Chapter – I

Community Radio in India: A Study of Its Effectiveness
And Community Participation

Introduction

Community Radio (CR) 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. (UNESCO, 2002)

In relation to CR, the term community refers to a collective group or a group of people sharing common characters and common interests. The term community can either be defined as a geographically-based group of persons or as social groups or sections of the people who have common or specific interests. However, common interest in a particular community is quite flexible and can be social, secular, political, economic, and cultural as well.

CR means radio broadcasting with the objective of serving the cause of the community in the service area by involving members of the community in the broadcast of their programmes. Community Radio affords a unique advantage of receiving transmission through low cost, battery-operated portable receiving sets. Community listeners would mean people living in the coverage zone of the particular Community Radio station. Like democracy, CR is, for the people, by the people and of the people. It is a two-way process that empowers people to identify problems and create solutions. CR enables the most vulnerable to participate in decisions for positive change in their lives. Through CR people can collaborate to produce and broadcast programme that focus on local concerns. Dynamic, this medium is autonomous and non
commercial relying on the communities it serves for survival. In real sense Community Radio is truly a medium for effective grassroots level communication. CR strengthens the democratic system and sends this voice of the masses across million of people in the world. In fact CR gives a boost to socially useful and productive work and multipurpose projects that form the basic infrastructure of a country's progress.²

According to Partridge the term ‘community radio’ was first coined by Powell in 1965 in a leaflet entitled Possibilities for Local Radio.³ However, the idea of locally embedded small-scale radio, produced and controlled by citizens had been around for a while (for instance US amateur broadcasters before World War I). Localism is considered to be one of the defining characteristics of CR and media.

Today, community media is defined as: grassroots or locally oriented media access initiatives predicated on a profound sense of dissatisfaction with mainstream media form and content, dedicated to the principles of free expression and participatory democracy, and committed to enhancing community relations and promoting community solidarity.⁴ Howley’s definition points, among others, to localism as one of the defining characteristics of community media and radio. He also associates community media with a wider set of notions and practices, such as participation by communities in their own media, and producing content for the communities they serve.⁵ Community media is thus seen to be intrinsically linked to forms of internal basic democratic procedures, to practices of self management, and to the production of alternative non-mainstream formats and content. In this regard, Prehn’s emphasis on participation as involving people directly in station programming, administration and policy activities’ is highly relevant. From this perspective, community radio contributes both to external pluralism by being a different voice among public and commercial broadcasters, and to internal pluralism by being basic democratic and providing a platform for a diversity of voices and styles, often lacking in mainstream media (Barl, Cammaerts 2009).
The phrase “a radio service by the people, close to the people and for the people” sums up the essential features of this service. This means that CR must not only be run by but also serve the interests of the community. For the whole range of existing definitions, the one from UNESCO is worth mentioning, a community radio is a medium that gives a voice to the voiceless, serves as a mouthpiece of the marginalized and is central to communication and democratic processes within societies. A CR station is a non-profit organization consisting of members of the community and its programming is based on community access and participation. It reflects the special interests and needs of its listeners whose first duty is to serve. CR treats its listeners as subjects and participants and not as objects. As stated in principle 13 of the Charter of Community and Citizen Radio Broadcasters, what defines CR is the socio-cultural benefits that it brings. UNESCO shares the views of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) that CR stations should represent the interests of the community, whether that be a small locality or a broad social sector. They provide opportunities for citizen involvement where all views can find expression and the diversity of languages and cultures can be defended. The challenge has always been the same: to democratize the world so as to democratize society. As was clearly stated by the previous Director General of UNESCO, on the occasion of the seminar to democratize the radio band, held in Caracas on 15th November, 1995 the Director General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor said, these broadcasting stations, genuine forums open to the whole of society without discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, social class, sexual orientation, disabilities or political or religious opinions, are indispensable for the promotion of social dialogues and the culture of peace.

1.1: Worldwide Community Radio Movement

The first two experiments in CR broadcasting in the world go back a little over 50 years in Latin America. Poverty and social injustice were the main factors stimulating such projects. The year 1947 saw the appearance in Bolivia of Radio de los Mineros (Miners’
Radio Station) and in Colombia of Radio Sutatenza. The main purpose of the first of these stations was to unite the mining community in the struggle to obtain better and fairer working conditions. For its part, Radio Sutatenza, although inspired by the objective of supporting the community of peasant farmers, was neither owned nor run by them. It was set up by Father Joaquín Salcedo, who made the first systematic attempt to educate through the use of radio, a venture that later led to the establishment of the Latin American Association for Radio Education (ALER) was the first Latin American Association for Educational radio.

Although the CR movement began in Latin America, it was in Europe that it became a vital factor and an alternative to the major State and private radio corporations. During the 1960s and 1970s the huge increase in the number of pirate radio stations in Western Europe led governments and national broadcasting systems to introduce officially authorized local radio stations.

In Africa the establishment of CR stations turned into a social movement after the disappearance of the apartheid regime in South Africa. In Asia the various pressure groups that had encouraged the growth of CR broadcasting in various parts of the world were less in evidence. Consequently, it was UNESCO and other organizations that took the initiative to assist the establishment of CR stations in that continent. In some cases, in a number of Asian countries it was the broadcasting organization that initially set up community radio services.

1.2: Advancements in the field of Broadcasting

In recent years steps have been taken to approve or, at the very least, to begin to draft laws designed to provide a legal framework for this sector of radio broadcasting all over the world. Such measures are the result of a number of economic, technical and political factors. Among the first of these is the fact that radio programmes are both cheap to produce and to receive. Among all the mass communication media it is the cheapest and most universal as well as the most flexible and immediate.
The technical factors include the advent of FM (frequency modulation) radio broadcasting, cheap transistor radios and cheap, low-powered transmitters, all of which helped to create a boom in CR broadcasting. Finally, the political factors worth mentioning were the partial surrender of the radio broadcasting monopoly by many governments, together with the gradual acceptance of private electronic media, indifference on the part of the private commercial services and the expansion of the democratic system and of freedom of expression in various regions of the world. All that has helped to open the doors to community initiatives and especially to CR stations.

However, the process of the CR movement in the world has been accompanied by certain problems, such as the saturation of radio frequencies by often excessive and uncontrolled growth in the number of broadcasting stations together with a lack of proper regulations that would provide a balanced framework for such expansion. This new situation was reflected in the urgent concern to legislate in this field. The Charter of Community and Citizen Radio Broadcasters was prepared in 1988 by AMARC. However, this point deserves special attention, as stated in Principle 7 of the Charter of Community and Citizen Radio Broadcasters, “community and citizen radio broadcasters cannot be regulated by unconstitutional means, such as the arbitrary establishment of minimum power levels, the ban on the sale of advertising or the establishment of networks, or the restriction, without technical reasons, on the number of frequencies assigned per locality or region. Such broadcasters seek no special privilege over the commercial or State media, but nor can they accept any discrimination towards them”.

**1.3: Community Radio : International perspectives**

Among the internationally-recognized principles which promote CR broadcasting, it is worth citing Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees
freedom of opinion and expression and the freedom to receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers. Also Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which recognizes everyone’s right to hold opinions without interference, as well as the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas regardless of frontiers.

In addition, Article 13 of the American Convention on Human Rights and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights guarantee the right to freedom of thought and expression and stipulate that this right may not be restricted by indirect methods or means, such as the abuse of government or private controls over frequencies or equipment used in the dissemination of information, or by any other means tending to impede the circulation of information and ideas. Similarly, the Inter-American Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression states that “freedom of expression in all its forms and manifestations is a fundamental and inalienable right of all individuals”. Additionally, it is an indispensable requirement for the very existence of a democratic society. It was on that basis that the UNESCO General Conference unanimously adopted on 15 November, 1989 at its 25th session the “New Communications Strategy”, which already reflected the profound changes in the political landscape of Europe and the world at large. The new strategy was intended to encourage the free flow of information at international as well as national levels, to promote a wider and better-balanced dissemination of information without impeding freedom of expression, and to create all the appropriate media so as to strengthen communications capacities in the developing countries in order to increase their participation in the communication process.

It is worth mentioning that radio frequencies have been internationally recognized as the common heritage of humanity by the Torremolinos Treaty of the International Telecommunication Union (International Telecommunication Convention, ITU) and by Article 33 of the International Telecommunication Convention with the modification
agreed in Nairobi. As a result, the administration of this limited resource is the responsibility of states, which have a duty to treat the various sections of society equitably.

At the Ibero-American Meeting on Community Radio, held in Havana, Cuba, from 23 to 26 November, 1996, CR was defined as that form of broadcasting which, taking as its starting point the tastes and interests of the community, broadened the exercise of democracy in society. The emphasis on the community need not stand in the way of the production of high quality competitive programmes nor of a station’s economic viability, even though it may be a non-profit organization. What defines CR are its objectives of serving the community and encouraging the active participation of the community in radio broadcasting. CR seeks to democratize the world so as to help democratize the society. Among the issues raised by the meeting was the quest for national communication policies that legalize CR stations.

In this context, the meeting declared itself in favour of proposing to ITU that specific frequencies be awarded for the official use of CR stations. Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights stipulates that every individual shall have the right to receive information, while the Windhoek, Alma-Ata, Santiago, Sanaa and Sofia declarations, adopted at seminars under the auspices of UNESCO, assert that the creation and maintenance of and support for a free, pluralist and independent press are essential for the development of democracy and for economic development. In addition, the People’s Communication Charter which argues states that communication and information policies must be based on respect for fundamental human rights and the public interest, besides defining the rights and responsibilities of broadcasters and of those who receive the information.

The above mentioned AMARC Charter of Community and Citizen Radio Broadcasters includes among its 20 principles the following:
• CR broadcasting, as a means of public expression, is an exercise of freedom of expression;

• like freedom of the press, the state should guarantee freedom of the airwaves;

• there is agreement on the growing importance of CR in the democratic process;

• CR stations offer high-quality news, educational and entertainment programmes;

• CR stations represent the interests of their community and owe one another mutual support;

• the monopoly and oligopoly of radio frequencies harm freedom of expression.

The Milan Declaration on Communication and Human Rights of 29 August, 1998 calls for international recognition of the community broadcasting sector as an essential public service and as a vital contributor to media pluralism and freedom of expression and information. It also requests governments, private enterprises and international institutions to help to promote the right to communication through the following:

• regulation of the telecommunication sector that will be favourable to the development of a communication infrastructure in the countries of the South;

• the allocation of a percentage of public funds for development projects that include improvements in communication capacities;

• an assessment of the extent to which governments respect the right to free and unhindered communication.
Communication is central to the success of developments and democracy and CR is a highly effective and convenient communication tool that is easy to run and maintain. It is a particularly effective means of communication in communities where most people cannot read or write, but can speak and listen. Its listenership is therefore much broader than the readership of newspapers and television viewers particularly in developing countries like India where literacy rate is still low.

CR can play a vital role in the development and democratization of a society by enabling communities to articulate their experiences and to critically examine the issues, processes and policies affecting their lives. This can be done by educating and mobilizing communities around development initiatives and strategies that will result in an enhanced life for the listeners. Access to media and Information Communication Technologies (ICT) should not be viewed as an end in itself but as a means to the ultimate goal of social inclusion. CR helps the remotest communities to integrate into the national and global economies, and the development of knowledge-based economies. CR is known to improve governance by enabling people to hold local governments to account for delivery of services. It brings out the best in community participation in development.

It has been used by farmers to negotiate better prices at local markets, villages to engage in the national economy and citizens to access knowledge on issues and service. CR is integral to Communication for Development as endorsed at the 10th Round Table held in Addis Ababa, February 2007. The Round table recommended it as an important tool for the UN system- wide approach to Communication for Development in accelerating progress towards Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The establishment of CR stations is often a result of various repressive experiences in different communities. For example:
In some European, Australian and North American cases, minority groups (such as indigenous, immigrant, refugee or black communities) were marginalised by mainstream media and therefore used CR as a tool for highlighting their rights and raise issues concerning their interests;

In South Africa, the apartheid laws ensured that the majority of citizens were disadvantaged and marginalised in the interest of the white minority. The apartheid regime actually used the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as a monopoly that controlled the media industry. This led to struggles engaged by progressive forces, which then led to the establishment of CR as a tool for development by community groups from the historically disadvantaged majority. Minority groups also saw CR as a necessity for their communication and started joining the movement;

In Latin America, CR became the voice of the poor and voiceless – Peoples Radio (landless peasants, urban shack dwellers, impoverished indigenous nations, trade unions, etc.) and also as a tool for development. As shown by the above examples, the historical philosophy of CR is to use this medium as the voice of the voiceless, the mouthpiece of oppressed people (be it on racial, gender, or class grounds) and generally as a tool for development.

Community listening clubs are in operation in Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa and gaining popularity in areas where CR stations have not yet been established. The members of the clubs, mostly women, assemble at a local centre and listen to a half-hour radio programme using a portable radio cassette recorder. Thereafter, the members debate the broadcast and the debate is recorded on the cassette contained in the receiver. They may also raise any other issues of concern to them, which are recorded in the same manner. It is they who set the agenda and the coordinator is merely a facilitator. The coordinator visits each club periodically to collect their tapes and replenish their supply. Back at the radio station, the coordinator listens to the recordings, identifies the officials or persons who
should respond to the content of the recording and compiles a programme for broadcast containing the responses obtained.

During AMARC 6 entitled Waves for Freedom Report, in Zimbabwe the coordinators report that the project is very successful and should be expanded. It has led to the establishment of viable ventures including savings clubs, fence-making, dairy farming, market gardening, manufacture of peanut butter and re-forestation using indigenous instead of exotic trees. The project has also de-mystified broadcasting by facilitating popular participation in the programming and placing the club-members in direct communication with the policy-makers instead of relying solely on messages relayed by visiting politicians and civil servants.

Known in different formats like community radio, rural radio, co-operative radio, participatory radio, free radio, alternative radio, popular radio, educational radio, they are located in isolated rural villages and also in the heart of the largest cities in the world. Their signals may reach only a kilometer, cover a whole country or be carried via short-wave to other parts of the world. CR is the most significant tool for participatory and democratic communication. It is important especially in Third World countries where it has significant development functions. CR stations have a long tradition especially in Latin American countries. They originated in the mid-40's, when small and often isolated communities of miners and of poor farmers (compassions) started to operate their own stations to challenge the monopoly of the state media and to have a voice of their own. Today any Latin American country has hundreds of CRs serving rural or urban communities. CRs, despite differences in operational and funding models, are essentially participatory and inclusive in nature.

They are typically:

- voice of the civil societies, communities and various marginal/minority groups,
open for participation by members of the community they serve,
- owned and/or controlled by and accountable to the community,
- independent and non-profit,
- often educational in nature and/or in some ways alternative, oppositional, radical.
- based on horizontal ”many-to-many” communication and ”bottom-up” communication (as opposed to “top-to-bottom” communication of the mainstream media),

CRs and community media in general have several important functions, such as:

- bringing out the concerns of the community into public discussion
- providing essential information for community members
- educating, empowering and mobilizing community,
- serving special groups and communities, such as ethnic minorities, women, indigenous people, students, civic organizations and social movements.
- promoting media diversity,
- promoting development, human rights and freedom of speech,
- providing media education (teaching media literacy and media skills to citizen),
- providing new ideas and innovations into profession,
- providing an alternative way into the profession (informal education).

In spite of their evident important social functions, CRs face many obstacles and challenges for example, with funding and policy framework. Their status varies a lot from country to country, both within Africa and within Europe. For example, in Finland the national legislation does not recognize the existence of CRs. One important step towards formal recognition of the community media sector in Europe was a non legislative resolution Community Media in Europe by European Parliament on 25 September, 2008. The resolution advises Member States to give legal recognition to community media and to support it more actively in order to ensure media pluralism (European Parliament, 2008).

1.4: Broadcasting and Community Radio
Broadcasting is mainly divided into public, commercial and community. Public broadcasting refers to a broadcasting service provided by a statutory body, usually state-funded but publicly owned, which means that it is run independently from the government and its budget is determined through parliament. Commercial broadcasting is a private broadcasting service operated for profit and controlled privately by independent commercial groups or individuals.

Community broadcasting is referred to as a broadcasting service not for profit, owned and controlled by a particular community under an association, trust or foundation. In some instances it can be owned by non-governmental organisations working in communities. CR falls under the community broadcasting category. It refers to a radio station owned and controlled by a community defined either geographically or as a community of interest. Strictly speaking, rights to broadcast in any given society are authorised by the ‘national broadcasting regulator’, which is the institution responsible for the application of national broadcasting laws in a given country and regulates the general development of the broadcasting industry. The regulating body issues licences and allocates frequencies that constitute one’s legal right to broadcast.

“Distinctions must be made between State media, those of the private sector and those having a community mandate. In many impoverished African countries, liberation of the airwaves often involves many risks such as media access by groups with substantial financial resources, wishing to influence public opinion by manipulating programmes and news. State media are not always prepared to assume the role of inspiring change and creativity, and contribute very little to the interaction between the public and the media - which must be restored. This is the vocation of the media, and more specifically, of CR to conceive programming in view of the most immediate concerns and profound aspirations of its potential listeners. Community radio stations offer new hope and can open new horizons for freedom. They can instill the desire to act and above all, to organize for change.” Amadou Mahtar, former Director General of UNESCO.
1.5: Ownership and Control

Ownership and control of a CR are usually the most crucial and contentious aspects in defining such a station. This can be effected through communities holding public and open meetings where leadership of the station is elected, either into a Board of Trustees or Board of Directors, or into a Coordinating Committee of the station.

The leadership takes decisions in between annual general member’s meetings (AGM), which are the supreme decision-making forums. Such a leadership is meant to represent community interests in the day-to-day running of station activities and ensure that policies guiding the daily management are developed and that they reflect the interest of the community the station serves. Those elected leaders shall be subjected to re-election after a period (one or two years generally) decided by the community, in its AGM. Should they have not done their job properly, they should not be re-elected but rather replaced by other representatives of the community.

1.6: Community Radio: The Non-profit Aspect

Central to the definition of a CR is that it should either be registered as a non-profit making organisation or owned by an organisation registered as a non-profit making entity. For example,

- The CR of Dassa-Zoumé and Glazoué, in Bénin, Radio Ilema, is owned by the Culture, Communication and Development Association, which is registered as an association not for gain;
The Bushbuckridge Community Radio Station, in South Africa, is itself registered as a non-profit making organisation. This means that the CR station is not run as an instrument and project for profit-making purposes but rather as a means of communication for the community, essentially run to serve the community.

“Do we work primarily for our gain, or to help improve the social conditions and the cultural quality of life of the people in our communities? Community radio stations are not looking for profit, but to provide a service to civil society. A service that attempts to influence public opinion, create consensus, strengthen democracy and above all create community – hence the name CR.” José Ignacio López Vigil, AMARC Regional Coordinator for Latin America.

This non-profit requirement does not mean that the initiative or radio station cannot be operated along business lines nor generate commercial revenues (for instance, from advertising clients). It does not mean either that the radio station cannot generate income in excess of its basic expenditure (i.e. a ‘surplus’: excess income in a non-profit organisation cannot be called a ‘profit’ – it is rather a ‘surplus’). It rather means that any surplus income generated has to be ploughed back into the project, be spent or invested into the development of the station. In a non-profit making organisation, there are no individual owners or shareholders. The community collectively owns the project and therefore decides collectively (at its AGM or through its representatives) on how to use its excess resources. However, these must never be distributed among some individual members, volunteers or staff members of the station as ‘bonuses’, nor in the way ‘profit shares’ are paid out to shareholders of commercial businesses.

1.7: Community Participation in Community Radio
Another very important aspect of a CR is the issue of community participation, to guarantee that the community really owns and control the station. The requirement of community participation ensures that members of the community are involved in the running of the station, i.e. in the following activities:

- election of leadership (Board members or trustees),
- policy-making for the station,
- management of the station,
- selection and provision of programming,
- production of programmes,
- external representation of the station,

Mechanisms and structures to achieve this depend on the various creative approaches and models of the different stations. What is important is that there is consistent involvement of community members in many different ways, and that it therefore reflects the interest of the community it serves. For example:

- Some stations have a “volunteer’s group” drawn from the community, who plan programming, production, gathering of news sources, etc., provide management back-up, contribute towards policy-making and development planning, etc. These activities are coordinated by a Volunteer, Co-ordinator who usually sits on the management committee.
- Other stations have “open forums” taking place on a monthly or bimonthly basis, where the station’s management team report on activities. Community members then share ideas and make recommendations for the Management or Board to decide or implement.
- In other cases, stations have both “volunteers groups” and “open forums”.
- Other stations have a “Listeners Club” where listeners can critique programming and suggest programme ideas.
Generally, there is a large Annual General Meeting of members (AGM) where reports are tabled, elections take place, a vision or plan is drawn up for the station, etc. These usually involve most members of the community that owns and controls the station.

In some stations, both individual community members and local NGOs or CBOs (i.e. community based organisations) have voting rights. Individual members, if any, usually have fewer votes than people representing organisations.

While talking about Perspectives on Communication and Development in January, 1996 Heloise Henning and Eric Louw, DBSA, highlighted the importance of participation of community in giving information as well as in receiving information by saying – “the highest degree of community participation should be achieved not only in receiving information, but in providing the information that the community requires”.

1.8: Community in Community Radio

In relation to CR, the term ‘community’ refers to a collective or a group of people sharing common characters and interests. The term ‘community’ can either be defined as :

- a geographically based group of persons or
- a social group or sector of the public who have common or specific interests.

For example, a community can be defined as any of the following:

- Community of Tezpur based on the geographical boundaries of Sonitpur district;
- Community of women in a particular area (community of women in Napaam);
- Community of workers in Tezpur township;
- Community of the youth of Tezpur.
However, common interest(s) in a particular community is therefore quite flexible and can be social, sectoral, secular, political, economic, cultural, etc.

A ‘Community Radio’ can therefore be either of these existing radio stations:

- Sangham Radio launched in Pastapur, Andhra Pradesh.
- Radio Bundelkhand 90.4 Development Alternatives launched in Orchha M.P.
- MVSS Community Radio Launched in Mhaswad (Satara), Maharashtra
- ‘Pard Vaanoli’ Community Radio Station launched in Madurai.
- ‘Gurgaon Ki Awaaz’ launched in Gurgaon, Delhi NCR

1.9: Community Radio and Funding

The definition of funding for community broadcasting services includes a range of sources, such as donations, member’s subscription fees, fund-raising events, levy, sponsorship, advertising income, etc. Such a variety of funding sources is of immense importance to the viability and sustainability of any CR.

Some stations are based in rural areas or in areas with less or no economic base to sustain the station. In these areas, sufficient self-generated income (advertising, membership fees, local sponsorships) might be difficult to secure for all the needs of the station. It can require complementary income through the financial and material support of national donating organisations (churches, charities, unions, large associations, trusts) or international development aid agencies. In such instances, the national government can also subsidise the station with no strings attached (i.e. funding but not controlling). This is possible through an Act of Parliament that clearly ensures that the government allows public and community broadcasters to be independent.
“All funding should aim to encourage pluralism as well as independence. As a consequence, public media should be funded only where authorities guarantee a constitutional and effective freedom of information and expression and the independence of the press.9

1.10: Radio: a Powerful Medium

Communication is central to the success of development and democracy. And CR is a crucial communication tool that is easy to run and maintain. Radio is the most accessible mass medium of communication in use. It is a particularly effective means of communication in communities where most people can neither read or write, as those people can speak and listen. Its listenership is therefore far more numerous than the readership of newspapers and audience of television, particularly in developing countries.

Technically, its production costs are significantly lower than those of most printed or video community media. Likewise, its reception is easier and more affordable than that of community video or television, and leaves out the distribution nightmares of community publications. “Radio opens traditional African speech to new spaces, to the conquest of time, to renewed ties of friendship. Speech thus becomes a component that constitutes the world. It should come as no surprise, then, that as the population demands its most basic rights radio is becoming the sign of new times, despite the fact that ancient times may not completely have been left behind. Radio, promoter of a school of national languages, of a technical school based on African expertise; radio, educator and strengthener of women’s often silenced voices, should not be a utopia but rather an effective on-air strategy (Opening Speech by President, AMARC, Dakar, Senegal, Jan. 24, 1995).10

CR can play a vital role in development and democratisation, by:
• enabling communities to voice their own experiences and to critically examine issues, processes and policies affecting their lives; and
• educating and mobilising communities around development initiatives and strategies that will result in a better life for listeners (voter education, AIDS, local government, gender issues, peace building, environmental problems, etc.). Because radio can be very powerful, it may some times be detrimental to the people it says it wants to serve. We saw in Rwanda that a radio station contributed greatly and criminally to the tragedy that hit this country (Radio Mille Collines). To avoid the use of media in human rights abuses, even minor ones, community media practitioners and human rights activists are trying to rally, internationally, around a People’s Communication Charter that provides guiding principles to prevent such potential abuses. Radio is therefore potentially very powerful and for its positive use and development to succeed, adequate resources and environment must exist.

Relatively inexpensive and all-pervasive, CR is a force multiplier for effective delivery of programmes on health, HIV & AIDS, environment and natural disasters, education, livelihoods, agriculture and rural development, urban development: gender mainstreaming, Youth, cultural heritage, capital investment, human rights and the rights of the child, drug abuse prevention and many more. Enhanced with new multimedia technologies, CR becomes an even more useful voice for change and betterment. For a contemporary society CR can play a vital role for social change and ultimately for national development. Among the various modes of radio broadcasting, CR especially has an important role to play. Due to its focus on local concerns and aspirations and the interactive nature of its programming, CR can be a powerful medium for education and development.

Speaking about Community Radio and its importance Federico Mayor said, I hope that this collection of instruments adopted by the international community to promote freedom of information and expression throughout the world will be read with project by all those concerned to foster democracy, development and peace within and among nations.
1.11: Community Radio and Women’s participation and Empowerment

Raising the awareness of women about political processes and opportunities in their communities has been shown to lead to their greater involvement in democracy building. This, in turn, can lead to both the empowerment of women and poverty reduction. But if women – who suffer more from poverty than men in developing countries – lack information on how community political processes work, they are poorly equipped to be able to participate in the development of good governance. The articles gathered here reveal many experiences of women accessing the media and how important it may become in building good governance.

The women’s movement has long recognized the important role that media, CR, in particular plays in shaping the values of society. As early as four decades ago, when the introduction of transistors made it possible for people from lower income groups to acquire radio units, women’s groups actively engaged this medium to address women’s issues, such as sexuality, advocacy for women, and children in conflict. Over the years, women’s organizations in many countries have used CR to advance their issues through the governance process, while others still have not learned about the power of this medium.

1.12: Women Empowerment and Good Governance

Women’s empowerment and good governance through CR seeks to enhance the use of community radio as a key communication vehicle that can provide women with a voice to make governments and institutions accountable, more transparent, inclusive and responsive to citizens, and to facilitate the participation of women in poverty reduction strategies in their communities. It also helps women with access to and ownership of CR.
There is an increasing consensus on the need for a more people-centred discourse when it comes to development and governance challenges. In this perspective, voicelessness and powerlessness have come to be seen as key dimensions of poverty, while democracy, equity and civil rights are seen as not only intrinsically desirable but as directly contributing to the realization of good governance.

Several studies have indicated that women have a higher incidence of poverty than men, that women’s poverty is more severe than that of men and that there is a trend towards even greater poverty among women, particularly in female-headed households. There are also many documented experiences on how raising awareness on women’s issues increases the political participation of women. The media can play an important role in this process thus leading to better governance. In this perspective, experience shows that CR can facilitate women’s access to media and disseminate information on alternative positive roles for women, thus empowering them to effectively participate in democratic processes.

Access to voice is known to be a key indicator of the quality of governance. Without access to voice, women are unable to participate in debates or to express their opinions on public policies affecting them directly. Community media has the distinctive capacity to provide pluralistic and participatory communication that is receptive to the need for expression from social and cultural sectors as compared to other media, particularly commercialized media. Many recognize that the onslaught of global commercialized media systems has dramatically reduced the diversity of the media and communication landscape and it has increased the barriers to women’s empowerment and their full participation as citizens. It facilitates the blatant and open domination of culturally and socially-controlling groups over the most marginalized, tribal and indigenous communities.

Even though CR has proven its social impact in good governance and its ability to give voice to women, there is an urgent need for more specific systematization and analysis, in order to reinforce women’s access to CR. The global assessment of the social impact of CR conducted by AMARC in 2006 showed that the single most important barrier that hinders CR’s impact in giving voice to women and reinforcing government accountability is related to the lack of recognition of CR in some countries. In countries such as in the
Philippines, governments are delaying the establishment of independent regulatory bodies that would institutionalize the presence of CR and clarify the rules under which they can operate. In other countries, where community radio is free to operate, it has trouble getting frequencies due to an increasing encroachment of these spaces by mainstream commercial radio.

Access to information is also a vital issue. Without access to information, the poor and marginalized, particularly women, are unaware of their rights and entitlements, are unable to challenge this unfair decisions and lack the knowledge to participate as citizens and take effective action to improve their conditions. At present, in most parts of Africa, Asia and Latin America, both in urban and rural areas, information – particularly information concerning women’s involvement in the political processes and good governance – is scant, randomly given, or non-existent. Access to such information and knowledge exchange can form the basis for a radical shift from helplessness and poverty to social, educational and economic knowledge, eventually leading to self-realization and growth within their communities.

1.13: Community Radio in India

The experience of a number of developing countries in using CR for such purposes has clearly demonstrated its tremendous potential for strengthening grassroots democracy. In India, All India Radio (AIR), the public service broadcaster has been playing a very useful role for decades in providing relevant information to the people in the remotest parts of the country. However, this has to be supplemented by a strong Community Radio movement to ensure greater involvement of local communities in the development process. In December 2002, the Government of India announced a policy for granting Community Radio licences to well established educational institutions.

In 2003, the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) of Govt. of India, further opened Radio for the educational sector by offering to grant non-profit, non-commercial radio stations to educational institutions both at the school and college levels. The Ministry termed these as 'Community Radio' though the specifications match what is known as '
Campus Radio' across the world. As per Government of India policy 2002, the country's first Community Radio Station has been operational since 1st February 2004 at Anna University, Chennai. But, the first experiment in local radio with FM facilities was conducted by MIB in Nagercoil which was launched on October 30, 1984.

In November, 2006, Government of India made an announcement that now NGOs and other reputed voluntary organizations can set up and run FM broadcasting stations. This announcement amended an earlier decision that allowed reputed educational institutions to set up and run radio stations. Now non-profit organizations are allowed only to set up a station to serve the community with a range of 10-15 km, but individuals, political parties and organization banned by the government are not allowed to set up a CR station.

Recognizing the potential use of the medium of radio for the betterment of the community, the MIB announced a policy for the grant of licences for setting up CR Stations by the educational institutions in December, 2002. Today, there are 28 such stations working in various parts of the country.

The CR aims at enhancing participation of the people in the development process and capacity building in rural areas, through education. It provides opportunities to the people to upgrade their skills and enhance their creative talents, besides preserving and promoting the traditional wisdom, knowledge and skills. Thereby CR helps to promote and protect local language, arts, craft, culture and traditions.

CRS brings within easy reach of the rural population, topical information in areas of agriculture, social welfare, education, health and environment and help in creating networks for the rural cottage and village industry.

The Government liberalized the policy for CR in December, 2006 and decided to grant permission for setting up CR stations to non-profit organizations viz. civil society & voluntary organizations, State Agricultural Universities, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) institutions, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, registered Societies and autonomous bodies and registered public trusts.
Highly moved by the successful running of the CR channels, the Government has entrusted it with the responsibility of exploring the possibility of establishing a CR-based pre as well as post-disaster damage control system in the Andamans comprising a satellite-triggered low power solar transmitter. Such a system would ensure active involvement and participation of the local residents of different islands of the area.

A feasibility study of the project has already been submitted to the appropriate authorities for consideration. Now the Government has taken initiatives in popularizing the policy amongst the eligible organizations by organizing consultations / workshops, seminars and other forms of audio visual publicity. The first of such Regional Consultation for Community Radio Awareness was successfully organized at Lucknow in November, 2007. In this first Regional Consultation this researcher was one of the participants and actively participated in the deliberations during the workshop.

In India, AIR, the public service broadcaster has been playing a very useful role for decades in providing relevant information to the people in the remotest parts of the country. However, this has to be supplemented by a strong CR movement to ensure greater involvement of local communities in the development process.

In 2004, the then director of Anna University's Educational Multi Media Research Centre (EMMRC) launched a plan to impart quality education in a novel manner – through a campus CR station. Starting with a few science and technology programmes produced at the university, the station got a major fillip in 2005 when it was brought under the the Department of Science and Technology’s (DST) Science for Women (SFW) project. This sought to engage women from marginalized communities and to create awareness among them about the basics of science in daily life. The project was adapted to have local women produce their own radio programmes for Anna CR. Women were paid Rs 300 to Rs 600 for their programmes.
EMMRC Director Dr. M Alagar highlighted the sense of purpose that community members feel when they walk into the university studio to participate in programmes. For community residents to be able to mingle with educated and literate people is something that gives them a lot of confidence. The fact that many community volunteers have interviewed doctors and scholars, has given them a sense of achievement. Knowledge gained is being transferred to society with the help of improved technologies for the uplifting of marginalized communities. Thus, Anna Community Radio is Anna University’s contribution to society in ensuring dissemination of knowledge to weaker sections of society.24

In a sense, Anna CR is the pioneer of campus CR in India. Vinoth Rajesh, who has been associated with the station since its inception, said, We were the first campus radio station in the country and at that time we had no idea how things were to be done. Apart from this, in a city like Chennai there were already 14 FM channels which were extremely popular. Anna CRS is doing more or less what it set out to do. Forty to 50 percent of the programmes are the product of community participation and involvement. Every six months there is a volunteers’ meeting to plan for the programmes for the coming months.

Operating in Chennai, a large cosmopolitan city, means Anna CRS is able to arrange for experts, celebrities and academia to appear at events or participate in phone-in programs. During festivals, debates are organized and celebrities are invited. Students from the Department of Media Sciences volunteered to anchor Samudhaya Neerkaanal, a live phone-in community programme. Such programme got a very good response from the growing listeners of Anna CRS. The students are paid Rs 150 per programme for their efforts. Every year since 2006 Anna CRS organizes an instrumental and vocal musical talent contest. By mid 2009, Anna CRS had arranged a bank of 3,000 hours of original music which is broadcast by the station.
Sometimes, the simplest of ideas take the longest time to roost simply because we underestimate the magic of working together. You would think in a country like ours, CR would make huge sense. Consider divides like rural-urban, literate-non-literate, rich-poor not to speak of a daunting diversity of languages, dialects, and the role of CR should strike an obvious chord. Ashish Sen, of CRF wrote, “finally, CR in India seems to be making waves. Truth, however, is stranger than fiction. It took more than eleven and a half years after the Supreme Court of India passed its landmark judgment in 1995, stating that air waves were public property to be used for public good, that community-based NGOs became eligible to apply for a licence to operate a community radio station of their own.”

In the early 2000s, when some of us in the community media sector decided to muddy our hands, we were often dismissed as a lunatic fringe that had lost their heads as well as their voices! Even when one of the movement's flagship initiatives based in Kolar, Karnataka, Namma Dhwani made it to the Limca Book of World Records (2006) as India's first cable CR station. 25

Even after the GoI guidelines was finally announced in November, 2006, the shouting from the rooftops and audio-stations were sufficiently few to stand up and be counted. It was realised that the time had come not just to act, but to get our act together. It wasn't sufficient to argue that CR was just a good idea whose time had come. If it was to work, we needed to network, to build a federation by joining hands across the country. In early 2007, the Community Radio Forum of India (CRF) was put together by a motley crew of a few dozen enthusiasts across India to help facilitate an enabling environment for CR in the country. While some might argue that we still have a long way to go, there's no quibbling over the fact that CRF has made a difference.

Today there are more than 141 operational CR stations (source- www.mib.nic.in as on 15.11.2012) on air in different parts of the India. Another 265 are in the process of being set-up. 26 These stations are in pipeline waiting to get their voices heard. What's more, those that are on air seem to have got their voices finally heard where it matters. In December, 2010, the Government ratified the CRF's recommendation to start a CR support fund. Later on, the MIB put together a working group to set up a framework to operationalize the fund.
1.14: Electronic Media in India

Radio is also an effective medium through which millions of people are able to become unified on the basis that they are common recipients of a particular message. In India, broadcasting was introduced by amateur radio clubs in Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, and Lahore, though even before the clubs launched their ventures, several experimental broadcasts were conducted in Bombay and other cities. The Times of India records that a broadcast was transmitted from the roof of its building on August 20, 2021. However, the first licence granted for transmitting a broadcast was given only on February 23, 1922. The Radio Club of Calcutta was perhaps the first amateur radio club to start functioning (in November 1923), followed by Madras Presidency Radio Club which was formed on May 16, 1924, and began broadcasting on July 31, 1924. Today, over 95% of the country’s population is covered by AIR’s broadcasting services. As years passed by, AIR slowly introduced commercial broadcasts. Today India has quite a large number of commercial channels. For several decades in India, radio has always been having a top-down approach in the sense, the listeners had no choice except to listen to what was broadcast over AIR and the effects of commercialism also couldn’t be underestimated.

The industrial and communication revolutions have changed the face of our country. Electronic media captured a vast mass in India and gave a phenomenal growth in the last decade, leading to a huge impact on socio-cultural understandings. Thus the impact of electronic media, especially radio and television, has to be seen in the background of our tradition and value-based social structure.

The Indian television system is one of the most extensive in the world. Television was introduced in India in 1959. A UNESCO grant of $20,000 for the purchase of community receivers and a United States offer of some equipment proved much too tempting to resist, and on September, 1959, the Delhi Television Centre went on air. Television broadcasts started from Delhi in September 1959 as part of All India Radio's services. The first major expansion of television in India began in 1972, when a second television station was opened in Bombay.

Media consumption captivates long hours each day in the lives of a typical Indian. Television plays a vital role in the life-style of the people. It allows people to reassert them
on the global stage & have their voices heard rather than viewing these as uncomfortable imposition from outside. And in a country with a high rate of illiteracy, TV informs and educates even as it entertains. With over 50 million TV sets and 20 million homes linked to cable with direct-to-home telecast round the corner and 99% of the population being reached by AIR through its 299 stations spread all-over the country. As per the official website of AIR, toady there are 299 AIR stations across the Country. 29 India is on the threshold of a major infotainment revolution.

Television may be only slightly older than independent India, but its efficacy as a medium far outstrips anything we know. Subsequent to its invention, television has reigned supreme over all the other media of mass communication. Considered as a luxury till a couple of decades ago, today it has become a part of every household, be it rich or poor. There are more than 50 round-the-clock television news networks operating in India in different languages most of which came on the scene between 1992 and 2006. The upheavals in the nature of Indian television have been accompanied by a simultaneous expansion in its reach and penetration.

Today’s children are besieged by manipulative commercial messages day in and day out on television. Companies hire psychologists to help them target children and manipulate them. Also, in terms of programming most of the popular, television shows are either American or Indian imitations of them. One of the most prominent examples of this is the phenomenon of MTV and youth culture in urban India. Consumerism is extremely prominent among this group due to the cultural icons represented through music videos and advertisements, along with their parents’ willingness to support such spending. This seems to hold true as a characteristic of youth culture across the globe, which raises the question of whether this global identity was created to homogenize this particular group.

Television has a major impact on toddlers as it influences their viewing habits throughout their lives. Television violence is accompanied by vivid production features; pre-schoolers are predisposed to seek out and pay attention to violence particularly cartoon violence.

Another important group that has faced major identity transformations, sparked by the engagement in television is women. In recent years, viewers of Indian film and television have witnessed a shift from portrayals of females as innocent and subordinate in nature,
into independent beings. While India’s strong traditional heritage has always been significantly characterized by the traditional roles of women as homemakers and mothers, the portrayal of women on television has challenged this ideal, and therefore cultivated a new perception of womanhood for the Indian woman.

The development efforts taken up by radio and television in context of rural India also can’t be overlooked. Some recent experiments in television have successfully helped in transforming lives of the rural populace. In Chhattisgarh villages Kalyani clubs were set up based on a bi-weekly television programme on health produced by Doordarshan. The programme has inspired the regional women to tackle illness and disease in their villages together. Today, over 10,000 women are using the Kalyani club platform to anchor change in the state.

Rang De Basanti and Lage Raho Munnabhai, the two trend-setting superhit films have one thing in common. They displayed the power of radio, like never before. Today you don't have to scream about the effectiveness of radio. Television has arrived but the radio has not gone. In India, it has been used extensively as a medium of instruction, for imparting education and spreading public awareness among the people. CR has also played a significant role in empowering the marginalized towards effecting the much needed social change in India. In 2008, an English for Fun radio programme was started by the Bihar government. It teaches spoken English and grammar through 50 songs and simple lessons aired by AIR in a 50-minute capsule. As it stands today, India has just made a beginning and a several stations have come up on their own, subject to the rigorous but probably necessary procedures of the licensing authorities.

And despite governmental constraints, CR stations are bringing in socio-economic changes by focusing on local issues and creating awareness. At Bhanaj village, near Rishikesh, CR helped in exposing the corruption in local governance. In Gujarat's Kutch, it addressed gender issues and empowered women who were victims of domestic violence. In Palamau district of Jharkhand, it has helped stop pilferage in mid-day meals scheme for children. Socially, one major challenge faced by India today is that it is so motivated by the capital gain from multinational companies that it often tries to counter balance the impact of the western images by enforcing radical Nationalistic themes. The growing popularity of mass
media in all parts of India is therefore making way for a homogenized Indian culture, whose cultural identity is becoming ever so fragile. Any sort of technological advancement has both pros and cons in the context of social change. Hence, mass media today, in many cities, is seen as a potential threat to indigenous cultural survival and tools of cultural imperialism. With the communication revolution, needs are certainly growing and it is due to mass media and advertisements that the economically-dependent third world is now being internally pressurized to make shifts that may not be financially possible yet incredibly desirable.

1.15: Social Change and Community Radio Movement

The above analysis suggests that mainstream development practices do not contribute to equitable development or increased autonomy and self-reliance for the people of the Third World. Development has created a new priesthood, development 'experts' and technicians, whose arcane language and arbitrary powers give them a monopoly of knowledge over the supposed beneficiaries of development. But the imposition of that monopoly of knowledge has not gone unchallenged. On the margins of the development empire - in the slums and shanty towns of cities, in the countryside, among disenfranchised social groups - new impulses to adapt and subvert the tools of the development empire have occurred. Grassroots development processes challenge the legitimacy of dominant knowledge systems such as neo-liberal economics, modern agronomy and allopathic medicines by favouring indigenous knowledge systems and democratic, popular participation in development.

Misunderstanding communication is as dangerous as misunderstanding development; both are at the core of fifty years of failure in a perspective of human development that is inclusive and brings justice and democracy to all.
Communication that is used to bring about social change has different labels development communication, communication for development (C4D), dev.com. etc. For some, such names pose problems as their roots are seen attached to the colonialist thinking behind communication used after the Second World War. The United Nation’s defines Communication for Development as- two ways communication systems that enable dialogue and that allow communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concerns and participate in the decisions that relate to their development.

1.16: Community Radio and Revitalising the Civil Society

Long back in 1932, Bertolt Brecht, said, as for the radio’s object, I don’t think it can consist simply in prettifying public life. The radio would be the finest possible communication apparatus in public life, a vast network of pipes. That is to say, it would be if it knew how to receive as well as to transmit, how to let the listeners speak as well as hear, how to bring him into a relationship instead of isolating him. Whatever the radio sets out to do it must strive to combat that lack of consequences which makes such asses of almost all our public institutions. But it is not at all our job to renovate ideological institutions on the basis of the existing social order by the means of innovations. Instead our innovations must force them to surrender that basis. So, for innovations, against renovation.

The Brechtian mandate to use radio for social change seems never more pertinent than the present times when the mounting influence of media globalization has eroded diversity and quality of information in the public sphere, rendering civil society increasingly ineffective. The concentration of media and modes of communication in the hands of a few oligarchic multinational corporations is infringing freedom of expression, diversity of information and media plurality. As firms grow larger, they become reluctant to take risks on innovative and or progressive information or cultural forms that could potentially challenge the status quo or strive toward even limited structural change. Since the Industrial Revolution, society and culture have been subservient to technology. One of the compelling tasks today is to reverse the process and make technology serve culture and society.
Meanwhile, broadcasting lessons are being learned from some of India's neighbours. Tiny landlocked Nepal, the Himalayan country that is home to some of the world's highest peaks, is showing the way to south Asia by setting up its first CR station in 1997. Official restrictions have not hindered the arrival of Radio Sagarmatha, the first non-governmental FM station in Nepal. It broadcasts from a transmitter set up by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with support from the United Nations.

Since then, this station has been filling the airwaves of Kathmandu with the sound of long-forgotten Nepali folk music mixed with 'development messages.' Sagarmatha, literally meaning the 'forehead of the ocean' is the Nepali name for Mount Everest. The Nepal Forum of Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ) headed this project and is planning to develop it as a prototype station and training and resource centre that will expand radio into the rural areas of Nepal. "Our long term objective is to encourage dozens or more of small stations throughout the Himalayan country," said NEFEJ executive director Om Khadka.

Radio Sagarmatha launched its own test transmissions in early June, 1997 after getting a license from the Nepali government a herculean effort. Over a dozen other applications are believed to be pending with the Ministry of Communication and Information in this Himalayan kingdom. But analysts in Kathmandu feel it is unlikely that there will be more private radio stations because of the enormous bureaucratic obstacles one must overcome. Presently, Nepal only has two FM stations both operating from Kathmandu. Radio Sagarmatha's 500 watt transmitter has just joined the government-run FM station in Kathmandu. Both stations cover the Kathmandu Valley, an area of around 400 square kilometers.

Radio Sagarmatha is an unusual experiment in other ways. Some of the country's best known media organizations, the Nepal Forum for Environmental Journalists (NEFEJ), the Nepal Press Institute, publishers of Himal magazine, and Worldview Nepal (a media related organization), have taken a lead in establishing Radio Sagarmatha.
UN development statistics say 75% of Nepalis live below the poverty line with an average life expectancy of 55 years. One in every 10 infants dies before the age of five, and 40% of Nepali children are undernourished. Environmental problems have been a concern in Nepal for quite some time. Some two-thirds of the country's rural population live in mountains and plateaus with only 30% arable land. Population pressures on the land in these rural areas have caused erosion and deforestation to reach alarming proportions. Low productivity, unemployment, and poverty are some of the concerns staring in the face of the country. Its backers hope that the Radio Sagarmatha experiment will boost pluralism in the broadcast media in the South Asian region, where the scene has largely been dominated by large, sometimes and monolith official organizations. India hopes to follow this example to improve the economic and social well-being of the country's rural inhabitants, as well as to improve the communication between these communities.

1.18: Community Radio and Its Effectiveness

Generally, people affiliated with CR either as station management, programmers, listeners, or donors, believe that CR works. Programming is generally interesting, and offers viable alternatives to mass-market commercial radio in most license areas. The public interest is often served with programme offerings in health, education, agriculture, culture, politics or financial management, to name a few. Listeners seem to like and appreciate CR stations especially when subjects that they care about are aired. In short, within the development field, CR is widely viewed as a successful approach.

In a sense, the growth and spread of CR stations throughout the world can be considered a movement of social ideas and processes of development. Community based radio stations, when effectively managed by local committees, can demonstrate key principles of local ownership, elevating local voices, community participation in decisions affecting them and collective decision-making. Each of these is essential for good government and democratic values to flourish. CR stations provide venues for less frequently heard small voices to be heard in larger big media. They provide ways of organizing people living together in the same defined geographic area – or community of interest -- around their common values and beliefs.
As CR is a participatory process that aids development and social progress, its assessment contain two components:

- Assessment of the effectiveness of the process of delivering CR (station management, operation and programming), and
- Assessment of the effectiveness of CR stations in contributing to social progress of the communities in which they are broadcasting, and analysis of the impact of such contributions.

Currently, those community media organizations that undertake assessments, often termed evaluations, primarily look at the perceived impact of CR programming on listeners and the perceived views of their listeners. What is most often lacking, however, is a systematic look at the entire process of delivering CR and its programming – an analysis that must be done with the heavy involvement of the intended beneficiaries or those from the affected communities. This perspective looks at assessment as a central component of accountability to the communities, which CR stations serve. Unless such systems are well developed, accountability can be compromised.

1.19: Assessing Community Radio’s Effectiveness

CR is a system that influences public and private values, helps shape public opinion and public will, rescues lost cultures and languages, and informs citizens who may be harder to reach about issues of importance to them. As such, this system is essential to governments and civil society. In order to attract and sustain CR networks within and across national boundaries there is a concrete need of dependable information on what the CR movement has done.

Assessments create knowledge that can be used to make the CR process and its individual station offerings better. No institution, whether from the community or not, can afford to remain stagnant and take its mission or its stakeholders for granted. It is needed to undertake more systematic assessment of CR because liberalization of media may ultimately result in more favorable legislative and policy climates for it, in many parts of
the world. Solid assessment reports can help show regulators and legislators that CR is indeed contributing to social progress of a nation.

Why to assess the effectiveness of CR station? The probable answer to this question may be, it is going to help the CR stations. There may be several other reasons, because there is enough history and available data to make analysis of short-term and long-term outcomes sensible. Because there has been significant financial investment by donors ranging from large bilateral and multilateral institutions to individual donors who have built community stations in Latin America, Africa and Asia, such donors need to know if their money has been put to good use or not. Also, because competition can only increase, due in part to rapidly exploding communication technology which can drive costs down, more CR stations may spring up in those parts of the world with broadcast legislation. On the flip side, we are already seeing dramatic growth of commercial radio stations within developing countries.

As an organization, AMARC and others including CRF can only benefit from cementing its base and demonstrating to all its constituents that the CR process not only works but is essential to the movement of development goals. CR contributes in numerous ways to shaping public attitudes and beliefs, informing citizens, catalyzing dialogue, increasing community participation in decisions that affect them, promoting local ownership of communication processes, and mobilizing members of the affected community. Systematic and regular assessments of both the process of CR and its impact on moving societies needs to be carried out on a regular basis. And finally, regular assessments of the CR process will lead to better radio programming. Review of available literature on community media, community radio, and participatory evaluation revealed no single vehicle or tool that can be automatically adapted to the type of systemic assessment of the CR process. However, there is a myriad of available sources of assessment tools for development or for media, parts of which can be adapted to the challenge of CR.

The nature of CR itself, being participatory and adapted to the cultural, social and political context of each region, country and community, calls for approaches to impact assessment, and even systems assessment, that are consistent with the philosophy of participation and
local ownership. Any assessment should serve the needs and interests of the CR constituencies. That is, the people from the community where the station operates. Assessments will be done in a participatory manner involving all stakeholders and constituents such as listeners, station personnel, affiliated community groups, NGOs and universities.\(^3\)

Usually social scientists are using a two-tiered approach for Community Radio assessments:

- **Looking at the effectiveness of the total process of delivering CR for a defined geographic or franchise area (system effectiveness)**
- **Assessing the effectiveness of CR in bringing about shifts in public values and social norms leading to social progress; and analyzing the impact of such contributions to a given society (impact or social influence).** In both the cases, participatory approaches are preferred where the people involved in the systems or in the processes determine what will be assessed and why, what are the indicators of change, how will they be quantified or qualified, what the data means for their community, and how the knowledge garnered will be presented and shared.
- **System view of CR effectiveness.** This type of assessment can take a short-term or longer-term view. The emphasis is on station delivery, not just programming, with evidence of movement. Indicators can be determined and monitored by people of and from the affected community, with results shared broadly within the community. The vehicle can be written questionnaires or face-to-face individual or group meetings. It may be preferred that a combination of these means are adopted to arrive at the results.
Status of Community Radio in India (as on 15.11. 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of operational Community Radio stations in India</th>
<th>141</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Community Radio stations run by educational institutions</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Community Radio stations run by (NGOs) / Voluntary Organizations</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Community Radio stations run by KVKs/SAU</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: www.mib.nic.in/communityradio

1.21: Rationale of the Study

Many scholars have written about CR, how it promotes community participation and community ownership, how it offers alternative programming for social and national development. In the Indian context many of the scholars and organizations during the past ten years have studied and written about the power of CR and more or less there is an unanimous consensus that it is an effective tool for social change and development.

But, there remains a need to make a specific study of how CR stations over a periods of time have moved development forward in their coverage areas are effecting people and societies. The need for documented primary research, and useful indicators to measure effectiveness was highlighted in a global assessment of CR, conducted by the AMARC in 2006 (AMARC 2007). In his foreword Secretary General, AMARC, Mr. Marcelo Solervicens writes there is need for appropriate tools and indicators to evaluate CR social impact that go beyond information dissemination indicators or small project impact on individuals. Some specific experiences point to the need for further research on how to increase the effectiveness of CR. To do so, the most important challenge is to embed participatory monitoring and evaluation across the CR network.
This research study seeks to partly fulfill this information gap by studying the efficacy and effectiveness of selected CR stations in meeting the needs and requirements of different communities in the respective coverage areas with selected indicators, documenting the findings, and making recommendations for future CR initiatives. It is very important to explore what the community does with CR stations. And how both of them complement each other’s efforts in changing life for the better.

1.22: Need for the Study

As stated earlier, plenty of literature on the potential of CR are available, in particular to bring social change, as its sole focus is the community as opposed to profit. There is also research that evaluates the impact of particular radio programmes on society. However, there is little documented primary research into the overall effectiveness of CR stations and few tested measurement tools to assist this. The need for documented primary research, and useful indicators to measure effectiveness was highlighted in the AMARC assessment of CR in 2006 (AMARC 2007).

This dissertation seeks to partly fulfill the information gap between the broadcaster and beneficiaries by reviewing the effectiveness of a particular CR station. The CR stations chosen for the study are –

1. Jnan Taranga Community Radio Station, KK Handiqui State Open University, Guwahati
2. CMS Community Radio, City Montessori School, Gomatinagar, Lucknow
3. Radio Bundelkhand, Development Alternatives, Orchha, Tekamgarh, MP and

Jnan Taranga Community Radio Station is run by KK Handiqui State Open University, Guwahati, CMS Community Radio is run by City Montessori School, Gomatinagar,
1.23: Overview of the Study

Radio can be regarded as the most appropriate medium of mass communication in developing countries with low literacy rates, poor transportation systems and very low purchasing power. Community based independent media, such as CR is now perceived by media activists and grassroots organizations as a means of enabling rural people and marginalized sections of the society to manage their own development and to acquire a sense of control over its course through self-management. It is trying to break the tradition and create space for the marginalized people with greater access to information and opportunities to participate.

CR has many names and operates with different objectives. Some CR stations are oppositional broadcasters working at the local level. Other stations are run by people without a particular political agenda in order to serve people with a humanitarian and grassroots development motive and there are radio stations that serve local minority language populations. CR has emerged from many origins, different terminology has been used: popular or educational radio in Latin America; rural radio or bush radio in Africa; free radio in parts of Europe; low-power radio in the United States; and ethnic or aboriginal radio in Australia. There might be differences in terms of operations, but all such radio stations have one thing in common, they serve their communities in various capacities.

The concept of participatory lacks a single widely-accepted definition similarly. Participatory communication means different things to different people. However, it is such a popular term that everyone wants to use it. Although it is easy to call an organization, medium, or any campaign participatory, it is equally challenging to prove it by action. CR being run in India, are said to be participatory media. True participatory
media would provide its community members a platform to participate in its initiative, establishment, management, financing, programme development, and evaluation. So, with this basic idea of participatory concept that CR of India is the model of participatory communication this research aims to explore and examine how it has, by it actions, been run as a form of participatory media.

1.24: Genesis of the Problem

In India where literacy rate is still not up to the mark and it is still common to find many rural communities that continue to live in a traditional manner. These rural communities are most of the times isolated and sometimes there is a lack of amenities regarding tools of communication as even the simple means of communication are not available in many of these areas. These rural communities often rely on what interpersonal and social contracts can provide them in terms of information. In this context, community media well have an honored and strategic role to play. They can easily promote literacy and provide alternative voices to the people. They can assure a plurality of voices in communities in a globalize world where mass media giants have opted to merge more and more, to keep their monopoly hold on information.

Further, community media is indeed a vital input to development. It makes people increasingly aware of all about development. Development becomes reality only when people take active part in the process. In the present time, community media is emerging as a prominent discipline of development communication. It aims at overcoming backwardness and is preparing necessary grounds for accepting innovations, ideas, technologies etc.

1.25: The aim:

The aim of the study is to analyse the process and procedure of CR broadcasting and to assess the utility and effectiveness of CR system in India.
1.26: Objectives:

The objectives of the study are to:-

1. Examine the awareness level of the community about CR;
2. Examine the utility and effectiveness of CR in India;
3. Find out how useful is CR in solving the problems of common people; and
4. Give suggestions to make Community Radio a tool of development for the country.

1.27: Research Questions:

This research study explores answers the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics/profiles of the listeners (age, sex and occupation) of CR?
2. What are the listening patterns for the CR, total hours of listening per day; and the programmes that are most often listened to?
3. What are the uses of CR for the community people?
4. What are the public opinion about the CR, its ownership, programmes and its effectiveness?
5. What is the level of public participation in different activities of CRS?
References:


26. [www.mib.nic.in/communityradio](http://www.mib.nic.in/communityradio)


30. Interview with Sushma Iyengar, a grassroots movement activist in Gujarat by Managing Editor Sheela Bhatt in Bhuj titled “Radio will never go” on rediff.com


33. [http://www.mallard.org/nep02.html](http://www.mallard.org/nep02.html)