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Impact of Community Radio on Societal Development

*Swanand Kalambe

**Others

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Abstract

This research paper focuses on the impact of Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM in promoting rural entrepreneurship, women empowerment, development of villages through Village Industry, Scientific inputs in agriculture sector, health sector, hygiene and sanitation through entrepreneurship development programme and education. In this essay, the thematic focus of the radio station is examined, along with some of its most notable programs that have made a significant impact on the growth of the nearby community. This study focuses on format innovations that improve the station's ability to interact with viewers.

Introduction: Community Radio

The government-owned All India Radio (AIR) monopolised the radio broadcasting sector at the beginning of community radio's existence in India. However, a landmark Supreme Court judgment in a dispute between the Department of Information and Broadcasting and the Cricket Association of Bengal recognized that airwaves belong to the public and should be used for the common good. This paved the way for the government to allow private players to enter the market and for the emergence of Community Radio's. Initially, private FM stations were established by paying hefty license fees, making it difficult for community radios to start operating. However, the government since issued regulations allowing non-commercial institutions to apply for licenses, including universities and private institutions.

This led to the establishment of campus broadcast radio, with Anna FM 90.4 at Anna University in Chennai being the first to launch in 2004. Our existence would not be complete without radio. In addition to being a source of entertainment, knowledge, and education, people want to be able to relate to radio on a personal level. As time went on, radio programming and broadcasting changed, adding new layers to it [1]. Economic empowerment includes the freedom to spend money and the ability to acquire new skills through radio programs. The crucial feature of CR is that it has given the community a voice, especially to women and those who are marginalized [3]. The issue of women's empowerment is significant to CR listeners in the case of Anna Radio [7]. These community radios are run by trained volunteers and are used to promote local culture, language, and issues of community interest. They have also become a platform for disseminating information on health, education, and social welfare.

Our comprehension of the idea of participatory communication in relation to community radio appears to be based on two questions. In a participatory communication environment, how do the roles and interactions between public figures, the media, and the general public change? What should the notable benefits of participatory communication be, then? The aforementioned queries have been on the minds of mass communication academics for generations. Contributions to our understanding of participatory communication are therefore helpful in the way we practice today. Unquestionably, the introduction of the idea of participatory communication at a time when institutional collapse in other nations is at a level that calls for critical analysis [5].

The CR movement was started in India thanks to grassroots activism, support from UNESCO, AMARC, UNDP and other factors. The Indian government enthusiastically declared that it would establish 5,000 Community Radio Stations (CRS) in India by the end of 2008 during the introduction of the CR policy in November 2006 [1].

Community Radio's have played a significant role in empowering women's and marginalized communities, providing them with a voice and a platform to raise their concerns. For example, community radios have helped rural communities to access vital information on agriculture, health, and education, while also promoting their culture and traditions. Additionally, community radios have also supported disaster management efforts by providing real-time updates and instructions during emergencies. Community radio stations and women participants work together to create program content that

strengthens women's roles in participation and participation in producing programs for women. In this, qualitative method is adopted for the study. In-depth qualitative information sometimes referred to as "coarse description," can be obtained through observation where pertinent events are closely monitored and in-depth field notes are taken [4].

Establishment of Radio MGIRI

A community radio station called Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM was officially launched with the aim of, among other things, fostering rural entrepreneurship, health awareness, legal literacy, literacy, and women's empowerment. The station is installed with the aid of using the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Rural Industrialization (MGIRI), a National Autonomous Institute beneathneath the Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprise, (MSME), Government of India (GOI.) [8]. The vision of MGIRI is to accelerate the process of rural industrialization in the country along the lines of Gandhian vision of sustainable and self-reliant village economy and to provide S&T support to upgrade the products / processes of rural industry so that they gain wide acceptability in the local and global market.

Since educators, development specialists, and researchers all have various perspectives on the subject, development is exceedingly challenging to describe. If we look at history, we can see that numerous perspectives have been used to view development, and these perspectives have linked various indicators like social change, modernization, and advancement; change in lifestyle, Gross National Product, etc [2].

According to best practices, programming, dependable local reporting, station management, and resource mobilization all contribute to community radio support. A needs analysis should be done before significant support programs are created for the community radio sector, according to the World Bank (2003). This preliminary analysis can provide insight into the best ways to support community radio's participatory planning and implementation, boost the capacity of its staff and volunteers, and increase the station's sustainability potential [5].

Community radio seems to be emerging as a new concept of broadcasting in India. Each station has its own small area that it serves, providing utility services that help reach right into the heart of the community [6].

The meaning of this word rural development is related to the all-round development of the rural society, which includes women empowerment, social, economic, political and cultural development so that the rural people can lead a dignified life. Rural development refers to all activities aimed at improving productivity, creating opportunities for increased employment so as to increase income, access to food security, shelter, education, health and hygiene [2].

Women empowerment is not easy in a way. There is a need to improve the mentality of family resistance, society and disabled women. There is a need to pay special attention to the strategy of women empowerment today. There are numerous strategies and tools available for empowering women. Education, entrepreneurship training programs, the creation of self-help groups, social action (feminist movement), legislation, mass media, and propaganda are a few common techniques for empowering women [3].

Some of the popular programs on Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM include **Bhaktirang** (Playing Religious songs and bhajans), **Warde Kathachya Goshti** (program for agriculturists), **Swamini** (Women empowerment), **Kayada Applyadari** (Legal issues), **Niramay Wardha** (Health awareness campaign), and **Chintan** (Mind Stirring) and many more programs. The brand-new initiatives include Shetkaryachi Yashogatha (agriculturists that use successful methods of agriculture), Ghey Bharari (program on self-sustained successful women entrepreneurs), Tarun Wardha (expert opinion and talk on successful entrepreneurship for unemployed youth), and a Yuva Vishv initiative for local youth to showcase their talents.

Community radio in India puts into the hands of communities. The empowerment of indigenous communities is facilitated by community radio in India, which gives localities the tools for communication for cultural expression, news and knowledge, ideas and dialogue. Community radio is still a tool in the hands of the poor and marginalized to meet their communication and self-expression needs, rather than being weakened by communication technology revolutions. They will make stronger conventional types of verbal exchange including storytelling, the phrase and theatre, and they may remodel grassroots participation in politics and democracy [4].

Thematic Focus

The development of rural entrepreneurship and village industries, agriculture, health, sanitation, and hygiene, as well as the empowerment of women and education, are the

thematic focuses of Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM [8]. The creation, preservation, and eradication of various kinds of descriptions and stereotypes of women in the modern world have all been significantly influenced by the mass media. Newspapers and magazines have not been as popular as visual media like television. The records humans get hold of thru newspapers, radio and tv shapes their opinion of the world [3].

In terms of promoting rural entrepreneurship and village industries development, Radio MGIRI broadcasts programs that focus on skills development, market linkages, and promoting locally made products. This helps to create more job opportunities in the rural areas and support the Rural Economy.

Agriculture is an important focus area for Radio MGIRI as it is a major occupation in rural areas. Programs on agricultural techniques, market linkages, and government schemes related to farming are broadcasted to educate the farmers and promote sustainable and profitable agriculture.

Environmental degradation must be stopped, natural resources must be conserved or identified as alternatives, population must be managed, etc. It entails a wide range of human endeavors, such as improving nutritional status, maternal and child health, primary healthcare services with programs to improve quality of life, and transformation of both people and social systems [2].

Women empowerment is another important thematic focus of Radio MGIRI. To empower women and advance gender equality, programs on women's rights, gender-based violence, and women's entrepreneurship are broadcast. In the modern world, the process of empowering women should be led by the media. But, most of the media portray women in their traditional role and their images in advertising media are only decorative. Women in media can have a greater impact on the final product the more decision-making roles they hold. They will be able to dispel long-held gender stereotypes [3].

Education is important for the overall development of the community. Radio MGIRI broadcasts programs on literacy, vocational training, and skill development to promote education among the community. Government, nonprofits, social workers, and others are all working to advance women in different ways [3].

To sum up, Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM broadcasts programs about rural entrepreneurship, agriculture, health, sanitation, hygiene, women's empowerment, and education in an effort to address the issues that the rural community faces.

Innovations in Format

Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM has been innovative in its format to engage and connect with its listeners. Here are some of the innovative formats that Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM has used. Interviews Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM conducts interviews with experts in various fields such as agriculture, health, education, and entrepreneurship. These interviews provide valuable insights and information to listeners on a range of topics.

Straight Talk: The host presents a topic in a straight-forward and direct manner. The host shares their opinions and views on the topic and encourages listeners to call in and share their own views.

Discussion: On various topics with a panel of experts. The panel members share their knowledge and insights on the topic, and listeners can call in and participate in the discussion.

Drama: Those are relevant to its listeners. These dramas are often based on real-life situations and address issues such as women's empowerment, health, and education.

Bhajan and Folk Songs: Traditional music such as bhajans and folk songs that are popular in the region. This format helps connect with listeners and promotes local culture.

Phone-in Programme: Listeners can call in and share their views, opinions, and feedback on various topics. This format encourages listeners to actively participate in the radio programs and fosters a sense of community.

Impact on the Community

In Wardha, Maharashtra, Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM has had a big impact on the locals. The station has been effective at fostering rural entrepreneurship, the growth of village industries, agriculture, health, sanitation, and hygiene, as well as the empowerment of women and education. The important programs have promoted awareness about various issues among the local community. The station has also played a crucial role in connecting the local community with government schemes and initiatives.

Uncha Maza Zoka

In our country, women constitute 50 percent of the total population. Now a days, the status of women in India is changing rapidly, We cannot ignore the fact that women continue to face gender-based prejudice, marginalization, and mistreatment in the world. However, women are an essential part of the human resource pool that contributes to a higher standard of living, and their inclusion is essential to the nation's overall development. Women have historically led societies' cultural movements. Women's status in a society serves as an accurate barometer of that society's cultural, social, religious, and spiritual standing [3].

In 2017-18, the broadcast radio program '**Unch Maza Zoka**' based on the lives of widowed, single mothers, and widowed women of farmer's suicide families in Vidarbha was launched under the Drushti Project. The program was initiated in 172 villages in the Wardha district. The primary objective of the program was to give voice to the marginalized and oppressed women of society and to bring about a change in the attitude of equals towards them.

Empowerment is a technique in which human beings end up extra aware about how energy family members function of their lives. With extra consciousness, human beings benefit self belief and energy to assignment diverse social injustices, troubles and inequalities in the society. The fact given via way of means of newspapers, radio and TV shapes their opinion. In a rural context, local/network radio serves as an opportunity to formal training which contributes to elevating consciousness approximately women's development, surroundings protection, clinical farming, entrepreneurship, employment alternatives and plenty of extra [2]. It was a big challenge for the Radio MGIRI team to present the life stories of underprivileged women to the listeners through the mouth of the same women. However, the team was committed to bringing about change in society, and this program was a step towards achieving that. The program aimed to provide a platform for farmer's suicide widows, orphans, and single women to be recognized and given a place of honour in society.

In conclusion, the radio program 'Unch Maza Zoka' was a great success and it significantly contributed to the shift in society's perception of widowed and single women. The program gave these women a platform to share their stories and inspired them to take control of their lives. The impact of the program was recognized by the government, and it won the third prize in the thematic category at the National Community Radio Sammelan in 2018. The

success of this program is an excellent example of how media can be used to bring about positive change in society.

Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM has had a significant impact on the community in Wardha, Maharashtra. The station has been effective at fostering rural entrepreneurship, the growth of village industries, agriculture, health, sanitation, and hygiene, as well as the empowerment of women and education. These programs have aided in raising locals' awareness of a variety of issues. Additionally, the station has been essential in linking the neighborhood with government programs and initiatives.

Shetakryachi Yashogatha

Due to rural residents' poor level of education and lack of awareness, production is low. The main reason for this is the lack of scientific knowledge of farming. Today, our community radio is the only alternative and easy medium to reach the basic information of agriculture to the users in rural areas, which is contributing to the promotion of agriculture sector in rural areas [2].

The use of chemical fertilizers in farming has been a growing concern for its adverse effects on soil fertility, texture, and production, as well as on human health. In response to this issue, Radio MGIRI's Farmer Success Story program was launched in 2015-2016, featuring interviews with progressive and experimental farmers who adopted natural and organic farming methods. Through these interviews, the program highlighted the benefits of toxic-free farming and natural farming, as well as the importance of traditional seed conservation.

One of the most influential interviews on organic and natural farming practices influenced many farmers to adopt these practices and reduce their dependence on expensive chemical fertilizers. As a result, many farmers were able to reduce their costs and increase their economic viability, while also maintaining a better balance in the environment.

Overall, the Farmer Success Story program significantly contributed to promoting traditional seed conservation and increasing public awareness of the advantages of natural and organic farming practices. The program's coverage of successful organic farmers and their methods inspired many others in the community to adopt these practices, resulting in a positive impact on both their economic viability and the environment. The study paper emphasizes the significance of community-based initiatives such as Radio MGIRI's Farmer

Success Story program in promoting sustainable farming practices and achieving environmental balance.

Community-Driven Water Conservation Efforts in Wardha District

Water scarcity is a major challenge faced by rural communities in many parts of India, including Wardha district in Maharashtra. The traditional farming practices and lack of access to modern technology and resources make it difficult for farmers to adopt sustainable water management practices. In this context, community-driven initiatives and collaborations between media, experts, and local organizations can play a critical role in promoting water conservation and improving the livelihoods of farmers.

Wardha based Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM, a community radio station, recognized the need to raise awareness and educate farmers about sustainable water management practices. In 2014, the station began broadcasting informative programs on water conservation, covering topics such as rainwater harvesting, drip irrigation, and groundwater recharge. The programs were designed to cater to the local language and cultural context of the listeners, making them more relatable and effective.

In addition to broadcasting programs, Radio MGIRI also conducted interviews with experts in the field of water conservation, inviting them to share their insights and tips on how farmers can conserve water. The station also organized community discussions on water conservation in various villages of Wardha district, bringing together farmers, experts, and other stakeholders to exchange ideas and share experiences. These discussions helped to build a sense of community ownership and responsibility towards sustainable water management practices. Radio MGIRI also collaborated with local organizations working on water conservation initiatives, such as NGOs and government bodies. These partnerships helped to amplify the impact of the radio station's efforts and also provided additional resources and support to the farmers. The station also conducted on-site visits to farms in various villages of Wardha district, meeting with farmers and providing hands-on guidance on water conservation practices. These visits were used to showcase successful case studies and also provide an opportunity for farmers to share their own experiences and challenges.

Over time, Radio MGIRI's efforts began to bear fruit, and more farmers in Wardha district started adopting sustainable water management practices. By raising awareness, educating farmers, and building community ownership, the station has helped to improve the livelihoods of farmers and promote sustainable water management practices. The success of

their efforts underscores the importance of community-driven initiatives and collaborations between media, experts, and local organizations to effect positive change in rural areas.

Governments and NGO's Project

Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM has been actively promoting social change and enhancing the quality of life for residents in the area. As a result of its efforts, the radio station was awarded the second runner-up prize in the "Samuday Ki Awaaz 3" competition, which involved more than 24 community radio stations from all over India. Five plays were written and performed by Radio MGIRI in cooperation with SBC3 and UNICEF. Each play was based on an "Aamchi Urmila" radio drama. The dramas addressed a range of social issues, including gender inequality, child marriage, patriarchy, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence. Their goal was to inform and inspire viewers to take action and work toward a more just and equal society. The aim of the dramas was to reach as many people as possible in the nearby villages of Wardha. The radio station wrote the drama scripts and forwarded them to SBC3 for approval. The team from Radio MGIRI recorded the plays according to the script and broadcast the program after receiving confirmation from SBC3. At Commerce College, Wardha, Radio MGIRI organized a career guidance program for women as one of its events.

The program's goal was to help women find the best career path for them, as well as to comprehend and communicate the issues they faced while researching and making their decision. In addition to this, Radio MGIRI also organized educational programs to inform students between the ages of 8 and 15 about child marriage and its effects. The radio station spoke to the students in one such program at Upper Primary School (Z.P), Rasulabad, about the detrimental effects of child marriage and how it can deprive young girls of their right to education and healthcare. The program was designed to create awareness among the students and their parents about the importance of educating girls and empowering them to make their own choices. The programs of Radio MGIRI have significantly improved the lives of residents in the nearby communities of Wardha, and both the local community and outside organizations have recognized the value of their work. The radio station is a crucial resource for the area because of its dedication to fostering social change and bettering the lives of people in the society.

Conclusion

The success of Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM can be attributed to its commitment to serving the community. The station's emphasis on promoting rural entrepreneurship, the growth of village industries, agriculture, health, sanitation, and hygiene, as well as women's empowerment and education, has aided in addressing the major issues the community has to deal with. The station's signature highlights, including "Hello Doctor," "Pashudhan," "Maz Gaon Maz Shivar," "Swamini," "Sevabhav," "Shetkaryachi Yashogatha," "Krushji Jagar," and "Jeena Isika Naam Hai," have been very successful at interacting with the audience and spreading awareness to wide variety of topics. In order to keep the audience interested, the station uses innovative formats like interviews, straight talk, discussions, drama, folk songs and music, and phone-in shows. These formats have allowed the station to create a sense of community among the listeners and help them feel more connected to the station. The impact of Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM on the community has been significant. The station has helped to create awareness about various issues and provided the local community with access to information and resources that they were previously unaware of. For example, the "Ekal Mahila" programme helped widowed and single women to connect with each other, form support groups, and become financially independent. Overall, Radio MGIRI 90.4 FM has demonstrated the power of community radio in addressing the needs and concerns of marginalized groups in society. The success of the station is a testament to the commitment and dedication of its staff and volunteers, who have contributed significantly to the growth of the community in Wardha, Maharashtra.

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