CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the findings, discussions, implications and recommendations arising from this research which attempted to evaluate the rural development role of CRS. The summary which will be used to provide conclusions will consist of:

- Brief discussion of the purpose of and rationale for the research study;
- Restating of the research problem;
- Brief discussion of the results of the literature review;
- Major findings of the study.

5.2 Summary

5.2.1 Purpose and rationale for the research

The purpose of this study is to substantiate that NGOs which run the Community Radio stations bring social, political and economic development by not only providing access to information and encouraging participation of the community members but also play a major role in enhancing the Social Capital of the community members which leads to further participation and actual development thereby.

The argument is thus, community media in isolation cannot contribute much to development. It needs support from external agencies or institutions, like the NGOs in this case, to catalyse the communication process. The participation of the community members also depends on their ‘community spirit’ which actually decides the level of participation.
5.2.2 Restating the research problem

For a Community Radio station, sustainability is more a matter of organisation and human resources than finance. Community Radio stations have to draw on social and human capital as well as physical and financial resources. But the CRS operators and stakeholders look at sustainability more from the financial perspective rather than the Social Capital and human resource perspective. The lack of sustained, context-specific research on the potential of CRS and its socio economic impact with respect to Indian media scenario is also a reason for the inability to develop an effectual working model for Community Radio Stations. Thus the problem here is lack of understanding about the association between Social Capital, community participation and development thereby.

5.2.3 Brief discussion on the results of literature review

Though a few researches have been done in Community Radio sector, the majority are policy studies, listenership surveys, structural studies of Community Radio stations and studies on financial sustainability. There is one case study of Community Radio and Social Capital done by Kitty Van Vuuren in Australia. Majority of the studies concentrate on developing a successful CRS model which ensures financial sustainability. It is widely believed that with financial capital other barriers can be easily eradicated. But the point is, as far as Community Radio is concerned intense participation can only determine success.

Many literatures in the forms of articles, books and research thesis were analysed to have a better understanding about Community Radio, its evolution, status of CRS in South Asia and India in particular. Literature related to Community Radio and development was studied, while several studies related to Social Capital was also examined.

A key question of this research lies around the contribution of Community Radio to community development. The answer to this question, as a result of literature review, indicated that although difficult to quantify in any systematic way, communities, Community
Radio practitioners, volunteers and other stakeholders feel that Community Radio makes a valuable contribution to community development based on their experiences. The main ways in which the stakeholders conceive of this valuable contribution is that it is a new dimension, avenue or approach in community development work. In this regard also, the literature review suggests strongly that the broad Community Radio sector was of benefit to disadvantaged groups in their coverage areas.

5.2.4 Major findings of the study

The study ascertains that there is a strong relationship between the demographic nature of the community members and the nature of their participation in the CRS. Depending on this factor, their level and intensity of participation varies.

The study proves that the demographic structure of the community has a significant relationship with the pre-existing level of Social Capital among them.

Another finding of the research is that not all the community members participate in CRS. People with more ‘community spirit’ are more likely to participate in the radio.

It is also evident from the results that the NGOs play a major role in enhancing the Social Capital of the community members as well as in encouraging the community members to actively participate in CRS which leads them towards development.

And finally, it is also proved that there is a significant association between the level of Social Capital and rural development which was measured in terms of quality of life, self esteem and freedom.
5.3 Discussion on the findings of the empirical study

5.3.1 Listeners to Community Radio by Demographic Groups

Gender

The male listeners of the CRS were slightly more than the female listeners although the difference is negligible.

Age

Among the respondents, 36 to 50 year olds have the greatest percentage of listeners (22.42%) and younger than 20 years old have the greatest percentage of non-listeners (25%). The age group ‘younger than 20 years’ has the least percentage of listeners (17.58) and those older than 65 years have the least percentage of non-listeners (15%)

Occupation

Self employed people are more likely listeners with almost 24.85% of the share. People who belong to the category ‘servant/maid’ are less likely to listen to Community Radio, with a percentage of 4.85.

Income

Community Radio listening is basically more likely as income decreases. More than 50% of the listeners are from the low income group and only 3.64% of the respondents are from the high income group.

Education

People with mediocre educational qualification tend to listen to CRS more than people with higher qualification or no formal education.
5.3.2 Likes in CRS

The most cited reason for liking the Community Radio is because of the ‘participatory nature’ of the medium. Nearly half of all Community Radio listeners provided this response.

Another common pull for listeners is the scope to spread indigenous knowledge (44.98%) and local nature of the content (44.92%). Factors like community ownership (44.68%), local personalities speaking in the medium (44.25) are also widely liked by the community members.

5.3.3 Dislikes in CRS

The least preferred characteristic of CRS is its poor signal (29.89%) followed by less coverage/reach (29.78%) and less entertainment (27.75%)

5.3.4 Association between demographic variables and participation in CRS

Gender and participation in CRS

Both males and females are more or less equally listening to Community Radio Stations. Though the number of male listeners is slightly higher than that of the female listeners, the difference is trifling, and thus it might well be deduced that there is no significant association between gender and participation in CRS.

Age and participation in CRS

The listeners of CRS are almost equally spread across all the age groups though it is not the same in the case of non-listeners. Among non-listeners a slightly higher number of them are younger than 20 years.
Occupation and participation in CRS

Among the listeners, the maximum number falls under the category of unemployed/retired/pensioners and a considerably lesser number is from the category of government job and maid/servant. In case of non-listeners too, a major portion of the respondents are unemployed/retired/pensioners and a minimum number of them are from the categories namely farmer, home maker and maid/servant.

Family monthly income and participation in CRS

There is a prominent association between income and participation in CRS. The participation increases as there is a decrease in income level. High income groups are less likely to participate in CRS.

Education and CRS

The results show that a very low number of listeners have higher educational qualification and very few non-listeners are from low educational level. It is thus evident that as the level of education increases people are less likely to listen to CRS.

5.3.5 Relationship between demographic variables and Social Capital

Gender and Social Capital

There is no significant difference among male and female as far as their level of social participation is concerned but there is a significant difference among them when it comes to social support, social networks and civic participation. Males tend to have a higher level of social support, social networks and civic participation when compared to females. In other terms we can say that they have a higher level of ‘community spirit’.
Age and Social Capital

Age and social participation:
The members whose age is lesser than 20 years have higher level of social participation as against the people older than 65 years who have the least level of social participation.

Age and social support:
A higher level of social support prevails among the age group ‘51 to 65 years’ and a lower level of social support prevails in the age group ‘younger than 20 years’.

Age and social networks:
The age group ‘51 to 65 years’ has a higher level of social networks and the people falling under the age group ‘Older than 65 years’ has a lower level of social networks.

Age and civic participation:
The age group ‘Older than 65 years’ has a lower level of civic participation and the respondents falling under the age group ‘51 to 65 years’ have a higher level of civic participation.

Education and Social Capital

Education and social participation:
The respondents having educational qualification up to the 5th standard have a higher level of social participation; contrarily the respondents with SSLC qualification have a lower level of social participation.

Education and social support:
The respondents who are illiterates or without formal education have a higher level of social support, whereas those with a higher level of education (Post graduates) have a lower level of social support.
Education and social networks:
The respondents who have completed school up to the 5th standard have a higher level of social networks, while the respondents who are post graduates have a lower level of social networks.

Education and civic participation:
The respondents who have completed school up to the 5th standard have a higher level of civic participation, and the respondents with SSLC qualification have a lower level of Civic Participation.

**Family monthly income and Social Capital**

Family monthly income and social participation:
The respondents who have a family monthly income of Rupees 15,001 to 20,000 have a higher level of social participation, and the respondents who have a family monthly income of Rupees 10,001 to 15,000 have a lower level of social participation.

Family monthly income and social support:
The respondents who have a family monthly income of less than Rupees 5,000 have a higher level of social support, and the respondents who have a family monthly income of Rupees 15,001 and above have a lower level of social support.

Family monthly income and social networks:
The respondents who have a family monthly income of less than Rupees 5,000 have a higher level of social networks, and the respondents who have a family monthly income of Rupees 15,001 and above have a lower level of social networks.

Family monthly income and civic participation:
The respondents who have a family monthly income of less than Rupees 5,000 have a higher
level of civic participation, and the respondents who have a family monthly income of Rupees 15,001 and above have a lower level of civic participation.

**Occupation and Social Capital**

**Occupation and social participation:**

The respondents falling under the category ‘Self-employed/Business’ have a higher level of social participation. The respondents who belong to the category ‘Maid/servant’ have the lowest level of social participation.

**Occupation and social support:**

The respondents falling under the category ‘Farmer’ have a higher level of social support. The respondents who belong to the category ‘Private Job’ have a lower level of social support next to unemployed/retired/pensioners.

**Occupation and social networks:**

The respondents falling under the category ‘Farmer’ have a higher level of social networks. The respondents who belong to the category ‘Maid/servant’ have the lowest level of social networks.

**Occupation and civic participation:**

The respondents falling under the category ‘Self employed/business’ have a higher level of civic participation. The respondents who belong to the category ‘Maid/servant’ have the lowest level of civic participation.

**5.3.6 Influence of NGO on Social Capital**

The following eight items were listed as the indicators of the influence of NGOs on Social Capital of the community members. The major significant predictors were selected for social participation, social support, social networks and civic participation.
1. Influence of NGO on quality time spent with non-household members

2. Influence of NGO in increasing an individual’s frequency of contacts with non-household members

3. Influence of NGO in encouraging individuals to offer financial aid to non-household members

4. Influence of NGO in encouraging individuals to offer non-financial aid to non-household members

5. Influence of NGO in increasing the frequency of involvement in group activities

6. Influence of NGO in increasing the number of groups an individual is involved with

7. Influence of NGO in encouraging an individual to participate in discussions and decision making process

8. Influence of NGO in motivating an individual to keenly take part in social welfare activities

**Influence of NGO on social participation**

Out of eight such indicators only three indicators including Influence of NGO on quality time spent with non-household members, Influence of NGO in encouraging individuals to offer financial aid to non-household members, Influence of NGO in increasing the frequency of involvement in group activities evolved as significant predictors of social participation in the present study group.

**Influence of NGO on social support**

Out of eight such indicators only three indicators including Influence of NGO in encouraging individuals to offer financial aid to non-household members, Influence of NGO in increasing
the number of groups an individual is involved with, Influence of NGO on quality time spent with non-household members evolved as significant predictors of social support in the present study group.

**Influence of NGO on social networks**

Out of eight such indicators five indicators including, Influence of NGO on quality time spent with non-household members, Influence of NGO in encouraging an individual to participate in discussions and decision making process, Influence of NGO in increasing the frequency of involvement in group activities, Influence of NGO in encouraging individuals to offer non-financial aid to non-household members, Influence of NGO in motivating an individual to keenly take part in social welfare activities evolved as significant predictors of social networks in the present study group.

**Influence of NGO on civic participation**

Out of eight such indicators four indicators including, Influence of NGO in encouraging an individual to participate in discussions and decision making process, Influence of NGO in increasing the frequency of involvement in group activities, Influence of NGO in encouraging individuals to offer non-financial aid to non-household members, Influence of NGO in increasing the number of groups an individual is involved with evolved as significant predictors of social networks in the present study group.

**5.3.7 Influence of NGO on participatory behaviour of the community members in CRS**

The results of the study clearly show that the NGOs play a major role in encouraging community participation in all possible levels and areas. The community members feel that the NGOs have a big share of contribution in promoting the CRS and creating awareness about the medium. Secondly the NGOs encourage the community members to listen to it. They also encourage them to send feedback and interact during programme production. But
the NGOs have played a lesser significant role in encouraging them to take part in station management and broadcasting and providing training in programme production.

5.3.8 Association between Social Capital and Inclusion and participation in CRS

The correlation between the Social Capital indicators namely social participation, social support, social networks, civic participation, and inclusion and participation in CRS is highly significant. Social participation, in particular, has a significant association with inclusion and participation which shows that the tendency of an individual to participate in group activities determines his intensity of participation in CRS.

5.3.9 Association between Inclusion & participation in CRS and Rural development

The correlation between Inclusion and participation in CRS and rural development in terms of quality of life, self esteem and freedom is highly significant. Especially, inclusion and participation has more effect on quality of life. It is thus clear that the level of participation in CRS has a significant association with the rural development.

5.3.10 Association between Social Capital and Rural Development

The correlation between Social Capital in terms of social participation, social support, social networks, civic participation and rural development in terms of quality of life, self esteem and freedom is highly significant.

Social participation has higher influence on quality of life, social support has higher influence on freedom, social support has higher influence on quality of life and civic participation has higher influence on self esteem. This shows that, by and large the two out of three indicators of rural development, namely quality of life and freedom, are highly influenced by the Social Capital of the community members.
5.3.11 Readiness of the Non-listeners to participate

Lastly, the readiness of the non-listeners to participate in CRS was assessed which confirms that 34.37% of the non-listeners expressed their willingness to start participating in the CRS. Whereas, a majority of them (43.75%) are not sure about their participation in CRS and 21.87% of the non-listeners are not ready to participate in the CRS.

5.3.12 Results of focus group discussions

Strengths

It is evident from the focus group discussions that the community members, both male and female, are very enthusiastic and excited about the possibility of working with CRS and engage themselves.

CRS has become very intimate to the lives of the community members, especially, the potential listeners. A feeling of belongingness could be sensed among them.

The CRS is managed with the minimum available financial and physical resources available.

The information exchange is quick. This helps the community members, especially, during crisis situations. The feedback is also very effective and constructive

It is a very positive sign to observe people listening in groups, interacting, discussing and debating on everyday issues. This empowers people by creating awareness of how to exercise one’s rights at the same time, breaking the sense of isolation often felt by rural people

CRS is exclusively in the hands of locals who usually are considered to have more understanding about the problems that the communities face.

Weakness

Though the level of participation in programme production is considerably good, the stations suffer from programme inconsistency.
There is a general discontent with poor signal which is a consequence of the low power transmitter and mediocre grade of audio equipments.

Poor internet connectivity is a genuine problem faced by the station. Transportation is also a major problem and due to that they programmers confine their territory to the adjoining villages.

Lack of Long-term commitment and coordinated efforts among the community members and volunteers and even the staff of CRS should be considered seriously.

Lack of confidence among the community members to run the station in the absence of assistance organisations

Training provided to the community members and volunteers is of ad hoc nature. Implementing organizations should incorporate training of management, financial, technical, equipment maintenance, and journalistic skills into their projects. Most importantly, they should prepare project beneficiaries to face and adapt to change.

**Opportunities**

If the permitted duration of commercials per hour is increased, probably the CRS will be able to mobilize more revenue through advertisements. But still they should try generating revenue through membership fees and sponsorships.

The radio stations can make partnerships with other groups, organizations, schools, government, etc., to have a network to facilitate programming and increased listening.

CRS can be paired with other ICTs to have a more effective reach. Convergence with new media and the Internet would definitely enhance the ability of CRS.

Radio clubs and listener groups could be formed which will help the station to retain its audience and create more potential listeners.
Audience research could feed the CRS operators with what exactly the audience want and will give an idea about their perceptions of the ongoing programmes. Thus separate funds should be allocated for conduct of necessary and rigorous quantitative and qualitative research to measure the effects of CRS.

Networks of community radio stations can serve as effective and efficient forum for exchange of programming, creation of national news, and information programs. Professional associations can play a vital role in establishing professional codes of ethics, identifying training needs, and establishing training programs.

**Threats**

There is no assurance for financial sustainability as there is no strong revenue model or funding strategy and hence the medium has to struggle to sustain financially.

There exists an unequal access to CRS due to the feudal social structure which may cause serious problems as far as participation is concerned.

Though the community members are enthusiastic, there is a low level of enthusiasm among the staff due to less salary paid which is in no match with the outside world.

There is a serious competition from local cable channels as far as mobilizing advertisements from the neighbourhood is concerned. People find cable channels more flexible in terms of rates, timings and frequency of appearances.

Once the radio was considered to be the poor man’s medium. But as the government started distribution of free TV sets to the households, people rely mostly on TV programmes nowadays.
5.4 Conclusion

This final chapter draws together the key findings of the study and presents them under a number of the common themes and headings used in Chapter 3 in order to analyse the respective responses of the Community Radio listeners and non-listeners and the various other stakeholders.

The chapter also outlines the aims and rationale of the research and relates this to the main findings. This is followed by discussions, implications and at the close of the chapter, by certain recommendations.

This study endorses that development is desirable and that community media can indeed contribute towards development. But generally the role of media is over-emphasized and it claims a priority of importance. Although the researcher does consider Community Radio of considerable value in development, they can never be effective alone, without social institutions acting as catalysts for the communication process. Thus there is little media can do in isolation.

Social Capital creates the possibility for community development and it is also a key product of community development. A minimal, pre-existing level of Social Capital is necessary for community development to work.

It is clear from the study that a pre-existing Social Capital among the community members determines the level of access and participation in Community Radio and thereby rural development. This process also requires a catalyst like the NGOs in this case which runs the Community Radio and facilitates the communication process. The researcher has also tried to evaluate and endorse the role of NGOs in enhancing the Social Capital of the community members.
The more people are connected, the more they are able to access information, resources, and develop appropriate behaviour towards one another as well. NGOs have played a role of bringing people together through constant interactions and hence building solidarity relationships that have made members to develop trust relationships which eased information dissemination. Solidarity confers upon members norms of trust that facilitate participation for common benefit.

5.5 Implications

The researcher sought to explore the role of Community Radio in, and its relationship with, the NGO sector, and more specifically, within the sphere of rural development. The thought behind this was that Community Radio is often misinterpreted and narrowly seen as either a radio broadcaster solely in the mode of public radio, or as aspirant commercial radio stations. This widely held misconception has had a detrimental effect on the recognition of the role of Community Radio in community development and, to a degree, has also acted as constraint on the expansion of the community development work of Community Radio.

Community Radio should not be considered as just another mass medium which mostly follow a top down approach and have an already proven business model. The Community Radio enthusiasts and institutions like NGOs should firstly have a good will among the public. Secondly the proposed community to be served should have a minimum level of Social Capital which will enable them to engage in CRS activities.

Otherwise the CRS operators should initially boost the community spirit of the people not only in order to ensure participation but also to develop a sense of commitment and belongingness towards the station. Once this is developed sustainability of the station will be taken care of by them.
The success of a Community Radio station will be ensured only by exhaustive participation from the community members and not by financial sustainability which can be guaranteed by institutional funds or sponsors. The real success would be when the community members become confident and capable to run the CRS by themselves even if the supporting organisation withdraws their support in every means.

5.6 Recommendations

True, CRS operators are more concerned about the sustainability of the station and this is common across the globe. CRS operators look at sustainability more from the financial perspective, but sustainability should be perceived as a matter of organisation and human resources than finance. Community Radio stations have to draw on Social Capital as they do with physical and financial resources. They have to prove themselves as social entities first and foremost.

There is no modus operandi for Community Radio sector which will ensure its success in terms of increased participation, revenue generation and impact. The lack of sustained, context-specific research on the potential of CRS and its socio-economic impact with respect to the Indian media scenario is also a reason for the inability to develop an effectual model for Community Radio Stations.

One common apprehension among the stakeholders of the CRS is about competition from audio visual media which they feel will outsmart the Community Radio. But it is evident from the study that the most preferred feature of CRS is the ‘localness’ of the content. The Community Radio station must dwell on its strongest reason for existence – local events, issues, concerns, and personalities. If a local station can do an exhaustive reportage of what goes on in its community on a regular basis, there is no way a regional or national broadcast
outfit could compete for listenership. The element of proximity is the most potent quality that the Community Radio should capitalize on. People will be enthusiastic to know on a daily or even hourly basis about the people and events unfolding next to their place of abode.

Thus they should be discouraged from competing with their counterparts of commercial and public radio stations and satellite television channels as this may lead to commercialization of CRS.

The study also tries to stress that the fundamental condition for a community to start its own Community Radio station is a sense of internal cohesion which is reflected by the pre-existing Social Capital among the community members. It becomes imperative for the Community Radio enthusiasts, social institutions and NGOs who kick-start CRS initiatives to re-examine the approach when they assess the conditions for setting up the CRS.

The board and management of a Community Radio station should rate community participation above everything else as this would ensure that the mission and vision of the station echo with every operation of that Community Radio station.

The CRS operators should ensure that programmes are primarily developmental, and revenue making should be secondary.

There is a need to create awareness and provide orientation on ways to use Community Radio for social change, development and political participation among the population in general. Efforts to promote the use of the radio’s developmental potential must actively seek to involve women and youth as listeners by, for example, encouraging the establishment of women’s radio listening groups.

Community Radio stations can make use of the Internet for networking with other stations and they can become community multimedia centres, incorporating Internet content in their programmes and providing communities with access and expertise. As new technologies and
combinations of technologies make affordable rural Internet possible, connecting Community Radio stations should be a priority.

5.7 Limitations of the research

As this study is mainly based on quantitative survey research of a considerably large population, it was unable to shed light on the nature of participation at the individual level.

The measures of participation in CRS were self reported and the study used only self responses for the questions related to Social Capital and rural development. Thus the external validity of the findings should be used with caution.

The scale of this study is limited due to economic and time limitations, but it demonstrates the benefit of extending this kind of research over the past.

Empowerment of people through Community Radio was directly measured through participation but its consequences for development were neither easy to measure nor possible to predict.

To conclude it may be mentioned that there is a clear need for comprehensive evaluation and continued research in this sector. It is essential to focus on community radio as a powerful source for empowerment, especially for disenfranchised and marginalized groups in society. Research efforts to quantify, analyze, and draw conclusions regarding the impact of community radio are essential and can serve as a sound basis for assistance advocacy.