

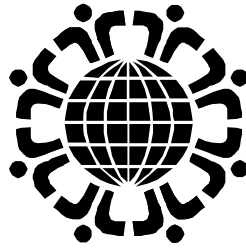
SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

COMMUNITY RADIO AS AN INSTRUMENT OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: AN EVALUATIVE STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RADIO BANASTHALI

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Doctor of Philosophy

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SUMMARY OF THE THESIS

1. Introduction:

India is a country with utmost diversities in terms of Geographical distributions, Culture, Caste, religion, Language and Beliefs. Looking to the diversities of the country, it is a challenge to fulfil the communication needs of the people through a single and conventional system.

Radio Broadcasting in it's more than 80 years of journey in India has passed through many cycles of growth. It has been used for information, education and then wholesome entertainment. Initially, it carried the character of public broadcasting and later turned to commercial broadcasting. In recent times, it is taking shape to narrowcasting also.

Although studies have been conducted on Community Radio, these are generally limited to analyse the success rate of generation of primary level of awareness in narrowcast area. When these outcomes are compared with the outcomes of broadcast area, hardly any difference is seen.

This study aims to discuss the basic shift from broadcasting to narrowcasting system, it's dimensions, Government policies viz-a-viz to analyse the various impacts and outcomes in the narrowcasting area's target community to produce an overall picture of this comparatively new and non-conventional medium.

2. Review of Literature :-

It would be pertinent to present an overview of the studies already done by scholars through books and research articles. There has been a great paucity research studies on the role of community radio. Major observations came into light through research articles. Here is one of the oldest studies on the subject undertaken for the current study done by

Robert Mc leish (2005) highlights the characteristics of radio as a mass medium in his book. He says that this is a require medium which would for millions and for an individual simultaneously. He gives an account of technological requirements to set up a radio studio. Radio programmes formats have also been discussed by him. The book actually enlightened the researcher and helped in developing understanding of radio medium. Researcher could understand how the medium can serve rural audience excellently and proved to be a medium which can provide outstanding plate form for interactive programming.

Hans J. Kleinsteuber(2006) states that the basic reason is the strong tradition that makes it very difficult for the political elite to think of radio media being controlled by ordinary citizens - or even worse: movements on the left, rebellious students or migrants.

Murthy(2006) in his book analyses in 'Development Journalism: What Next-An Agenda for the Press' that the purpose of development journalism is to educate and inform the citizen about the developmental issues and thereby make him participate in the national development. Since majority of the population in the third world countries are illiterate, the newspapers as public educator can take up the issues that are of immediate concern to the citizens.

Pavarala and Malik(2007) discuss about the initial struggle which was over with the supreme court decision in 1995 to declare airwaves public property. They talk about the process of de-monopolization of airwaves. The campaign for community radio in India and community radio guidelines began in 2006. The authors describe the civil society initiatives in rural India, including Namma Dhwani (our voice) in 2001 at Boodikote village in the Kolar district of Karnataka, Ujjas radio at Kutch, Gujrat and Henva Vaani and Mandakini ki Awaaz set up in the state of Uttarakhand.

Nitya Jacob(2007) in her article opines that being a simple and cheap means of communication, community radio empowers communities. He stresses on the participatory programming and tries to establish community radio as a medium for the marginalized.

According to **Muralidharan(2007)** community broadcasting is an extremely useful device in providing voice to the local community in managing their affairs and participating in the overall development process.

Maraa(2008) states in his article that in the corrupt, Naxalite and drought-prone areas of Palamau, Jharkhand, an NGO set up a community radio station, Vikalp, the first one to go on air in the state. **Maraa** opines in his article that Vikalp is one of the most promising community radio stations in India.

A study done by **Dr P Govindaraju, M Kalavathy(2008)** on the **Holy Cross Community Radio, Trichy, Tamil Nadu, found** that most of the respondents were of the opinion that the Holy Cross Community Radio initiative has fostered local participation and awareness generation.

Birowo(2009) opines that in chaotic and uncertain situations related to natural disaster, information is important for people to understand their recent situation. His paper describes the role of community radio in its community, especially before, during, and after natural disaster in Indonesia.

Dr. K. John Babu (2010) opines that the radio lessons enhance the knowledge of the students and are also useful to the teachers. He suggests that the use of radio programmes in classrooms may not only help the teachers in multi-grade teaching to use supplementary devices for their better professional growth but

also help the students to enrich the mental horizon in respect of cognitive growth and provide an adequate inspiration.

Dr. Babu recommends that issues other than primary education may be taken up for further research. Hence, the proposed research aims to evaluate other developmental issues like health, agricultural practices and sanitation and proposed study is confined to the area covered by one community radio station.

Babu's study is an experimental study whereas the proposed study aims to evaluate a community radio working for more than five years for the target community.

3. Justification:

Community Radio has been accepted now as a major tool for decentralization of Mass Media in India and whole of the world. It is a medium for the people, by the people and of the people. Community Radio can be used as a tool to break monopolies in the field of broadcasting and converting the phenomenon of broadcasting into narrowcasting.

It would be useful to know that whether community radio is successful as an instrument of narrowcasting?

Community radio is a type of radio service that caters to the interests of a certain area, broadcasting content that is popular to a local audience but which may often be overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters.

It has been more than eight years since community radio entered in Rajasthan. It was launched at two different places in the year 2005 as a new initiative. . In the initial phases of establishment, Banasthali and FM 7 Community Radio were available on 90.4 MHz frequency and the

channel had three hours of transmission (including repeat transmission) a day which has now been extended to 12 hours.. They covered around ten kilometers of their respective transmission centres. The target audience of Banasthali community radio is the rural population of 50 villages around Banasthali Vidyapith. Village youth volunteers (VYV) from Niwai block have been associated with community radio project since its inception. Around 100 VYVs were given training in how to assess community needs for audience preferences on radio programmes. To analyze how community radio is being used (and hailed) as a medium for articulating more people-centric development needs and establishing decentralized public spaces for dialogue and collaborative action in Rajasthan and How it is related to the rest of the world. This study has been done to present a basis for evaluating community radio initiatives by sketching approaches for engaging with the stakeholders in this sphere and through the responses of collaborators and participants in these projects.

4. Objectives :-

- 1) To identify the information needs of the area taken under study.
- 2) To analyse the role of Community Radio in the area.
- 3) To assess the role of Community Radio to give voice to underprivileged section of society and ensuring right of freedom of expression for last man of our society.
- 4) To study the financial sustainability of Community Radio.
- 5) To compare the awareness level of the area of almost same demographic profile without having any community radio with the area having community radio.
- 6) To review the accessibility of the radio station among the target audience.

5. Description of the Research Work:-

5.1) Identifying the Research Problem : India is growing at a very fast pace. Development is taking place in each and every sphere of life. A change can be noticed in every walk of life as far as urban and privileged population is concerned. Growth rate in the field of media also corresponds with the facts above mentioned. The only concern among all good news is Whether our communication system is sufficient to cater information needs of each and every section of the society. When a question regarding communication policy system comes in light, whole debate revolve around a false dichotomy between state owned public broadcasting system and market oriented profit governed private media. Eventually both the systems have their own limitations to serve the public interests. Whole programming has been designed centrally at one centre for such a country. A structural reform of existing media system is required in the given circumstances. Here, Community Media represent a “third way”. Community media is grassroots or locally oriented media access initiative, predicated on a profound sense of dissatisfaction with mainstream media form and content. Community media is based on the principles of free expression and participation of people. Community media is dedicated to building community relations and promoting community harmony. Community media is often termed as ‘alternative media’. Scholar and activist Dorothy Kidd(1999,p.113-119) comes closest to explaining a relationship between alternative and community media which captures the dynamics of locally oriented, participatory media organisations.

Community radio is an important tool of community media which can play a significant role in narrowing down the distance between the audience and the

broadcaster. However, radio has been a medium which is taken for granted and considered a lesser subject to study. Radio as a medium is continuously playing a significant role not only in dissemination of information but also in the propagation of culture and nation building, providing various minorities and remote and disenfranchised areas with a low-cost public domain. However, the field of community radio and media activism is relatively unexplored.

In an important judgement of Supreme Court of India declared airwaves or frequencies as a public property and a new medium in the form of 'Community radio' could make its beginning in India. First community radio station started on February 2, 2004 in Chennai with a name Anna FM. Presently more than 96 Community Radio stations are working in all over the country. The present study focuses on evaluation of the role of community radio in its target area. Apno radio Banasthali has been selected for the study being the first CRS in Rajasthan and completed eight years of its working in rural Rajasthan.

The present study focuses on the role and functioning of Community Radio at the community level. It is an attempt, therefore, to understand how the rural listener, as part of the community, perceives different programmes presented by their own community members in his/her own socio-cultural milieu. This is certainly a kind of feedback study, but with a difference. The difference being that a functioning of community radio provides a participatory platform to the people to express themselves and find the empowerment on their own. This is a feedback of their own performance. This aspect of the study makes it sociological as well as policy-oriented research as it is very important to make a shift in the communication policy of the nation, to narrowcasting from broadcasting; whether we can shift from profit oriented, media monopolies to a participatory, non-profit making, people oriented media. Keeping in view the objectives of this study it has been attempted to comprehend the position of

community radio as a social institution vis-à-vis the usual people and their problems. It is further envisaged to understand the potentialities and problems of the rural masses who constitute more than 78 per cent of the Indian population.

5.2) Methodology adopted for the research study: Six villages under the study area have been taken for data collection using interview schedule as a major tool. Three villages- Banasthali, Sunara and Palai are under the coverage of radio Banasthali whereas the other three Jamdoli, Khidgi and Sindara are out of reach of radio Banasthali. A comparative study of listeners of these villages has been conducted. The total population of the six villages is the universe for the present study. Total sample of 500 individuals has been taken for the current study. 250 people were chosen from the area covered by the CRS and the same number of people was chosen from the non coverage area for the study on random sampling basis.

Research Hypothesis

Certain research hypothesis have been adopted to give the study a direction and momentum. Following are the major hypothesis formulated for the study:

- 1) Community Radio can play a vital role in the development of a state like Rajasthan.
- 2) Community Radio can be part of developmental schemes of the government.
- 3) Community itself can take up the responsibility of running its own radio station in terms of production of programmes and financial viability.

- 4) Villages and communities having community radio are aware about health, sanitation and agricultural issues in comparison to other ones.

Pretesting the Schedule

Before finalizing the interview schedule it was pretested in a couple of selected villages. The schedule was reconstructed on the basis of the responses. The pretesting had helped the researcher in clarifying certain fundamentals of participation and respondents behavior. While selecting the respondents the researcher adopted the random sampling technique of data collection. However, for contacting the respondents for the 250 schedules in each section of the sample, i.e. coverage and non-coverage area, care was taken to select at random 75-80 individuals from each village. It may be mentioned in this context that a discrepancy in the form of more weightage for the female respondents has crept into the data. The proportion between male and female respondents works out to 38.8% and 61.2% in coverage area and 35.2% and 64.8% in non-coverage area respectively. This imbalance may be justified considering the less number of males listening to and participating in the community radio programmes. Secondly, in the field situation it was not easy for the researcher to collect the required information from the male respondents. As the researcher is urban female, male respondents in rural areas were not comfortable in answering questions. The age of the respondents ranged between 16 and 60 years.

Tools of Study

Interview Schedule

The researcher used one schedule with three different sections for data collection. After considerable efforts an interview schedule was constructed. The first section of schedule contained structured questions. This initial section gathered information pertaining to the profile of the villagers. Questions on the

literacy level, occupation, financial status, water sources, usage of self-help group etc. were included in section one.

The second section dealt with the information regarding exposure of villagers to various media. This section contained both quantitative as well as qualitative information. The section in general was aimed at collecting data on specific aspects like media participation. This section tried to perceive different levels of media usage in community radio coverage and non coverage areas. Questions about the awareness of villagers regarding working and programming of the community radio were included.

The third section of the questionnaire included structured, semi structured and open-ended questions. The questions designed to evaluate the level of awareness regarding healthcare, common diseases, their causes and remedies, rural development schemes, villagers' rights and willingness to participate in their own development.

248 schedules were administered from the coverage area whereas 247 from the non coverage area. For the convenience of calculation, the total of the sample is considered to be 250.

In-depth Interviews and Observations

A few in-depth interviews were also conducted among the respondents with a view to analyze their specific communication needs and information seeking behavior. Participating observation was also a part of data collection. This data mostly qualitative was guided with the help of an unstructured open-ended interview guide. In-depth interviews and observations were found to be quite useful in understanding peoples' perceptions like patterns, aspirations and communication needs with reference to the programming of Apno Radio Banasthali.

As part of the method of observation adopted by the researcher, a participant helped her to comprehend the peoples' reaction, comments and facial expressions while answering the questions and listening to the community radio.

Analysis of Data

After completion of the entire field work, the schedules were arranged and the responses were coded for easy handling of data. A master table was constructed systematically entering the recorded data, using Microsoft Excel as a computer software tool. The schedules were processed for frequency distribution of the various parameters.

A selected number of independent and dependent variables were cross-tabulated with a view to test various research hypotheses mentioned in this chapter. The entire data processing has been done using Microsoft Excel and MS-Word data processing and computing software. The data analysis has been shown using various tables and graphs.

Limitations of the study

- 1) Limitation of time, space and manpower are the most restrictive aspects in an empirical study and this study have limitations due to these handicaps.
- 2) The answers of the respondents as such have to be taken as true.
- 3) The respondents were quiet on certain issues and as such certain inferences had to be drawn on the basis of observation of the overt behaviour of the respondents which may include gestures and facial expressions.
- 4) The conclusions drawn may not be universal.

5.3) Another research on participatory communication: Brenda Dervin and Robert Huesca, after examining “a rich and diverse body of theoretical and empirical research” in their meta-analysis, opines that participatory communication should be understood as being at the heart of what it means to be human, to have an identity, and to possess a sense of belonging vis-à-vis humanity, nature and God (Dervin and Huesca 1976, p.46). They perceive participation as centre of successful and positive development.

Participatory communication flourishes on input from people from different areas of life and of every socio-economic sphere. This change of thought is a shift of understanding not only for studying communication but for developing an idea of development from the point of view of local people on their own terms, looking at their culture, and issues that they consider relevant.

For application of the participatory approach, the primary concern is the language which is used to describe the cultures and people of the country. Participatory communication stresses the basic right of all people to be heard, to speak for themselves and not be represented or reworded by anyone else. This open approach towards communication attempts to facilitate faith and aims at creating the participation of the local populations in the country in their own development. This approach towards communication requires parties from outside to act as facilitators and co-collaborators. Theoretically, active listening and faith are required from both sides to make the model of participatory communication successful.

Several countries in the world are suffering with problems like diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS, hunger, illiteracy, poor family planning, domestic violence, poverty etc. To fight these problems many countries have started using various media to educate their population. Media have been used to generate awareness about their conduct in a way to bring about changes to improve the society. This concept of using mass media to push the individuals for social changes for improvement is called entertainment–education (edutainment).

“Entertainment–education is the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and to educate, in order to raise an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, and change overt behaviour. Entertainment–education seeks to capitalise popular media to explain individuals the ways to live safer, healthier and thus happier lives. (Singhal and Rogers 1999, p. 12).

5.4) Discussion on the theory and concepts of community media :

Community media operate in sharp contrast to public and private broadcasting patterns. For example, in terms of financing, community media rely on donations, underwriting and limited advertising, grant funding, in-kind contributions, and other non commercial forms of support. In this way, community media are away from the direct and indirect influence advertisers exercise over media form and content.

From a political economic perspective, community media represent a significant involvement into the structural inequalities and power imbalances of contemporary media systems. By providing local populations with access to the means of communication, community media offer a modest, but vitally important corrective to the unprecedented concentration of media ownership that undermines local cultural expression and privatizes the channels of public

communication. Community media operates in contrast to the corporate and public service media for the people and not for any struggle for dominance. Community media represent a field to examine hegemonic processes at work at the local level. Certainly, it provides a platform for individuals and groups who are marginalized by dominant media to express their hopes and fears, their aspirations and frustrations. Community media can give out a forum for oppositional politics and ideological perspectives which are not consistent and unable to get along with the interests of dominant media.

The operation of media power figures prominently in the study of alternative, citizens,' and community media (Lewis & Jones, 2006,p.89). For example, dominant media do not tell the truth usually or remain partial to individuals and groups on the basis of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and lifestyle. For those with little or no access to mainstream media outlets, community media provide resources and opportunities for marginalized groups to tell their own stories and facts using their own voices with their own typical idioms and phrases (Rodriguez, 2001,p.156).

The study of community media corresponds with the core concerns of media studies. Community media studies examine the production, content, and reception of media texts. By the same token, community media offer new points of entry into other aspects of media studies. Community media represent a blind spot in media history. As Rodger Streitmatter (2001,p.211) argues, historians neglects the contributions of newspapers operating outside the mainstream of American social and political thought. Additionally, it is hardly ever acknowledged the

contributions of alternative, citizens' and community media in the cultural production, oppositional politics, and public policy. With a few notable exceptions – Jeff Land's (1999) analysis of the Pacifica radio network, Chris

Atton and James Hamilton's (2008) history of alternative journalism, and Ralph Engelman's (1990,1996) work on the development of public access television in the United States readily come to mind, Birowo(2009) examines the role of community radio in risk communication during tsunami at Indonesia, Marra(2008) seeks to analyses the contribution of radio Vikalp at underdeveloped area in Jharkhand. Otherwise alternative and community media are underdeveloped areas of media history.

The present study also discusses the 'Community Radio Policy in India'. On imposition of immense pressure Government of India introduced the policy for community radio and in year 2002 Government came with the first policy initiative.

5.5) ' Banasthali Research Area' : A Profile gives an account of location, population, various facilities available in the area. The six villages under Radio Banasthali Study Area are located around Apno Radio Banasthali. Bansthali, Palai and Sunara are within a range of 2-3 km whereas the area which is not covered by Apno Radio Banasthali i.e. village Sindara, Khidgi and Jamdoli are 6-7 km away. Banasthali and other villages are not connected by the railway though a railway line passes nearby. There is no railway station at any of the villages. One has to travel by road to reach all of these villages from Niwai. Tonk is situated on National Highway no.12. The Radio Banasthali Study Area is surrounded by a series of villages, all within two to three kilometres. The nearest town, Niwai has the facilities of a post office, a hospital, a maternity home, a high school, and a college.

6. Conclusions :

a) It is clearly emerged imparting information, providing education and entertaining people to their interest is an easier task than changing their deep rooted belief. Probably it will take more time to changes in the area. However, people in the coverage area find community radio as a problem solver for them, they want to participate in various programmes of Apno radio Banasthali.

b) As a major area of concern in a democratic system specially in rural areas that people should get information regarding various rural development schemes and be benefited with them. It was another significant development to note that villagers in both the areas were equally aware about various government rural development schemes. They were informed regarding the ways using those they can be benefited the most. Here, non government organisations play a significant role, they organise many activities in the villages to inform people. As far as a query regarding remedies of injustice in implementation of RD schemes is concerned people in both the area are aware about using right to information as a tool. Complaining higher authorities is another popular remedy to injustice and corruption. Villagers in CRS coverage area have another tool to use against corruption in the form of radio programme where they can talk about corruption and injustice. Villager found it effective also.

c) People have become more vocal and active. They are participating in CRS activities as well as village development schemes. Role of community radio remains enthusiastic till the time villager's traditional and religious superstitions are not being touched. As and when their deep rooted rituals are questioned, villagers hardly listen to the medium.

d) Initially it was felt that community radio would act as a source of motivation for getting information. However, it was found that rural people in majority

listen to community radio as a platform to forefront their talent and voice themselves. Getting light entertainment is another reason for listening to community radio.

e) Incidentally quite a bit of learning takes place. A listener while getting entertained also changes his attitudes and stores up certain information. This incidental storing up of information proved that they developed new values, attitudes and social patterns conducive to development.

f) Listeners are particularly happy with the use of local language and dialect in the programmes of community radio.

g) Another important feature is to provide immediate solution to the local problems. Programmes on Apno radio Banasthali invited quarries regarding problem and sorted them out immediately.

7. List of Publications based on the Research Work :

1. A research article on “Community Radio as an instrument to achieve comprehensive and sustainable Rural Development” presented in the National conference on Sustainable Rural Development in India organised by the IIS University in collaboration with ICSSR has been accepted to be published in conference proceedings.

2. A research paper on “Science Communication and Community Radio: Challenges and Concerns” has been accepted for publication in *The IIS University Journal of Arts*. ISSN No. 2319-5339.

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CONTENTS OF THE THESIS

Chaper-1 'Introduction' underlines the requirement of other voices to come on surface as India is growing at a very fast pace. Development is taking place in each and every sphere of life. A change can be noticed in every walk of life as far as urban and privileged population is concerned. Growth rate in the field of media also corresponds with the facts above mentioned. The only concern among all good news is Whether our communication system is sufficient to cater information needs of each and every section of the society. When a question regarding communication policy system come in light, whole debate revolve around a false dichotomy between state owned public broadcasting system and market oriented profit governed private media. Eventually both the systems have their own limitations to serve the public interests. Whole programming has been designed centrally at one centre for such a country. A structural reform of existing media system is required in the given circumstances. Here, Community Media represent a "third way". Community radio is an important tool of community media which can play a significant role in narrowing down the distance between the audience and the broadcaster.

Chapter-1 also discusses the already published research and theoretical work related the subject. It would be relevant to mention that there are very few researched available in India regarding work evaluation of community radios. Most of the books, articles and research papers confirms the positive role of community radios but only two of the papers provided with the data collected from field.

Methodology adopted for the research study has also been discussed. Six villages under the study area have been taken for data collection using interview schedule as a major tool. Three villages- Banasthali, Sunara and Palai are under the coverage of radio Banasthali whereas the other three Jamdoli, Khidgi and

Sindara are out of reach of radio Banasthali. a comparative study of listeners of these villages has been conducted.

Chapter-2 ‘Dimensions of Development Communication’ throws light on various development paradigms. Concepts of cultural imperialism and participatory development communication have been taken up in the chapter. Cultural imperialism focuses on the ability of the powerful to influence cultures, value systems and economies of the major part of the world, whereas participatory communication concentrates on the power of the individual to influence the world and to find path to persuade and encourage action towards positive development of all.

Chapter-3 ‘Community Media : Concepts and Perspectives’ discusses the theory and concepts of community media. Community media operate in sharp contrast to public and private broadcasting patterns. For example, in terms of financing, community media rely on donations, underwriting and limited advertising, grant funding, in-kind contributions, and other non commercial forms of support. In this way, community media are away from the direct and indirect influence advertisers exercise over media form and content.

Chapter-4 ‘ Banasthali Research Area : A Profile’ gives an account of location, population, various facilities available in the area.

Chapter-5 ‘Empirical Study of Impact of Community Radio’ shows the results of analyses of the data collected from the field. It is clearly emerged with the discussion in the chapter that imparting information, providing education and entertaining people to their interest is an easier task than changing their deep rooted belief. Probably it will take more time to changes in the area. However, people in the coverage area find community radio as a problem solve for them, they want to participate in various programmes of Apno radio Banasthali.

Chaper-6 ‘Conclusion and Suggestions’ discusses that there are some changes observed in the mindset of the villagers in Apno radio Banasthali coverage area. People have become more vocal and active. They are participating in CRS activities as well as village development schemes. Role of community radio remains enthusiastic till the time villager’s traditional and religious superstitions are not being touched. As and when their deep rooted rituals are questioned, villagers hardly listen to the medium.

References - References mentioned in various chapters have been listed in API format.

Appendices – ‘Grant of permission agreement’ for getting licence of community radio and interview schedule have been added to the thesis as appendices.