



A Study on the Potential of Community Radio in Spreading Education in Chhattisgarh

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Abstract: Education is the only means to develop an economically prosperous society and to ensure social justice. Providing education is therefore vital to human rights, but education is not equally distributed around the world. In case of India, there is only 77.7% people are literate, which is quite worrying as a statistic. The geographical and cultural condition of Chhattisgarh state makes it very suitable for community media. Due to inaccessible hilly terrain, dense forests and the network of rivers, many areas of this state remain cut off from each other. During the rainy season many areas here are in the grip of heavy rains and it becomes difficult to reach. In such a situation, even restoring communication services is a big challenge, in which the mainstream media has often failed. There is a lot of diversity here culturally and linguistically as well. In such a situation, the need of communication of the people here can be fulfilled only through the community media. Community media can prove to be successful in providing administrative assistance and proper development to remote and isolated people and areas. According to the geographical economic and cultural situation of Chhattisgarh, radio proves to be the most suitable of all mediums of communication. This study explains the importance of community media as a tool of interactive communication. It also analyze the dissemination of educational content through community radio operating in Chhattisgarh. The overall literacy rate of Chhattisgarh is 70.28 % according to the 2011 census, while the female literacy rate is 60%. According to these statistics, the state is quite backward in terms of literacy, keeping it in mind this paper also discuss the potential of community radio as a teaching aid in Chhattisgarh. For this study, content analysis as well as integrative literature review has been done, and the conclusions obtained accordingly show how community radio can play its role in spreading education.

Key words: Education, Community Radio, Chhattisgarh, Dissemination, Educational Content.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a power through which every individual develops from purely physical consciousness to higher intellectual development. An important measure of the development of any country can be considered the literacy of that country. Only literate citizens are capable of building a developed, inclusive and benevolent nation. Swami Vivekananda Said -

“Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.”

Education is seen as a force for social development, which brings about improvement in every aspect of society. It is that vocal means of self- expression of the individual which gives man a different and higher status than the any creature, in the stage of evolution. The purpose of the education is to facilitate the process of development of individual. The role of education for an ideal society and individual is innumerable. It is necessary for every society and nation to bring overall happiness and prosperity to its people. The ministry of Education, Government of India supports the use of technology to improve teaching - learning and promote innovation across educational systems. The Government of India has introduced the new National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which recommends a number of innovations in learning-teaching process that is expected to bring about profound changes in education in India. The use of technology in the spread of education is a major element which is being talked about quite vocally these days. The way, technology

has contributed in keeping communication and dialogue going during calamities like floods, disaster, inaccessibility, epidemics is noteworthy.

Radio is the most widely available mass medium in the world for over a century. Its importance remains the same today as it was decades ago. Community radio broadcasting was an important step taken for development needs of developing and underdeveloped countries. Over the years community radio has become source of strength for downtrodden, marginalized, and oppressed people. In a country like India with cultural, social, linguistic, geographical and economic diversity, this medium has created a distinct identity. Today, community radio is proving to be a medium to help people, reach various goals of development by connecting people with issues of public concern in different communities and institutions, in different areas of the country.

2. Related Literature

The beginning of radio communication in India and its journey has been very interesting. The radio broadcasting services which started during the British rule went through many stages till the independence of the country. While in the initial phase, radio was mainly limited to the communication for the information and entertainment, but its importance in the spread of education was also understood that is why 'The school Broadcast Project' was commissioned in 1937 to focus on elementary school students (**Usha & Sharma, 2003**). University Broadcast Project was initiated in 1965, with an aim to expand higher education as widely as possible among the different strata of the society (**Vyas & others, 2002**). In 1979-80 language learning programme, popularly known as 'Radio Pilot Project' was started by All India Radio and Rajasthan Government's education department. The project was found useful in improving the vocabulary of children. With its success, similar project was repeated in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh with some modification (**Kumar, 2024**). In collaboration with IGNOU, AIR stations of Mumbai, Hyderabad and Shilong started broadcast of IGNOU programmes in 1992. The target audience of this broadcast service were students of open or conventional universities (**Vyas & Others, 2002**). In 1998 IGNOU and AIR again started IGNOU- AIR Interactive Radio Counselling (IRC) for the students of open or conventional universities. This project was very successful in order to bridge the gap between institutions and learners. The decision of the Supreme Court on broadcasting service in the 1990s gave a new dimension to the expansion of broadcasting service in the country. After this the concept of commercial radio was born and radio licenses were distributed by the government. At the same time, educational radio was also started to promote the use of mass media in education. However, the concept of educational radio did not become that successful in the country (**Sreedher and Murada, 2019**). There was a demand for separate community radios for different communities in the country for a long time. But in the year 2004, the country's first community radio was started in the form of Anna FM at Anna University, Chennai. Social organizations continued to fight for their broadcasting service to the community. In 2006, the government passed a proposal to grant radio licenses to non-governmental organizations as well. Thus, today there are three types of radio service working in the country, first public sector broadcasting, second commercial broadcasting and third community broadcasting service (**Singh, 2010**).

3. Community Radio Stations in Chhattisgarh

Radio broadcasting in India started in 1920s, while it took decades for radio broadcasting service to start in Chhattisgarh. The first radio broadcasting station in Chhattisgarh has started on October 2, 1963 from Raipur by All India Radio. According to Prasar Bharti there are 13 radio stations in state, namely Ambikapur, Bilaspur, Jagdalpur, Raigarh, Raipur, Saraipalli, Manendragarh, Konta, Kharod, Korba, Pandariya, Kanker and Dongargarh. FM service was started in the state in 1991-92, whose stations are in Raipur, Bilaspur and Raigarh. Gyanwani has also broadcasted in the state as an experiment of educational radio. The broadcast of Gyanwani started under the joint aegis of AIR and Indira Gandhi National Open University (**Sreedher & Murada, 2019**). Raipur was chosen as the center for this broadcast service in the state. In September 2009, Raipur based Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya Received a letter of intent from the ministry of information and broadcasting for setting up a community radio station. Thus the first community radio broadcast started in the state. Journey of community radio broadcasting is started here with Radio IGKV, Raipur in early 2009, in very slow pace. Even after more than a decade since the inception of the first community radio, the number of community radios in the state has not increased as much as it should have. The community radio station 'Radio Raman' has made effective efforts in preserving the endangered folk tales and folk songs of Chhattisgarh (**Pandey & Singh, 2025**). Through this medium the local community is also being made aware of their cultural heritage. Hamar Radio 90.4 MHz is a CRS situated in Surajpur district of Chhattisgarh. Vikas Anusandhan Sansthan is running this CR station with the help of UNICEF. It focuses to preserve local traditions, culture and enhance the livelihood and sustainability of prospects in the region (**Sharma, 2022**).

Today total 15 community radio stations are working in the state, as on 17th January 2025. The list of community radio stations of the state is given below-

Table 1: Community radio stations in Chhattisgarh

S. No.	Name of Community Radio Station	Organization	district	Category
1	Radio Neotech 90.4 FM	Neotech Technical and Management College	Sarguja	Educational Institution
2	Radio Raman	Dr. C.V. Raman University, Kota	Bilaspur	Education Institution
3	Hamar Radio (90.4 FM)	Vikas Anusandhan Sansthan	Surajpur (Bishrampur)	NGO
4	Radio Saawan	Govt. Boys Higher Secondary School	Balrampur	Educational Institution
5	Radio Samwad 90.8 FM	Kushabhau Thakre Patrakarita Avam Jansanchar Vishwavidyalaya	Raipur	Educational Institution
6	Arpaa Radio (90.8 MHz)	Libra Welfare Society, Bilaspur	Bilaspur	NGO
7	Sahyogi Radio	Sahyogi Mitra Mandal	Durg	NGO
8	Radio Lokwani	Sutra Samaj Seva Sansthan	Durg	NGO
9	Radio Sangwari	Samata jan Kalyan Samiti	Rajnandgaon	NGO
10	Radio Dhoom 91.2 MHz	Janmitram Kalyan Samiti	Raigarh	NGO
11	Gyanodaya 91.20	Surguja Gyanoday Association	Surajpur	NGO
12	90.4 FM	Sanjay Nishakt Jan Kalyan Samiti	Kabirdham	NGO
13	Radio Raipuriya 90.00	The Vision Foundation	Sundarnagar, Raipur	NGO
14	Mitan Radio 91.2 MHz	Relief and Help Society	Durg	NGO
15	Radio Mahtari 90.00	Nav Kaushal Vikas Sansthan	Mahasamund Chhattisgarh	NGO

This table shows that as on date there are 15 community radio stations are operational, out of which 4 stations are run by educational institutions while 11 are run by NGOs. Apart from these, a community radio station, operating in the Krishi Vigyan Kendra category has already been closed.

4. Objectives

This paper makes an in-depth study on community radio stations operating in Chhattisgarh with the main objectives of;

- Explain the importance of community media as a tool of interactive communication.
- Analyze the dissemination of educational content through community radio operating in Chhattisgarh.
- Discuss the possibilities of community radio as a teaching aid in Chhattisgarh.

5. Methodology

This study uses an integrative literature review as a research method to construct a result for alternative learning in remote areas, where it was challenging to do virtual learning during the crisis and difficulties of accessing the internet network. In the integrative literature review study, data analysis is replaced with clear logic as the basis for argument and explanation.

Content analysis of the programmes broadcast by community radio stations in Chhattisgarh is also being done in this study. This will provide information about the nature of the programmes broadcast through these stations. Along with this, it also helps in highlighting its importance in the easy dissemination of education.

Radio Raman 90.4 FM Kota, Bilaspur

Radio Raman 90.4 FM is a Community Radio Broadcasting service situated in campus of C.V. Raman University, Kota in Bilaspur district of Chhattisgarh state. Radio Raman broadcasts informational and educational programmes to the 15 km radius of area which included approx. 225 villages. This radio station has functioned from 31st May 2014 with detailed aims and objectives which are as follows,

1. Broadcasting of Programmes on various subjects through local languages.
2. To broadcast programs related to women empowerment.
3. To produce and broadcast programmes to aware people for education
4. Broadcasting inspirational programmes.
5. To aware community about Social evils and taking initiatives to end superstition.
6. Broadcast health related programmes.
7. To broadcast ideal and entertaining programmes.
8. Broadcasting Short stories and inspirational stories for children.
9. Provide information about the law.
10. Production and broadcasting of programmes related to the benefit of farmers.
11. Encouraging to be a skilled entrepreneur.
12. Ensuring the participation of teachers and students.
13. To Promote and provide a platform to folk art.
14. Taking government schemes to the community.
15. Contribute to development and modernization.

Some major programs broadcast from Radio Raman

Radio Raman is not for profit but to inform the community through education, entertainment, health and awareness. This radio station broadcasts informative programs daily to a community of about 225 villages within a radius of 15 kilometer. Radio Raman is associated with every section of the community like children, women, farmers, youth and elders through various programmes. People of every class are provided information according to their interest. Some of the programs broadcast by Radio Raman are as follows-

Table 2: major programs broadcast from Radio Raman

Sr.no	Programme Name	Genre and Content	Target Audience	Subject
1	Samay Hamara Baat Hamari	Question forum, Teacher and student community discussion, Lecture Series by the professor	Students	Education
2	Kuchh Kahna Hai Sakhi	Information related to family planning, gynecology, vaccination, health care, domestic violence, gender equality, hygiene and childbirth	Women	Social Education and Health
3	Harihar Kheti	Agriculture based information, interaction with agricultural experts, farmers questions and answers	Farmers	Agriculture and allied Subjects
4	Hamar Bani Hamar Goth	Programs in local language Chhattisgarhi, Platform for folk artists, folk songs	General Audience	Culture and Literature
5	Chhattisgarh ke Sujan	Programs based on the lives of Chhattisgarh's folk artists, writers, litterateurs, patriots, painters etc.	General Audience	Motivational
6	Bachhe Man Ke Sachhe	Broadcast of inspirational stories, poems, jokes etc. for children	Children	Motivational, Educational
7	Nav Chetna	Informative programs based on Central and State Government schemes	General Audience	Govt. Plans

8	Sehat Ki Baat	Health-related information is given, experts' advice is also given about the symptoms and prevention of diseases.	General Audience	Health
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Apart from the above programs, many other programs of development are also broadcast from here. 6 days a week from 11:00 am to 4.30 pm daily 5.30 hours telecast is being done from here.

Radio Lokwani 89.6 FM

Radio Lokwani is a CRS operating in Patan, Durg district. This station is operated by an NGO named, Sutra Samaj Seva Sansthan. Its main objective is the all-round development of the rural people of the state. This station is striving for education, health and awareness along with promoting the local language. Lokwani Durg 89.6 FM is also an online community radio station from Chhattisgarh. Its programmes mainly contains information that will be helpful to the local farmers. This radio station tries to connect with maximum number of people through its programmes. Most of its programs are interactive. Durg has the distinction of being the most literate district in entire Chhattisgarh. This is also evident from the feedback the radio receives from the listeners here. Excellent source of water, fertile land provides better opportunities for agriculture. At the same time, due to industries, the working class is also present here in large numbers. Overall, people of every class are present here for whom programs are being prepared in Radio Lokwani. This relatively new community radio has also started innovation in program production. Vaccine awareness, promotion of local talent, programs for the elderly, and programs for women, farmers, and workers are prepared and broadcasted from here. The broadcast time of this radio is from 06 in the morning to 10 in the night. For this reason also, it is emerging as an alternative to other services in the field of radio broadcasting.

Table 3- Major programs broadcast from Radio Lokwani

Sr. No	Programme Name	Genre and Content	Target Audience	Subject
1	Humara Ghar Humara Vidyalaya	Question forum, Teacher and student community discussion, Lecture Series by the professor	Students	Education
2	Hello Farmaish (Chhattisgarhi Songs)	Demanding program of Chhattisgarhi songs	General Audience	Culture
3	Health Tips	Identification of diseases and their symptoms, preventive measures and tips from the doctor	General Audience	Health
4	Motivational Kahani	Inspirational stories for children, stories of great men and principles of life	Children	Education
5	Chhoti Si Pahal	Soft genre programs on cleanliness, health and different social issues	General Audience	Informative
6	Kalakaron Ki Kahani, Kalakaron Ki Zubani	Conversation with folk artists of the region, inspirational events related to their lives	General Audience	Motivational
7	Vishesh Charcha	Discussion with subject matter experts on specific issues	General Audience	Informative and Educational

7. Findings

- The foundation of community radio in India is based on the developmental principles, hence the priority of community radio is to ensure that the station is available to the community without any hindrance. Thus Community radio provides a common platform to its community where they can openly express their aspirations, hopes and needs.
- Community radios of Chhattisgarh are broadcasting social development programs like education, health, culture, awareness etc. Positive changes in the society are also being promoted through them. For example, there is a musical programme, named 'Farmaishi Geet' broadcast from Community Radio Lokwani 89.6 Patan, Durg, in the peak period of Corona people were asked about their Corona vaccination, and on demand songs were recited on giving proof of vaccination.



- Educational institutions are broadcasting educational lectures and other format of radio production through community radio in the form of campus radio. Along with this, programmes are also being made and broadcast on topics like health, skills, awareness, cleanliness, agriculture etc.

8. Delimitations

- Chhattisgarh is a big and untouched state. Reaching out to the underprivileged community and all the community radios here, that are in operation is a difficult and time-consuming undertaking.
- Less-availability of any kind of research or local documents on community radio in the state has also been a major drawback.

9. Conclusion

As a mass medium radio is accessible and affordable to the people of India. Community radio is comparatively a new concept for Indian society. It tends to be a community oriented democratic medium of communication. It is a tool for empowerment, social development and voice for voiceless. Over the years community radio stations have also developed to become a source of strength to the people. Community radio has a potential to play an important role to make its communities aware and lead them for social development. As communication is the key aspect of development and if it associates with the participatory mode of communication, then it certainly awakes communities for their needs, their rights and leads them to the development. Education is a key aspect of development, Indian broadcasting policy facilitates the educational institutions to set up Community Radio in their campus and disseminate information and knowledge. In this way in India community radio plays a role of a radio for community as well as a campus radio.

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