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The performance of community radio stations in southern India: An empirical study

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Abstract---One of the media that had created great impact among the people and later became a companionship to them is Radio. The radio has influenced people who listen to its programme broadcasted on various subjects. The radio was invented by Guglielmo Marconi in 1897 (Degna M., 2001). It comes in different sizes to the needs of the people and it is most portable that one can carry it with them. Transformation of transistor radios in 1950s to digital radio in late nineties and later web radio was introduced. Today, listening to radio has become a hobby to many people and it has changed numerous people around the world towards better living attitude. It became a source for information. Radio has become an instrument for collecting information that happens around the world. Besides that, radio reduced the stress on the people especially those who are subjected to hard labor works. However, Wireless Radio Transmission was started during the early nineties. Along with Guglielmo Marconi, another Inventor named as Professor Reginald Aubrey Fessenden has transmitted using wireless radio across the ocean for the first time in 1906 (Helen F., 1940; Ormond R.,1970).

Keywords---performance, community radio stations, programme broadcasted.

Introduction

One of the media that had created great impact among the people and later became a companionship to them is Radio. The radio has influenced people who listen to its programme broadcasted on various subjects. The radio was invented by Guglielmo Marconi in 1897 (Degna M., 2001). It comes in different sizes to the needs of the people and it is most portable that one can carry it with them. Transformation of transistor radios in 1950s to digital radio in late nineties and later web radio was introduced. Today, listening to radio has become a hobby to many people and it has changed numerous people around the world towards

better living attitude. It became a source for information. Radio has become an instrument for collecting information that happens around the world. Besides that, radio reduced the stress on the people especially those who are subjected to hard labor works. However, Wireless Radio Transmission was started during the early nineties. Along with Guglielmo Marconi, another Inventor named as Professor Reginald Aubrey Fessenden has transmitted using wireless radio across the ocean for the first time in 1906 (Helen F., 1940; Ormond R.,1970). It was a world historical event that was carried out by Reginald A.F. on 24th Dec 1906. Since then the radio transmission had become an instrument to communicate with people within the transmission radius. This electronic communication invention has created spur among the community to listen to the radio that gives plenty of information which can be useful for the people. Countries like Brazil, South Africa, Australia, USA, Great Britain, China, India, Vietnam, Lao, Cambodia, Russia and Germany where the Community Radio (CR) has played a major role to motivate the people especially during the period of war and natural disastrous. However, the communication through wireless radio did not reach the people who are residing at rural areas, either they were out of reach or there is no radio. As a community services like voluntary sectors, civil societies, agencies, NGOs around the world had developed the community radio which acts as a vehicle to reach the unreached people in the rural area and to further develop the rural community through broadcasting. On 26th December 2004, earthquake measuring 9.3 scaled in the Indian Ocean has caused a giant wave. Aceh, the western most province in Indonesia, was worst affected by the tsunami where 180,000 people were killed, and houses and buildings were flattened, leaving more than 500,000 people homeless (Mario A B, 2001). A donor organization, domestic and international, has the built community radio stations in the affected area to help people access to information. The community radio has become a vital source to reach the people when the commercial radio was disrupted. The community radio is broadly define as a “non-profit station, currently broadcasting, which offers a service to the community in which it is located, or to which it broadcasts, while promoting the participation of this community in the radio’ (Bailey et al., 2008 cited Helen C, 2009 p.9).They broadcast on content that is popular and relevant to a local, specific audience but is often overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters. According to Blane H. (2011) states that community radio is well recognized as a powerful vehicle for advocacy and social changes. UNESCO (2001) defines Community Radio (CR) as a medium that gives voice to the voiceless that serves as a mouth piece for the marginalized and it also became the heart of communication and democratic process within societies. AMARC (2007) has pointed out that the main social impact of CR is voice for the poor and marginalized people who have less contact with the fast growing society.

Community Radio Stations in India

India is one of the oldest civilizations among other countries, where 72% of the people are still residing in the rural area (Census, 2011). Hence, some of villagers were not able to travel out of their area due to mountainous terrain, improper road condition, separated by wetland and other obstacles. Some of the villages have no proper electrical supply and telephone services. As such they rely on the Village Administrative Officer or the Village Presidents for information that could have conveyed through postal services. The Government of India has established

community radio to ensure the villagers were well informed on the issues on government proposals, policies, framing related issues, education and health related issues. In India the campaign to legitimize community radio began in the mid-1990s, soon after the Supreme Court of India ruled in its judgment of February 1995 that "airwaves are public property (GOI, 2012). Anna FM of Anna University was India's first campus "community" radio station. It was launched on 1st February 2004 that has been serving the people to enhance their knowledge towards better living standard. According to Vinod P. and Kanchan K. M., (2007) mentioned that community radio station has been seen as the voice of the marginalized groups, an instrument of their empowerment the community in the rural area.

Likewise, broadcasting in India has speedily shifted its profile. Indian radio is currently changing from being a government monopoly to highly-commercialized broadcasting. Till now there are 648 community radio stations in India and out of that 256 community radio stations where situated in the southern zone of India [see table 2-1]. The south zone of India consists of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, Pondicherry, Orissa and Karnataka. The broadcasting is done within the frequency from 0.01MHz to 90.4 MHz. Community radio is a type of radio service that caters to the interests of a certain area, broadcasting content that is popular to a local audience but which may often be overlooked by commercial or mass-media broadcasters (Christopher B., et al., 2003, p 349).

Table 2-1 Community Radio Stations in Southern India

Distribution of Community Radio Stations in Southern India							
Tamil Nadu	Orissa	Maharashtra	Andra Pradesh	Goa	Kerala	Pondicherry	Karnataka
60	15	64	31	6	30	9	41

Source: Government of India, (2012)- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Literature Review

According to Ian Hargreaves and James Thomas (2002), mentioned that news broadcasting is essential part of any media in which it updates the listener on the latest ongoing developments, policy updates and future plans. Independent Television Commission of UK indicated that 59% of people are sourcing news through radio broadcasting which gives them the latest events (cited in Ian H and James Thomas, 2002, p5). Silvia Balit, (1999) specified during the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at Rome, that fostering a dialogue between rural people and other sectors of society, empowers both women and men to gain knowledge and also a way to be innovative. Radio programmes based on research on soil and water conservation has helped the farmers in the rural area which has widen the understanding of farming management (Robert Chapman et al, 2003). Gavin Anderson and David Elliott mentioned during the Africa Regional Consultative Conference, 5-7 November 2007 at Ghana that radio programmes has elevated the poor people in the villages to overcome their poverty through business inventions. Sylvie I. Cohen and William N. Ryerson, (2002) said that radio programmes on sexual transmitted diseases had a great impact on the

rural people especially the teenagers. Michelle Elliott, (1994) wrote that the community radio acts as a child help line in which assist the child who is on distress. Cheri Kramarae and Dale Spender, (2000) said that women listen to radio for health issue that relates on women. Dennis List, (2003) said that the programme broadcasted through community radio has no use for older people, instead of they like to listen to music. In countries like Philippine, Nigeria, Cuba, China, and different Caribbean nations, the community radio has been efficiently used to create awareness on HIV/AIDS among the people (Faheen H., 2001). The literature review revealed that the CR is indeed a tool for the communities that have no or little information on social issues.

Scope of Study

The scope of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the Community Radio Stations (CRS) in Southern India. Questions were raised on the type of programmes were broadcasted for the people who are mainly living in remote area.

Q1 Does the CRS address issues related to men, women, youth (boys/girls) and aged people?

Q2 Does the CRS address issues related to child development i.e pregnancy and prenatal care?

Q3 Does the CRS broadcast programme exclusively for student?

Q4 Does the CRS programmes broadcast on medical, ethical values and safety issues?

Q5 Does the CRS programme broadcast on new farming technology?

Q6 Does the CRS programme broadcast on sexual related diseases?

Research Methodology

Since the Community Radio Stations in Goa, Pondicherry and Orissa were less than 20; the Community Radio Stations in Southern India is further divided into group so as to facilitate the data collection. Thus, using the area sampling technique the sample size for each group was established as 30 as shown in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 Grouping of the CSR

Group 1(30)	Group 2(30)	Group 3(30)	Group 4(30)
Goa	Karnataka	Tamil Nadu	Maharastra
Pondicherry	Kerala	Andra Pradesh	
Orissa			

A questionnaire was send to selected community radio station owners in each group, to examine their role in developing the people in the rural sector through various types of radio programmes. Cross-tabulation analysis technique was used in analyzing the collected data from the Community Radio Stations.

Findings

Using the Cross Tabulation Analysis from SPSS Package, the data was analysed. The result for Q1 shows that 78(65%) CSR stations have broadcasted the programme three times per week namely on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday; 23 (19.2%) for two days that is Tuesday and Thursday; 5(4.2%) on weekends, 14(11.7%) as daily and no such programme broadcasted on Mondays [see table 6-1]. The result for Q2 shows that 49 (40.8%) CSR stations have broadcasted the programme three times per week namely on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday; 41 (34.2%) for two days that is Tuesday and Thursday; 20 (5.8%) on weekends, 3(2.5%) on Mondays and 14(11.7%) as daily broadcasting [see table 6-2]. The result for Q3 shows that 35 (29.2%) CSR stations have broadcasted the programme three times per week namely on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday; 38 (31.7%) for two days that is Tuesday and Thursday; 29 (24.2%) on weekends, 8(6.7%) on Mondays and 10(8.3%) as daily broadcasting [see table 6-3]. The result for Q4 shows that 34 (28.3%) CSR stations have broadcasted the programme three times per week namely on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday; 33 (27.5%) for two days that is Tuesday and Thursday; 39 (32.5%) on weekends, 11(9.2%) on Mondays and 3(2.5%) as daily broadcasting [see table 6-4]. The result for Q5 shows that 65 (54.2%) CSR stations have broadcasted the programme three times per week namely on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday; 21 (17.5%) for two days that is Tuesday and Thursday; 30(25%) on weekends, 2(1.7%) on Mondays and 2(1.7%) as daily broadcasting [see table 6-5]. The result for Q6 shows that 45 (37.5%) CSR stations have broadcasted the programme three times per week namely on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday; 29 (24.2%) for two days that is Tuesday and Thursday; 23 (19.2%) on weekends, 7(5.8%) on Mondays and 16(13.3%) as daily[see table 6-6]. Looking at the result, most popular type of programme broadcasted is New Farming Technology which validated Robert Chapman et al, 2003 research work. New Farming technology programmes will update the farmers about farming technique that yield better crops by using latest equipment. The next highest programme is Sexual Related Diseases. The programme on Sexual Related Diseases i.e AIDS, HIV will educate the people on safe relationship and protection against the deadly diseases. The research work by Sylvie I. Cohen and William N. Ryerson, (2002) and Faheen H., (2001) has coincided with researchers findings made on sexual related diseases. However, the study has revealed that 78 CRS broadcasted programme for older people which overcomes the doubts made by Dennis List, (2003) in his research, that older people prefer listening to music instead of the news.

Conclusion

The research on community radio station in Southern India has revealed that they are engaging people through various types of programme.

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