concepts like empowerment, social justice, and globalization (Melkote and Steeves, 2015). In a short period, critical theorists envisaged the dominant role of media in shaping society with concepts like cultural imperialism (Schiller, 1975) and cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1992). On the other hand, the development-starved (Moemeka, 1994) continued to oppress until critical educators like Freire and Rogers came with the ideological framework with practical goals that were adopted in the developing countries. Currently, India is in the fourth development decade. (Narula, 2016 [1994]) The noteworthy developmental initiatives in India were SITE (1975) and Kheda (1975), which contributed to the educational and technological development.

The non-to-profit organizations and voluntary groups consolidate the awareness and practical approach to issues of development. In such cases, the mobilization of media by these groups on

the grassroots level conceives a ratified plan for development. Apart from mainstream media, which often neglects the marginalized communities or extensive coverage of local development issues – community media, designed to the framework of niche broadcasting – serves to entertain and eradicate the issues of a specific community. Working under the various demographic and cultural constraints of a region, the varying degrees of community support proves to be an invaluable message source (Fuller, 2007). Over the period, the lack of debates on theoretical traditions of community media, there is growing disorientation regarding definitions of ‘radical,’ ‘alternative,’ and ‘community’ media. Atton (2003) has critically analyzed the terms and differentiated between them based on ‘News’. Minority groups or ‘ordinary people’ have their way of making news in contrast to an elite group of managers, owners, and senior professionals. Alternative media not only offers theoretical and organizational discourse but possess the ability to enact social change in the society through their means of production. (Duncombe, 1997). With this in mind, Howley (2005) suggests that the nature of community media is flexible, depending upon the meaning, forms, and resources. The calculations of time and place can open the doors of opportunities for local populations. In a country like India, where community media is disallowed to broadcast news to the targeted communities, the elucidation of Howley seems to fit the scenario. Community and Alternative both terms imply the participation of community and representation of their interests. Unlike mainstream media, the audience here can act as a producer.

Post the historical decision of ‘airwaves are free’ by the supreme court of India (1995) and declaration of the first set of CR guidelines (2004), community radio initiatives in India started to take off.

These guidelines proved to be useful since it incorporated provisions to allow non-governmental organizations to start radio stations (Malik, 2017). Later on, the campaigning of media-activist groups forced the union cabinet to formulate a community inclusive radio policy in November 2006 (Pavarala, 2002). Namma Dhwani and Sangam Radio hold the tag of India’s one of the most successful early experiments in this sector. During the experimental years, the Tuk Tuk experiment in Sri Lanka encouraged the CRSs in India to harness ICT technology and improvised in the broadcasting. Within the legal framework, the successful initiatives of community broadcasting in India include CR stations such as – Henvallvani, Radio Bundelkhand, Brahmputra CRS, Waqt ki Awaaz, and Tilonia Radio. These stations have been applying social and developmental agendas in the region with an overarching approach to cater to the needs of the local population. These stations have also received praise from the academicians and professionals working in the sector. CR in India witnessed the initial struggle but later broadened the horizons and advanced with fruitful outcomes. Every year Government of India publishes a compendium of CRS in India; organizes a workshop in the capital where the awards are given for outstanding achievements. Moreover, GOI launched the “Supporting Community Radio Movement in India” to offer financial assistance to deserved CRSs in the country.

As of 2 September 2019, according to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting – there are 185 operational community radio stations in India. (mib.nic.in) The following table indicates the state-wise classification of CRSs in India –

Table 1: State-wise List of Community Radio Stations in India

| State | Number of CRS | State | Number of CRS |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 5 | Arunachal Pradesh | 1 |
| Assam | 3 | Bihar | 7 |
| Chandigarh | 2 | Chhattisgarh | 5 |
| Delhi | 4 | Gujarat | 4 |
| Haryana | 7 | Himachal Pradesh | 3 |
| Jammu and Kashmir | 1 | Jharkhand | 1 |
| Karnataka | 15 | Kerala | 7 |
| Madhya Pradesh | 14 | Maharashtra | 18 |
| Manipur | 1 | Odisha | 11 |
| Punjab | 5 | Rajasthan | 8 |
| Tamilnadu | 22 | Telangana | 4 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 23 | Uttarakhand | 9 |
| West Bengal | 4 | | |

Tabing (2002) defined community radio station as “one that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community” (p.9). The characteristics of community radio seem unrecognized until we compare them with the public service broadcasting and private radio sector. Community radio is endowed with an ability to engage a limited group of people bounded within a particular geographical region in the dialog process, which ultimately ends up shaping grassroots levels. In other words, CR engages in producing efficient and proactive programming to cater to the needs of a specific community. CR shares a democratic approach and works under the cultural context of the community. Milan declaration (1998) clearly states that community media can play an essential role in strengthening rights while sharing a responsibility to help sustain the diversity of world cultures. The democratic behavior nurtured by community radio facilitates participatory content production and communication. The sense of belonging developed in the community during the process accentuates the participation. A community learning program designed with a process-oriented dialog model ascertains the community

participation in program production (Dutta, 2015).

Regional development issues and challenges are complex and require co-operation of stakeholders, state government departments, and social groups. For this purpose, CR can intervene in the process and act as a facilitator or mediator. CR not only aware of local populations about the government schemes and essential livelihood information but catalyze sustainable development efforts and incubate milieu. A study by Pavarala and Malik (2007) points out that dominant media - especially the western metropolitan countries have discreetly managed to control the information flow - which in recent years has become one-directional and drastically excluded social actors from power. However, marginalized communities have granted access to the creative and cultural content in the form of community radio, which is impacting social change.

METHODOLOGY

This research is conducted with an intent to experience the ground reality of community radio stations operating within rural regions. It was essential with the time to understand the extent and degree of community radio's existence in the local people. The researcher attempted to observe the changes in society originated by CR and consequently evaluated the involvement of community in CR. Understanding the assorted nature of the study, the mixed-method approach seemed appropriate to present the data and information. Creswell (2003) defined a mixed-methods approach is one in which the researcher collects, analyzed, and integrates both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or multiple studies in a sustained program of inquiry. Creswell (2007) suggests three basic approaches for data collection. The present study adopted

a concurrent design, in which qualitative information and quantitative data are collected at the same time and given equal weight in analysis and interpretation (Wimmer and Dominick, 2014).

**Concurrent Model
QUAL + QUAN**

Two community radio stations in the state of Maharashtra are selected to fulfill the objectives. Unlike the present research with a broad survey and comprehensive perspective, selected CRSs have not been studied. Qualitative information was collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative data was gathered through the survey and content analysis. At Mann Deshi Taranga (MDT) CR, we conducted six in-depth interviews with the station manager, director of NGO, technical staff, and radio jockeys. One focus group discussion was held with frequent content contributors and listeners. Eight participators attended it. A similar pattern was followed at Yeralavani CR. Interviews and FGDs were recorded with duly permission of participants.

We decided to conduct an extensive survey with non-purposive sampling. However, there was uncertainty about the listenership. As none of the CR possessed exact figures of listeners, the snowball sampling method was applied. From both regions, a sample of four-hundred was collected. We followed the frequency of CR circularly and appointed six partakers to each region. We trained them and provided a detailed understanding of the questionnaire. The task was to fill fifty questionnaires from eight directions surrounding CRS. Though we pointed out four villages from each direction, we maintained flexibility in data collection considering the nature of the sampling method. We aimed to gather six-hundred samples; however, we received four-

hundred only. Even though the snowball sampling method was employed, we tried to maintain diversity in samples.

The questionnaire was prepared with forty close-ended questions. There were screener questions to classify listeners, non-listeners, participators, and non-participators. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: listening patterns, nature of participation, and perception towards the CR. During the survey and field visits, the researcher maintained a fieldnote (Robben and Sluka, 2012), which were later analyzed.

Profile of Selected Community Radio Stations

The following table indicates the primary information of selected community radio stations for study.

Table 2: Essential Information about the selected community radio

| Community Radio | Frequency | Launch Date | Parent NGO | Location | Broadcast Hours | Broadcast Timings | Language |
|---------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| Mann Deshi Taranga Vahini | 90.4 MHz | 17-11-2008 | Mann Deshi Foundation | Mhaswad, Maharashtra, India | 8 Hours | 7.00 am to 10.00 am, 12.30 to 2.30 pm, 6.00 pm to 9.00 pm | Hindi and Marathi |
| Yeralavani | 91.2 MHz | 31-07-2011 | Yerala Projects Society | Jalihal and Sangli, Maharashtra, India | 11 Hours 30 Minutes | 6.00 am to 12.00 pm And 4.00 pm to 9.30 pm | Marathi and Kannada |

Mann Deshi Taranga Vahini (MDT) is run by Mann Deshi Foundation, a well-known NGO in the region. The MDT CR was started with two aims: women empowerment and promoting Mann Deshi culture and folk art. The area surrounded by CR is considered as a drought-prone region of the state of Maharashtra. The prominent occupation of the region is agriculture. According to the official sources, over one lakh people listen to CR. However, the presented statement has no substantial data to support. CR concentrates on creating awareness about water, literacy, organic farming, health, and government schemes. The people have appreciated the innovative programs

on personal cleanness in adolescent girls and eco-friendly farming. With support from multinational NGO, MDT CR maintains an excellent financial condition that enables them to produce programs with expensive equipment and field recordings.

Yeralavani is run by Yerala Projects Society, NGO based in the city of Sangli. Yeralavani operates from two studios. One is located in the village of Jalihal, where are the transmission and antenna. The second studio is based in Sangli, where the content committee and radio jockeys work. Content is prominently recorded in Sangli studio and sent through the internet every week to the base studio. The empowerment and development of the local community is a primary motive of Yeralavani. The team of CR emphasizes on informing the community about government schemes, jobs, and educational opportunities. The project area Jalihal has situated 145 km from the headquarters in the southeastern corner of Maharashtra. The town lies in between the border of two states: Maharashtra and Karnataka. Due to the severe drought conditions over the past few decades, people are struggling with daily food. In addition to this, most of the people are illiterate, and the local dialect is a combination of Marathi and Kannada, which has made it challenging to communicate. Migration is a prominent impediment in the area. The labor of sugarcane cutting vanishes in the summer due to drought which causes migration of communities in the cities. To tackle this issue, communities need a fixed occupation in the region, and Yeralavani is working towards it.

Finding Community in Community Radio

Considering the Indian caste system and class hierarchy, which has been manifested in Indian society from hundreds of years while studying the

community radio broadcast from the perspective of the audience, the question about the nature and format of community in which community radio is operating hold our attention. These factors, particularly in South Asian cultures, has made a community as a complicated and unattainable entity (Tharoor, 2000). For instance, the broadcast of Mann Deshi Vahini covers the 15 km radius in which approximately over 2 lakh people live. These people belong to different races, castes, religions, and ethnicity. Similarly, they have preferences, needs, interests, and choices according to their cultural and social background. With this excessive number of people, it is possible that not everyone is a listener of community radio and even unaware of it. Bailur (2012) speaks about this issue,

“One may speak of ‘Muslim Community in Bangalore,’ but within this created, holistic ‘Muslim Community,’ there will be further networks dependant on neighbourhoods resided in, friendships made, school and university attended, and so on. In short, a geographical bounded community may exist but comprises of multifarious networks”. (p.93)

It implies that community radio operating within a region broadcasts to a heterogeneous audience or community. The region and geographical boundaries do not confirm the homogeneity of the community or audience. Thus, we stumbled upon the question again, what are the factors and ingredients that make a community? Who is the community in community radio? Bogardus (1952) specify “community is a special group with some degree of feeling and living in a given area.” Ogburn (1922) defines community as “Total organization of social life within a limited area.” Cohen (1985) considers communities as a symbolic construction, whereas Tajfel and Turner (1979) introduced social identity theory indicating the impact of the cognitive processes of a person on his or

her existence in a particular group or a society. Influenced by the writing of Ferdinand Tönnies, Campbell (1999) proposed the idealistic view of the community based on the natural evolution and historical developments of humanity. His idea of community is based on the notion of 'Feeling,' which he believes as a reason for establishing human ties. As he carefully observes the human past, he emphasizes human survival as a means of the habit of living together. In simple words, agriculture was one of the early 'Work Habit' that brought people together and formed a community or village.

Bailur (2012) suggested three theoretical elements about the nature of community in the light of community radio: Community is not a discreet entity, communities are dynamic, and communities are cognitive. A structure of a community can be complicated at times as multiple networks of relationships form diverse groupings and webs of small enterprises. What adds to this is the continually changing nature of these communities and their progressive developments, which creates the need for assessing the most valuable entity. The third element discusses communities as mental constructs. A community formed within a network has a disadvantage of ephemerality due to its subjectivity, which is dependent on the changing cognitive maps of an individual or a group. The above classification offered by Bailur (2012) provides an overview of the structure of communities while speaking about community radio.

Analyzing the above construct through the cases of selected community radio stations, some of the quotes by community members can be presented to develop an idea of heterogeneity of community in which these stations are operating. Moreover, this evidence develops needs and bond local community members shares with the radio. A frequent listener of MDT, Maruti Vanjari, owns a small

cycle repair shop in the town of Mhaswad and thank CR for changing his life. Consider his statement,

"I do not wish to remind me of my past, but I was a heavy drinker and had been engaged in gruesome fights and quarrels. I knew my behaviour was wrong, and I wanted a change. That time, I was approached by the staff of Mann Deshi CR. They provided me a radio set and suggested me to listen to programs regularly. The morning preaching broadcasted on the CR made a drastic change to my soul. First time in my life, I felt I could rely on someone. There is someone for me. I stopped all the wrongdoings and opened a puncture shop. I open and close my shop following morning and evening transmissions. I remain in the shop, stay away from temptations and listen to the radio. Without the radio, I would not have survived".

A farmer gave the following statement in the Mhaswad Taluka,

"I have a mango irrigated farm nearby. Last year, ploughing was good. However, my deal with local business people gone wrong, and I was worried. I had no idea what should I do with all the mangos. I went to Mann Deshi CR with my problem. They made an appeal from radio for me, and in no time, I was approached by several dealers asking for mangos. CR really looked out for me".

The above statement has given us an idea of diversity in the community members. The researcher maintained a field diary in which studio activities (March 2019) were registered. Based on the diary, the following table is formed to showcase the guest visits to MDT CR.

Guest visits to Mann Deshi Taranga Vahini Studio

| | |
|--|---|
| Rotary Club Members | A member of the Women Education Organization |
| Competitive Exam Qualified Student | Entrepreneurs |
| The principal of Government School | Employees of Leading IT Company |
| Argentina's Members from W20 Summit 2018 | Musical Group |
| School Students | Director of Private Bank |
| Editor of Leading Newspaper | A lecturer from Academy of Development Administration |
| Team of Cancer Specialist | National Level 10 Meter Pistol Shooter |
| District Governor | Chief Officer of Municipal Corporation and Assistant Police Inspector |

(Source: Primary Data)

It can be summarized from the above tables and anecdotes that broadcasting is not partial to a specific group of interests. People from diverse cultural and social backgrounds listen to the content. For instance, a radio listener may have a keen interest in music, especially folk songs, and at the same time, the listener is a government employee looking for more information on government schemes through the same channel. In this case, the listener maintains CR as a source of entertainment as well as professional and cognitive resource. The dispersal of the listener is related to the mental constructs by which the ephemeral communities are being introduced. These communities are not easy to recognize and served. Hence, in the next session, we will concentrate on the deconstruction of the concept of 'audience.' The above evidence helped to form three inferences: a) Communities are cohesive and holistic. b) As per the niche broadcasting of CR, geographical boundaries are responsible for forming communities. However, these boundaries are not responsible for the inner

fragmentation and segregation of community members. c) People have found commonalities in the fundamental issues troubling society, such as drought, water scarcity, female-foeticide despite their different social backgrounds, milieu, and personal attributes. In simple words, the efficacy of human development issues is forming communities in the light of community radio.

Identifying Audience in Local Community

Given the detailed discussion about recognizing communities to which community radio serves, it is equally necessary to identify the audience in these communities. Mere broadcast over specific geographical region does not guarantee the audience and their commitment. Identifying or in some circumstances, establishing an audience is a significant task in which community radio staff and volunteers must prevail. The audience is a term broadly used for describing reception processes of message sending (Watson and Hill, 2006). Perhaps, in the discourse of radio broadcasting, 'Listener' would be a more suitable term to define decoders. McQuail (1997) mentions this issue as,

"The problem surrounding the concept [of audience] stem mainly from the fact that a single and simple word is being applied to an increasingly diverse and complex reality."

In the context of community radio, which caters to a specific region, there is a narrowcasting of content; thus, the listeners [audience] of community radio are confined. These listeners share a strong idiosyncratic bond supported by inherent factors, as discussed earlier. The need and usability of content will always influence the choice of listeners. The degree of activity and passivity, as well as interactivity and interchangeability, change the engagement with a medium. The integral factors like social

togetherness and satisfaction experience the use of medium despite the content can increase the involvement of listeners (McQuail, 2010). While speculating on the concept of a mass audience, researchers debate the issue of fragmentation and segregation. However, the application of these concepts in the scenario of CR does not work expressively. The monopoly of a medium can be the reason here as the environment offers limited choice to people with bounded preferences. Besides this, community radio is chiefly dedicated to the rural communities where the population is not advanced in terms of media consumption, media literacy, and gratification.

Nevertheless, the reach and attributes of audio-visual and digital mediums can steal the listeners of CR. In the survey, the decreasing attraction and usability of community radio programs in youth are seen as compared to social media and the internet. To handle this issue, Ang (1991) suggested the transformative process like the content and its reception to the audiences. In other words, both McQuail (2010) and Ang (1991) agreed on the dispersion of the audience causing by moderation and gradualness (Watson and Hill, 2006).

As the researcher attempted to measure the listenership of selected community radio stations, he noticed the fact that since the formation of these community radio stations, there has not been a single extensive survey. This was one of the main reasons to employ a snowball sampling method for the survey. Nonetheless, these stations maintained a list of frequent listeners. However, the list should be updated regularly.

Before investigating the attributes of listeners, the case of Yeralavani exposed the researcher to an unprecedented fact. In the case of mass mediums or digital media handles, the primitive structure or

framework of an audience is already prepared, and media networks do not invest time to create the cultural and aesthetic features, background variables, and media literacy [ability to understand texts, genres, and meanings] in audiences. However, these institutions employ various marketing research techniques and tools to study the audience. Going back to our initial discussion, the interviews and focus group discussions revealed that the staff and volunteers of Yeralavani CR had to produce listeners in order to broadcast seamlessly. The following statement by the project manager of community radio in Yerala Projects, Anuradha Kunte elucidates the unyielding journey of Yeralavani CR:

“We did a pilot study before setting up a station. We found out that people were new to the radio medium as they did not have a reception to public and private service broadcasters in the region. Thus, they did not own radio sets or any other medium to listen to the transmission. So, we had to start from scratch. On starting community radio, these rural people were new to the concept and technology. We listed as many community members as we can and provided them with radio sets. Further, we organized a media literacy campaign in nearby towns and prepared a mobile van. Through this van, we taught people tuning radio stations, AM and FM settings, station tuning through mobile, and reception techniques. We also set up radio sets at public places such as petrol pumps, schools, colleges, and hospitals. Even after campaigning, we observed that the local community was unable to understand the format of radio programs. Therefore, we prepared promos of programs and specified its genre and usability to a specific community. Not only this, community members were not punctual when it came to the program timings. They used to miss the programs. To solve this issue, we put up hoardings explaining program timings in public

places of nearby villages. We continuously aired promos regarding radio timings. Gradually, community members understood the concept of community radio as we further increased their participation in all aspects of community radio”.

The usability of content is the solution to increase listenership. Unless community radio becomes the reason to solve the day-to-day life hurdles of the local community, people will not trust the medium. Apart from the methods mentioned above, Yeralavani CR focused on the live discussions and off-air telephone interaction with community members. Some interested and euthanized community members turned up as a source of information. Consequently, they were added to the local content creation committee. Staff initiated a practice in which selected local members were contacted and enquired about the ongoing local issues. Last year, the announcer of Yeralavani engaged a distressed farmer in a live phone-in interaction about the latest hailstorm in the region and its consequences. On the following day, the station received numerous phone calls from farmers thanking CR staff as they imagined they were the only ones affected by hailstorm with excessive damage to farms.

Similarly, a few years back, Yerala community witnessed a dengue fever epidemic. Radio jockeys of Yeralavani CR interacted with patients and alarmed other community members about the precautions and treatment. The efforts of CR not only stopped with this as they removed the accumulated water storage in the sensitive areas with the help of the sanitation department. A similar incident occurred early this year as few teenagers lost their lives due to methyl alcohol. Yeralavani station received a call from the affected village. A unique program was broadcasted immediately alarming people about the incident with an appeal to stop

drinking alcohol. With the help of local administration and police, the staff of CR went to the affected village and dismantled the wine bar. Based on these inferences, it is evident that the need and usability will produce listeners and keep them intact. There are numerous incidents researchers witnessed during the study, but only a few were considered for disclosure.

The conventional measurement techniques of listenership can be criticized in light of three significant factors: Extent, Duration, and Attention. The question ‘do you listen to community radio?’ can only provide an uncompleted and professed picture of listenership. Radio listenership numbers neither promise the complete attention of the listener nor confirms the duration of listening and consistency. Consider the following statement by station manager of Yeralavani community radio,

“After establishing a base of listeners in the region, we were happy. However, one incident changed our perception of the measurement of listenership completely. As we visited some local shops and community centres, we witnessed people chatting and discussing while radio was tuned in the background. It was there as a background score of a movie. No one was paying attention to it. On that day, we realized that we would never be able to calculate the listenership based on the attention paid by listeners”.

The following data has emerged through the survey conducted in the coverage area of MDT Vahini and Yeralavani community radio stations.

Table 3: Duration of Listening

| CRS | Duration of Listening | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | Less than One Hour | Two to Three Hours | Four to Five Hours | More than Five Hours |
| Mann Deshi Taranga Yahini | 12.01% | 47.73% | 15.91% | 24.35% |
| Yeralavani | 10.58% | 43.27% | 14.10% | 32.05% |

(N=308) (N=312)

Table 4: Frequency in Listening

| CRS | Frequency in Listening | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Everyday | Two to Four Times in a Week | Four to Six Times in a Week |
| Mann Deshi Taranga Yahini | 75.65% | 8.44% | 15.91% |
| Yeralavani | 75.96% | 11.54% | 12.50% |

(N=308) (N=312)

Table 5: Listener Engagement

| CRS | Listener Engagement | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | From Beginning | Six to four years | Three to four years | Since last year | Since last month |
| Mann Deshi Taranga Yahini | 24.03% | 12.34% | 13.31% | 26.62% | 23.70% |
| Yeralavani | 53.53% | 9.29% | 13.14% | 15.71% | 8.33% |

(N=308) (N=312)

The implications and statements entail that the attention of the listeners should be measured by the experimental method instead of filling questionnaires. The empirical data lead us in a way to believe that we would never measure the attention paid by listeners with a printed questionnaire.

Content is the King or Queen!

The production of thematic content and emphasis on the reception factors can ensure the probability of social change (Patil, 2019). The much-appreciated study of Pavarala and Malik (2007) focuses on the flagship programs of community radio stations in four different Indian states to measure the success and impact of community radio and NGOs. Many previous studies have found the sustainability of community radio as a critical and significant factor to study. If

we enquire further in the case of sustainability, we will find a strong correlation of content to every aspect of community radio. Community radio operated by a small-scale NGO or community is struggling financially across the world. Dagron (2001), in this case, mainly classified the sustainability of community radio in three areas: Social, Institutional, and Financial. According to him, financial and institutional sustainability are built upon the social sustainability of community radio, which is mainly comprised of two notions: Nature of Content and Community Participation in Content Production.

The primary and evident source of income for community radio is advertising. In India, government entities like DAVP (Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity) monitors the activity, and the result is satisfactory until now. As the law censor the content and restrict the duration of advertisements, the advertisements of local businesses and private vendors must be paired with appropriate and impactful programs in order to obtain positive feedback from listeners and provide financial benefits to clients. Hence, the content of these programs should be beneficial to the local community along with the notion of entertainment, intellectuality, and local culture. This discussion is supplemented by the following diagram, which shows the salience of the content and finance.



Figure 1: Relationship of Content and Financial Sustainability

This prompts us to argue that programs beneficial to the society can increase the listenership, and as the number of listeners increases, the private and government advertisers can be contacted for

advertisements with a positive attitude. As a result of this cycle, CR overcomes the obstacle of insufficient funds and maintains financial sustainability. Let us look at the key programs of MDT and Yeralavani.

Table 6: Programme Chart of Mann Deshi Taranga Yalini, Mhaswad

| Programme Name | Subject Covered | Duration | Frequency (per week) | Format of Show |
|----------------------------------|--|------------|----------------------|---|
| Malayache Shivar | Agriculture and Technology | 10 minutes | 5 | Community Interview/Panel Discussion/Vox-pop/Expert Talks |
| Gammal Jammat | Children | 10 minutes | 5 | Drama/Songs/Skit |
| Sakhi Sajani | Women | 10 minutes | 5 | Drama/Open Talk/Skit/Songs |
| Tarunai | Education and Career Options for Youth | 10 minutes | 5 | Drama/Songs/Discussions |
| Radio Doctor | Health and Fitness | 10 minutes | 4 | Expert Interview |
| Mayaltikade | Senior Citizens/Retired Persons | 20 minutes | 2 | Interview |

Table 7: Programme Chart of Yeralavani

| Programme Name | Subject Covered | Duration | Frequency (per week) | Format of Show |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Rang Prabhatiche | Research and Technology | 1 hour | 7 | Interview/RJ Talk |
| Ghev Bharari | Entertainment | 1.30 hour | 7 | Songs/Talk |
| Agrovan | Agriculture and Technology | 30 minutes | 7 | Expert Talk/ Panel Discussion |
| Yeraja Sangrahatun | Multi-disciplinary | 1 hour | 7 | Repeated Broadcast |
| Vividha Kannada | Cooking Recipes/Songs/Stories | 30 minutes | 5 | Interview/Talk Show |
| Yerala Vichar | Intellectual quotes and tips | 1 hour | 5 | RJ Talks |

Based on the previous discussion, as long as the theme of program caters to the need of local community and produce productive outcomes and brings change and progress in social reality, it will adhere to the concept of community radio. In this regard, let us consider the initiative taken by Yeralavani a few years back on climate change programming. The operational area of Yeralavani CRS witnessed unprecedented consequences of climate change, causing distress in the agriculture community. Issues like heat-waves, reduce access to food and changes in nutrition quality, unexpected massive

hailstorm, changes in pests and diseases, and ground-level ozone concentrations affected agriculture in the region. For this purpose, Yeralavani worked on the project of developing community radio programs on climate change for rural advancement. The staff of CR undergo a capacitation building program before the production. They were instructed to make four episodes in the local language and broadcast twice a day. The first episode differentiated between weather and climate. The second episode explained how climate change affects us all, and the third episode discussed the practical approach and adoption techniques. The last episode was based on avoiding mitigation. Experts were called for the guidance and the programmes broadcasted during April 2015. While investigating the results of this initiative on the grassroots level, the researcher met three farmers and recorded their statement. After listening to the programme, farmers put the net to protect farms from the unexpected ice falls. Also, one of the farmers expressed that adopting the water-saving technique of drip for sugarcane plot helped him a lot and generated a secure income. Another farmer confessed that the community of his village came together to implement the scheme of including sugarcane on a drip and not burning sugarcane waste. Some of the villagers came together for building borewell recharges.

The similar initiative taken by Yeralavani should be highlighted in the same context. To improve the food and sanitation habits of women and make the community aware of preparedness measures to ward off epidemics and communicable diseases, Yeralavani created a program called 'Jagar Tichya Arogyacha' (For 'Her' Health), a CR program series on science for women health and nutrition. The project was funded by the Department of science and technology (DST), Government of India, and broadcasted during October 2016-

December 2017. The staff of Yeralavani registered a thousand women from nearby villages and confirmed their participation in content production. During the first six months, magazine format used for designing programs. Later, they started full-fledged programming. There were six to seven programs aired during the project. Most of them presented in the following formats: debates, discussion, interview, tips, radio reports, skits, sports, and dramatization. For instance, the 'Khatti-Mithi' program used a skit of two characters. One newly married girl with innocent questions and other a wise woman with scientific answers. The program 'My Story' documented self-experiences of women regarding superstitions about women's health and nutrition. Most of the participated women in this show hide their names but got a platform to reach other women in the community. The program 'Health Book' provided with doctor's advice on women's health issues. These programs were supported by numerous creative spots, quizzes, phone-ins, and folk songs. Due to language diversity, programs aired in both Marathi and Kannada language. These programs covered the issues and topics such as Anaemia, Pregnancy Care, Infants Care, Menstrual Hygiene, Cancer, Women's Reproductive Health, Nutritional Intake Through Locally Available Ingredients, Infertility, Mental and Dental Health. The official report and FGD suggests that the output of this initiative was significant and productive. Numerous health camps were organized during the campaign and women were not only treated but educated in self-care. The project benefitted Yeralavani with trained women volunteers, key resource persons, and creative opinion leaders. Following a statement by project co-ordinator indicates the significant impact this project left on the lives of community members:

"Mrs. Sangita Mailapure conducted a baseline survey with us while she was pregnant. She had three daughters, and this chance was for a son due to her in-laws and husband's demand. However, this time, too, she gave birth to a daughter, and her husband demanded a divorce. His parents selected another bride for him. Meanwhile, 'Jagar Tichya Arogyacha' broadcasted on Yeralavani, which discussed the issue of determination of sex of a fetus. Made her family listen to the broadcast. CR volunteers helped her in the process. She was also supported by the doctor who featured on the radio talk. As a result, her husband and his mother changed their perception and accepted Sangita. Now she lives happily with her family".

Supplemented by this evidence, we could argue that content plays a crucial role in changing the pace of society. Recently, this year, Yeralavani CR received a prize in the national community awards-2019 organized by the ministry of information and broadcasting, GOI. The prize was for its local cultural programme under the category of local culture. The programme was focused on the promotion and popularization of Jen manufacturers. Jen is a mattress made up of sheep wool. The programme featured interviews and experiences of these local artisans. The show highlighted the issues of Jen workers as their traditional occupation, the merits of Jen mattresses, its utility and how it helped the local economy and livelihoods of this area. The output of this show was the engagement of local youth in this ancestral business. Most of them embraced the occupation as a source of income as the show removed the air of negativity and prejudices.

Participatory Content Production for Participatory Development

The core principles of community radio recommend community participation in content production, ownership,

management, and decision-making process. In other words, community radio should be owned, operated, and managed by community members only. However, very few CRSs in India follow this principle as non-to-profit organizations manage most of them. A comprehensive survey by Hoot (2016) indicates the increasing political influence in the CR sector in India and limited participation and access to community members in operational activities. To begin with the idea of participation, we need to understand the ways of involvement of community members in CR. Apart from the classification mentioned above, listenership should be considered as the first criterion of participation. Considering the previous research on participatory methods in CR (Lush and Uργοiti, 2012; Kazi, 2007; Berrigan, 1979; Patil, 2019; Tacchi, Watkins and Keerthirathne, 2011), it seems that despite the regional and cultural diversity, there is a common understanding of community broadcasting. The funding and internal policies may vary geographically, but the engagement of the community with radio is based on similar attributes and characteristics.

Coming back to the case of selected CRSs, a survey was conducted to assess the community participation in the activities mentioned above of a CR. Empirical data allowed the researcher to draw inferences and suggestions. The following tables indicate the preferences, habits, interests, and priorities of community members while making content for CRSs.

Table 8: Participation Type

| Participation Type | Mann Deshi Taranga Vahini | | Yeralavani | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Content Production | 109 | 98.20% | 98 | 92.45% |
| Ownership | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 |
| Decision-Making | 02 | 01.80% | 08 | 07.55% |
| Management | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00 |

(N=106) (N=111)

Table 9: Role of Community Members in Participation

| Role of Community Members in Participation | Mann Deshi Taranga Vahini | | Yeralavani | |
|--|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Reporter | 22 | 19.82% | 05 | 0.72% |
| Musician | 04 | 03.60% | 32 | 30.19% |
| Host/Presenter | 06 | 05.41% | 01 | 00.94% |
| Interviewee | 02 | 01.80% | 09 | 08.49% |
| Interviewer | 39 | 35.14% | 02 | 01.89% |
| Participant in Vox-Pop | 38 | 34.23% | 30 | 28.30% |
| Participant in Phone-in Programs | 00 | 00 | 27 | 25.47% |

(N=106) (N=111)

Table 10: Content-Type Produced by Community Members

| Content-Type | Mann Deshi Taranga Vahini | | Yeralavani | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Local News/ Information | 21 | 18.91% | 10 | 09.43% |
| Folk Songs/ Singing | 04 | 03.60% | 32 | 30.90% |
| Discussion | 11 | 09.90% | 11 | 10.38% |
| Comment/ Opinion | 40 | 36.03% | 30 | 28.30% |
| Request | 10 | 09.00% | 12 | 11.32% |
| Interview | 25 | 22.52% | 11 | 10.38% |

(N=106) (N=111)

Table 11: Multiple Question Regarding Participation Pattern of Community Members

| Questions | Mann Deshi Taranga Vahini | | Yeralavani | |
|---|---------------------------|--------|------------|--------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Handling of Equipment in Recording Studio | 3.60% | 96.04% | 10.38% | 89.62% |
| Participation in Field Activity (Outside of Studio) | 05.41% | 94.59% | 39.62% | 60.38% |
| Compensated After Contribution | 14.41% | 85.59% | 3.77% | 96.23% |
| Member of an Advisory Board | 00 | 100% | 2.83% | 97.17% |
| Member of a Decision-making Committee | 02 | 98.20% | 1.80% | 98.20% |
| Financial Support to CRS | 00 | 100% | 00 | 100% |
| Motivated Other Community Members | 75.68% | 24.32% | 83.02% | 16.98% |

(N=106) (N=111)

Above data helped the researcher to draw the following observations:

- 1) In both CRSs, participation level in ownership, management, and decision-making is low. Also, very few community members are on the advisory and management committee. This defines that the opinion of the community is not considered in the content making. CRSs

are owned by NGOs involving the community in only content production.

2) The majority of participation is remote or off-studio. This implies that community members find it difficult to reach CR studio every time and record the programs. Instead, approaching the community will ensure more participation. In this case, phone-in programs and field visits (Vox-pop) will work effectively.

3) There should be no language barrier to approaching the community and presenting their contribution. The local dialect will attract the community and make it feel more comfortable. Content produced by the community should not be edited in case of grammatical errors, tone of voice, and erroneous language. These are not errors but a local and cultural phenomenon.

4) CR should appoint a representative of community radio in the coverage area. Their job should be forming radio clubs in villages. These listener groups should communicate with CR for creative content ideas.

5) Conservation of local culture should be the first priority, and to do so, CR staff must mobilize folk singers in the community and record the vanishing rare folk music. The digital archival of these folk songs should be maintained.

It is equally important to debate on how participation can solve the development issues in a society and change the social reality. This argument can be criticized with few instances registered during the field survey and studio visits. The researcher kept a field notebook, which later on utilized to draw out the instances in an appropriate manner. The following tables define the methods and tactics adopted by CRSs to ensure participation and increase it gradually.

Table 12: Participation Increasing Initiatives of Mann Desh Taranga Kabini, Maharashtra

| Sr. No. | Participation Initiatives |
|---------|---|
| 1 | Capacity building programs at nearby colleges are taken regularly. College students are trained for communication skills, audience surveys, and voice modulation. Talented students are provided further assistance. |
| 2 | Hindi and Marathi songs are not broadcasted. Instead, community members are motivated to sing the same songs and these are aired on the show. |
| 3 | Concentrate on the retired individuals, homemakers, children, and disabled. They have time, interests, and heed to present and produce content. |
| 4 | Community meetings are held monthly. With the help of NGO, women volunteers are categorized as ASHA, and ANGANWADI workers who primarily work for children and women regarding health and nutrition. These volunteers help CR staff for content generation. |
| 5 | CR promises to broadcast a birthday song for the listeners. They need to send a message with name and details. |
| 6 | The practice of quizzes and competition-based programs with incentives, gifts, and coupons. |

Table 13: Participation Increasing Initiatives of Yeravani

| Sr. No. | Participation Initiatives |
|---------|--|
| 1 | There are two studios of Yeravani. One is located in the city of Sangli, and the other one is in Jalihal, which allow staff to manage resource from rural and urban region easily. |
| 2 | Training to school children from the 5 th standard to 10 th in making programs and editing. NGO runs the school, and these activities have extra credit to motivate more students. |
| 3 | Remote interviews are taken on the phone and broadcasted. Hence, there has been no geographical limitations when it comes to expert interviews. |
| 4 | Staff believes in letting community members handle the equipment in order to lessen the workload and sustain. |
| 5 | The team considers listening as first participation. |
| 6 | Each year anniversary and world radio day are celebrated to connect with the maximum number of people. |

The above initiatives could be helpful to other CR struggling for community involvement. To evaluate specific parameters, the researcher has drawn a hypothesis and tested it with non-parametric method. A chi-square test was applied to assess the relationship between certain variables. Screener questions in the survey helped the researcher to classify participants and non-participants. Based on the classification, the following tables define the hypothesis testing results.

Table 14: Relation Between Participants and Non-Participants in CR Programmes and Their Frequency of Listening (Mann Deshi Taranga)

| Frequency of Listening | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|--|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 20.477 ^a | 1 | .000 |
| a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.61. | | | |

Table 15: Relation Between Participants and Non-Participants in CR Programmes and Their Duration of Listening (Mann Deshi Taranga)

| Duration of Listening | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|--|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 22.647 ^a | 1 | .002 |
| a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.61. | | | |

Table 16: Relation Between Participants and Non-Participants in CR Programmes and Their Engagement with CRS (Mann Deshi Taranga)

| Engagement with CRS | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 14.678 ^a | 1 | .001 |
| a. 3 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.66. | | | |

Table 17: Relation Between Participants and Non-Participants in CR Programmes and Their Frequency of Listening (Yeralavani)

| Frequency of Listening | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 16.826 ^a | 1 | .047 |
| a. 6 cells (27.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .045. | | | |

Table 18: Relation Between Participants and Non-Participants in CR Programmes and Their Duration of Listening (Yeralavani)

| Duration of Listening | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|--|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 17.267 ^a | 1 | .000 |
| a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.61. | | | |

Table 18: Relation Between Participants and Non-Participants in CR Programmes and Their Duration of Listening (Yeralavani)

| Duration of Listening | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|--|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 17.267 ^a | 1 | .000 |
| a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.61. | | | |

Table 19: Relation Between Participants and Non-Participants in CR Programmes and Their Engagement with CRS (Yeralavani)

| Engagement with CRS | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|---|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson's Chi-square | 19.728 ^a | 1 | .000 |
| a. 3 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.46. | | | |

The following table indicates the results of the conducted hypothesis testing. The first three hypotheses indicate the Mann Deshi Taranga CRS and remaining indicates Yeralavani CRS.

Table 20: Hypothesis Testing Outcome

| Hypothesis Number | Hypothesis | Result | Conclusion |
|-------------------|--|--|--|
| H1 _a | There is no significant relationship between participants and non-participants frequency of listening to CRS | The null hypothesis is rejected, and Alternative is Accepted | There is no significant relationship between participants and non-participants frequency of listening to CRS |
| H1 _b | There is a significant relationship between participants and non-participants frequency of listening to CRS | | |
| H2 _a | There is no significant relationship between participants and non-participants duration of listening | The null hypothesis is accepted, and Alternative is Rejected | There is a significant relationship between participants and non-participants duration of listening |
| H2 _b | There is a significant relationship between participants and non-participants duration of listening | | |

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|--|
| H3 _a | There is no significant relationship between participants and non-participants engagement in CRS | The null hypothesis is accepted, and Alternative is rejected | There is a significant relationship between participants and non-participants engagement in CRS |
| H3 _b | There is a significant relationship between participants and non-participants engagement in CRS | | |
| H4 _a | There is no significant relationship between participants and non-participants frequency of listening to CRS | The null hypothesis is rejected, and Alternative is Accepted | There is no significant relationship between participants and non-participants frequency of listening to CRS |
| H4 _b | There is a significant relationship between participants and non-participants frequency of listening to CRS | | |
| H5 _a | There is no significant relationship between participants and non-participants duration of listening | The null hypothesis is accepted, and Alternative is Rejected | There is a significant relationship between participants and non-participants duration of listening |
| H5 _b | There is a significant relationship between participants and non-participants duration of listening | | |
| H6 _a | There is no significant relationship between participants and non-participants engagement in CRS | The null hypothesis is accepted, and Alternative is rejected | There is a significant relationship between participants and non-participants engagement in CRS |
| H6 _b | There is a significant relationship between participants and non-participants engagement in CRS | | |

Hypothesis testing results indicates that the community members who have participated in the programmes possess the tendency to listen to CR more than those who have not participated. Similarly, participated members build an emotional bond with CRS which confirms their engagement in future projects. On the other hand, we cannot confirm the listening frequency of members based on their acceptable participation. Because participants tend to listen to CR programmes only when the show they participated is on air. Both selected CRSs showed similar results. To assess the participation of community members, content analysis was performed. Consider

the following table indicating results of content analysis.

Table 17: Total Participation Time in CR Programming (Per Week) – Mann Deshi Taranga Vahini

| Week | Total Participation Duration (In Minutes) | Total Broadcasting Duration (In Minutes) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------|---|--|----------------|
| Week 1 (31-12-2018 to 6-1-2019) | 143.73 | 2,226 | 06.45% |
| Week 2 (7-1-2019 to 13-1-2019) | 101.44 | 2,226 | 04.44% |
| Week 3 (14-1-2019 to 20-1-2019) | 198.22 | 2,226 | 08.90% |
| Week 4 (21-1-2019 to 27-1-2019) | 141.5 | 2,226 | 06.35% |
| Week 5 (28-1-2019 to 3-2-2019) | 91.33 | 2,226 | 04.10% |
| All Weeks Total | 643.33 | 11,130 | 05.78% |

Table 18: Total Participation Time in CR Programming (Per Week) – Yeralayani

| Week | Total Participation Duration (In Minutes) | Total Broadcasting Duration (In Minutes) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------|---|--|----------------|
| Week 1 (31-12-2018 to 6-1-2019) | 179.70 | 2,520 | 07.13% |
| Week 2 (7-1-2019 to 13-1-2019) | 102.30 | 2,520 | 04.05% |
| Week 3 (14-1-2019 to 20-1-2019) | 64.14 | 2,520 | 02.54% |
| Week 4 (21-1-2019 to 27-1-2019) | 67.13 | 2,520 | 02.66% |
| Week 5 (28-1-2019 to 3-2-2019) | 40.4 | 2,520 | 01.60% |
| All Weeks | 453.67 | 12,600 | 03.60% |

The month of January 2019 was selected for content analysis. The researcher and his team were provided with weekly programmes which had been broadcasted in that month along with cue sheets, spot information, and a separate folder of advertisements. The idea was to calculate the duration of programmes in which community members have participated. For the purpose, coding sheets, operational definitions, and coders were assigned. The team analyzed programmes and marked the duration, programme type, and participation type. It is evident from the content analysis is that the actual participation level is low, despite the results of the survey.

Patronage of NGOs: Limitations and Ramifications

According to the guidelines for the community radio sector designed by the Government of India, Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Educational Institutes, and NGOs can only apply for a license. CR operated by KVKs and educational institutes has lesser financial trouble than the CRSs operated by NGOs. There is no harm in managing and operating community radio by the non-governmental organization as long as they are not politically influenced. Often, NGO operated CR lacks the community presence in the ownership, management, and decision making. The concern in this discourse is about the patronage of a multinational NGO to the CR. There is always an ongoing debate about the financial independence and resource dependency of community radio run by multinational NGOs. More specifically, community radio operated by financially secure NGOs, gradually become dependent on the NGO for commercial purposes, and in some cases, it also utilizes the connections and resources through the context of NGO. In this way, CR fails to stand out as an independent medium of communication and a separate organizational entity.

Seeking patronage of multinational NGOs for the welfare of the local community is not dormant. However, the practice builds non-sustenance attributes in the staff of CR and constraint their efforts, which is not recommended. If somehow the financial flow from NGO gets delayed or erupted, CR may fail to broadcast immediately. To make community radio a self-sustaining station which is one of the primary goals of CR and has been included in the principles and guidelines of CR, even Ministry of Information and Broadcasting each year award the sustainability prize based on the certain criterions, it needs to develop techniques to earn revenues rather than fundraising programs and donations. Innovations in on-air and off-air activities

are capable of the financial requirements of a CR. Selected CRSs are operated by multinational NGOs. MDT Vahini is run by Mann Deshi NGO with a tagline of 'Empowering Women, Transforming Lives,' which prominently works for the rural women in the region, justifying the eighty percent women-centric programmes. Yerala Projects Society operates Yeralavani; another multinational NGO in the region primarily works for the welfare of people situated around the Yerala river.

Mann Deshi NGO is well recognized and famous in the region for its four flagship programs: Mann Deshi Bank, Mann Deshi Business School, Mann Deshi Community Radio, and Mann Deshi Chamber of Commerce. Mann Deshi NGO is dedicated to the economic empowerment of rural women. It was founded in 1996 in the most drought-prone region of Maharashtra. The bank established by NGO provided women with easy access to credit and necessary support to become entrepreneurs. With a thousand success stories, Mann Deshi has changed the region through the holistic approach towards nurturing entrepreneurs.

On the other hand, Yerala Projects Society claims to help people to help themselves. Through the self-sustained programs, YPS provides an excellent livelihood to the deprived. NGO has completed successful projects like watershed development, housing, comprehensive HIV/AIDS program, agriculture projects (seedling service, demonstration, nursery, marketing of agro produce), preventive health care program, and many more. The NGO has several branches in the rural areas of the Sangli district of Maharashtra.

The financial dependence of CR can cause dependence on content also. It may not be deliberately carried out every time, but the activities taken by NGOs often portrayed as the CR initiatives. Similarly, CR plays the role of a media partner in the

programs organized by NGOs. For instance, a voting awareness campaign was held during the Lok Sabha elections 2019, and workshops were conducted, followed by rallies, community meetings, and Vox-pop. These activities were carried out by CR staff. However, MDT CR has low revenue generation since it does not accept advertisements by private clients and does not believe in the subscription model. In such a situation, even the initiatives taken by CR are funded by NGO. According to the law, it is mandatory for CR to open and operate a separate bank account with a minimum balance. Without fulfilling this rule, the license is not issued to the organization. Nonetheless, CR seems to manage to fund by the parent organization. Consequently, it becomes complicated to differentiate between the real organizer of these activities.

Let us address this argument with two remarkable instances. Due to the terrifying drought and laxity of government, Mann Deshi NGO organized a cattle camp or fodder camp near Mhaswad. The purpose of this camp was to stop the deaths of cattle and provide them with fodder and water. Only villages fall under Satara district were allowed in the camp, but as the drought had crippled the hope of the whole state, the outsiders were also welcomed later, and arrangements were made. Taking this opportunity, volunteers and fellows working for CR produced numerous programs based on the various themes. They regularly visited fodder camps and interviewed people, recorded their opinions, organized programs like voting awareness and Haldi-Kumkum. The researcher also spent two days in the camp interviewing community. The camp was established in February and lasted until the end of August. Talking about the content generated on this camp, station manager Shivaji Yadav said,

“The camp was crowded with women over 50s and 60s. We grabbed this opportunity to record rare folk songs as most of the women had a collection of unfamiliar folk songs such as Gajnrutya, Abhanga, Gaulan, and Bharud. In addition to this, most of these women were a victim of child marriage. We asked them to share their experiences. On recording a good collection, we made an impactable thematic program.”

It is no doubt that camp was an infinite source of stories and anecdotes. The six months long cattle camp produced more recordings than any other activity. As we go along with the work of NGO, it was observed that MDT CR was used as a promotional tool or mouthpiece. Every year in January, NGO organizes the ‘Mann Deshi Festival’ in Mumbai to celebrate the culture and traditions of the region, which is known as ‘Mann Desh.’ This festival promotes handicrafts, traditional comestible, and ethnic wear along with folk dance and singing performances. The staff, participants, volunteers of MDT CR attend this festival every year. Later, they broadcast programmes recorded during the festival. It has become extremely complicated to differentiate between NGO and CR activities.

Incepting Sustainable Behavior in Community – The Process of Establishing Need

Although the sustainability of CR is a challenging task, it can be maintained and achieved before planning and setting up a community radio station. CR established with the strategic plans and broadcasting agenda, pilot study, audience survey, location survey, and technical support would not face sustainability issues in the future. The inferences and results of previous studies (Arora, Ramakrishnan, Fernandez, 2015; Hussain and Tongia, 2007; Faisal and Alhassan, 2017) about the CR sustainability and the ongoing unpublished research of researchers

suggest that the lack of strategic planning and lack of research in the beginning stages of setting up creates financial and production hurdles for CR. Although, after setting up a station, there are numerous innovative factors exist to sustain CRS successfully. Consider the following table for techniques and ways of adopting sustainability:

Methods and Techniques for CR Sustainability

| |
|--|
| Emphasize on agriculture broadcasting |
| Instead of paying a royalty to broadcast songs, record the same songs by community |
| Internships and Fellowships to college students |
| Tie-ups with colleges and universities |
| Recording, broadcasting, and preservation of various folk performances |
| Yearly festivals or events to gather community and increase listenership |
| Emphasize on getting local advertisements and sponsorship to help the local economy |
| CR studio can be rented out to the third party for recording purposes. |
| Maximum community members on management and decision-making committee |
| Content production in local language |
| Include maximum volunteers |
| Content sharing and collaboration with other CRS in the region |
| Formation of work ethics and human resource management |
| Inspire volunteers to work for wellness of the community, not with commercial purposes |

In the sense that these factors sustain the community radio, another observation or ideology should be considered. It can be summarized from the previous studies that not only community radio needs the attention and participation of the community, but community members also require the existence of a thriving community radio station to lead a healthy lifestyle. They may not see the need explicitly, but CR is transforming their lives in various ways. In other words, the need and exigency are from both ends; however, communities in most of the regions do not realize this fact.

Active community engagement practices, accountable and transparent attitude with the impactable and productive content or broadcasting (Arora, Ramakrishnan, Fernandez, 2015) could influence community members intention to adopt sustainable behavior (Shahzadal and Hassan, 2019) which will promote social change, development and marginalized communities will have their perception converted into collective perceptions about the local reality (Fraser and Estranda, 2002). Interestingly, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions pointed out the numerous anecdotes portraying the relation of community with community radio. These instances reinforced the argument about realizing the feeling of a need for community radio in local community members and building solidarity and harmony in the community.

MDT CR is significantly recognized for the broadcasting and conserving folk songs. There are five to six frequent women contributors who write the lyrics of folk songs and present them in the prescribed format. These women do not get paid for the presenting talent, nor they are provided with traveling allowance as all of them reside far from the studio. Nevertheless, they visit the studio once a week. One of the women contributors, Kerabai Sargar, who has gained celebrity

status in the region and has become a star RJ of the CR, feels blessed and motivated to have a medium to present her talent while conserving the dying art form. Likewise, Bhajani Mandals (Folk Song Performer Groups) in the region feel the same as they travel far to record songs. When asked about this motivation to the staff to find out whether they have efforts behind this, the station manager denied any contribution. According to him, these performers have an aesthesis about the art and community. They care and worship their talent and wish to make it available for future generations. Kerabai received adequate attention from news media and the community. She received an award from legendary radio jockey Ameen Sayani last year and performed outside of India. When asked about fame and glamor, Kerabai expressed that she does not want to be part of these activities and high-rated social parties in Mumbai and outside country. She only wants to sing folk songs of her ancestors.

Consider another example of Satish Shah, a retired person and small shop owner in the Mhaswad, who produce, write, and present a quiz programme on MDT CR, called Prashna Amuche, Uttar Tumche' (Our Questions, Your Answers) which is popular in the region and only sponsored programme of CR. As a retired person, Shah can invest a sufficient amount of time in preparing for the show. He told us that the programme had become a part of his life. The interactions he had with participants during the show and the emotional relationship with CR staff brings happiness in his life. As long as he can produce the programme, he will present an entertaining community.

Yeralavani CR started broadcasting with a blind radio jockey, Satish Nawale, who trained himself with a spoken interface and digital braille system. Nawale tried to work in public service broadcasting, but his disability failed him to achieve the designation. However,

community radio helped him to make his dream come true. Community radio became life support for Nawale, leading him to support his family and live a respectable life.

At the moment, due to some ethical issues, MDT Vahini does not broadcast advertisements and earn revenue through advertising. Instead, the station manager has appointed a rickshaw driver with an audio system and speaker installed in the vehicle. Advertisements are recorded and created in the studio and circulated through a rickshaw in the Mhaswad town. This rickshaw driver shares an affective bond with CR staff. Whenever CR plans field visits, Ashok Pansande, rickshaw driver, assist without money. This is an example of social relations and emotional attachment. In this case, both parties need each other to maintain the status quo. Anuradha Kunte, project manager at Yeralavani CR, speaks about linkages and indicators of audience research and response,

“We connect community members with each other. We just become a mediator in the process. We help them to reach their destination. For instance, a group of women in Yerala region is known for spraying disinfectant on grapes. We broadcast their contact number for the needful. Same way, many farmers lend their tractors from time to time. We aired mobile numbers of such farmers. We also make announcements regarding help or opportunities in hospitals, colleges, skill centres, health camps, viz. Community do not call us but contact the respective agency. We get to know from the benefitted. We also started a morning show called ‘Employment Times,’ where we sort out the essential jobs in the region from a local newspaper and broadcast. That way, job seekers receive assessed information. The show is popular in the youth”.

A few years back, Yeralavani conducted a live broadcast of ‘Sinchan Parishad’ (local community meeting on water shortage issue). Hundreds of people listened to the decision taken in the meeting through the CR. Such initiatives failed due to some problems and did not occur again. Perhaps, the lack of enthusiasm in the community was responsible for this failure. This implies that the extra efforts of volunteers and staff also matters while discussing incepting sustainable behaviour in the community members.

Last month, Mann Deshi NGO organized an awareness and educational campaign about ‘menstruation’ for teenage girls. CR staff was assigned the role of mediator between the resource person and audience. During the campaign, doctor Madhuri Shah felt that girls are not comfortable talking to her in a public and they are holding their questions back. She conveyed this to the station manager. After giving it much thought, Shivaji Yadav asked girls to write their questions on a piece of paper. Instead of answering these questions face-to-face, he asked the doctor to video record these queries so it can be played in every school and college onwards as there is the probability of shyness and fear. This shows the extra efforts and dedication of the CR staff at work.

CONCLUSION

Community Radio should be owned and operated by the community only. It is an effective tool for participatory communication and advocacy. The principles of a CRS adhere to the comprehensive community ownership which ensures the empowerment and grassroots development. The government should modify the legal framework to strictly allocating a license to communities only. There are very few CRSs in India operated by the community itself. Apart

from content production, MDT and Yeralavani CR have low community participation in ownership, management, and decision making. When the community invests money in the CR, the community is answerable for the expenditure and effectiveness. On the contrary, NGOs are not directly answerable to the community since their revenue model is not based on the subscriptions.

The key programmes and participatory content production methods of MDT and Yeralavani CR proposes two categories of content making: Awareness and Implementation. The content analysis supported this classification by revealing that most of the programs are pointed towards educating, informing, and alarming people about particular concerns in society. Apart from that, very few efforts are being taken to work on the grassroots, changing the status quo, and transforming social reality. Even the impact of awareness campaigns and informative programmes is not measured efficiently which reflects the flawed model of feedback. Meanwhile, the researcher cannot dismiss the presence of implementation programmes which are rare, inconsistent, irregular, and dependent on funds and human resource. The work of volunteers, radio jockeys, and staff members should not be restricted to the only studio and administration. To assess the impact of programmes and to change reality, they need to roam around the region and engage in physical activities. The role of community radio is not limited to awareness but ensuring the impact of awareness and producing promising socio-economic outcomes, which helps to develop the society and achieve progress.

Participation could increase listenership. The survey indicated that those who have participated in the content production seemed to listen to broadcasting regularly. The key to operating a successful community radio is

making community dependent on the CR. In other words, the community must realize the potential of this medium as a tool of social change and a platform to communicate its existence. In the case of CR operated by NGOs, unless the staff weave emotional attachment with the community and establish rapport, the participation rate would not increase.

It is evident from the results and information that community radio owned and operated by community will lead to a transformative social change and greater empowerment.

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