Impact Of Community Radio Programs In Rural Development

Dr. N. Johnson, K. Rajadurai,

Abstract: This research paper throws light on impact of community radio programs in rural development. It helps to address the linguistic and ethnic diversity and plug all socio-economic and rural-urban gaps in the society. The broadcast content are relevant to a specific audience, thus, providing a platform to the local voices (individuals, groups and communities) to share their own stories and experiences, and speak about issues concerning their lives that are largely ignored by the mainstream media. The major findings of the study reveal that community radio programs are boon to the farmers in increasing the productivity and yield of crops. Through the education programs of CRS, newspaper reading has increased among the student in around Kottampatti. Health related programmes were more beneficial to the adolescent students, women and senior citizens.

Keywords: Agriculture, Community Radio, Rural Development, Society.

1. INTRODUCTION
Community radio stations (CRS) are an important part of the media landscape in many countries. They make up one part of a three-tier system of radio, the other parts being public and commercial radio. They were set up to provide a platform for communities to communicate among themselves and with their governments without interference. In many ways, the sector entrenches the democratic process in which freedom of communication and speech plays a central role. Wealthy sectors of the society have many media choices, but community radio stations often represent the only space where poorer communities can discuss the issues that affect them. Therefore, it could be said that CRS are much more important in case of a country like India, which serves to a pluralistic society where every region, tradition, and class of society is endowed with unique cultural and indigenous identity. Hence, the need for development and approach for communication also differs with cultural differences in the community. It was felt that to facilitate the development of different segments of the population and to give them an opportunity to be heard, there is a need for community specific communication medium that can reach the grassroots level. Moreover, interactivity has become a key term for number of new media use options evolving from the rapid disseminations of interest access point, the digitalization of the media and media convergence (Johnson et.al 2019).

2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Alumuku (2006) contends that “community radio is emerging as one of the best forms of local community communication.” He identifies two aspects of community radio. These are geographical community radio and community of interest radio. He argued that geographically defined communities are “those communities which exist in a specific locality and which construct meaning from a common language and symbols and therefore share an identity by virtue of these.” Yalala Nirmala (2015) made a study on the role of community radio in empowering women in India. Community radio is a third tier broadcasting along with public and private radio broadcasting. Community radio is managed, run, controlled and owned by a community for the benefit of the community and serves the needs, interests and aspirations of a community. CR plays an important role in the lives of women as it creates awareness, provides information and education, improves their skills and on the whole it promotes social, cultural, political and economic development or empowerment of women. Many studies have proved that community radio is an instrument of power in changing the lives of women. Olusegun Hakeem Adeburniti (2016) examines the impact of community radio on public awareness of government policy agenda. The study further examines the functions of community radio, as well as the objectives of community journalism in national development. We adopted the Development Media theory as framework because community media create the atmosphere for audience participation in relation to issues of rural and national development.

2.1 Rationale of the Study
Realizing the vast potential of CRS as an instrument for positive social change and as a tool for community empowerment, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting seeks to assess the extent to which these stations have been delivering the desired benefits to the community. In this context, the Ministry has mandated the conduct of a study to assess the listenership, reach and effectiveness of CRS in India by way of tangible and intangible, direct or indirect benefits to the community. The investigator felt the need to study about the impact of community radio in rural development based on the prospects and wider dissemination of knowledge through community radio programs to the unreached rural sectors.

2.2 Objectives of the Study
The overarching goal of the proposed study is to undertake an in-depth assessment of the existing community radio stations located across the country in terms of their listenership, reach and effectiveness. The study will seek to draw pertinent insights into the extent to which the CRS meets the educational, developmental, social and cultural needs of the
community. In view of this, the study would seek to achieve the following specific objectives–

I. To generate reliable estimates for measuring the listenership and reach of community radio stations in the community.

II. To study the socio-demographic profile of the listeners for assessing the target segment that these radio stations are catering to.

III. To examine the behavior of community towards CRS, identify the reasons they have for listening or not listening to CRS.

IV. To suggest suitable recommendation for wide spread of community radio station.

2.3 Sample of the Study
The Present study consists of 150 samples selected from in and around kottampatti panchayat by Purposive sampling technique. The sample forms a representative sample of the entire population. The list of sample types was collected is given in the below table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types</th>
<th>Samples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home makers</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 Research Instruments
Listing of households was employed in the sampled village to assess the listenership of the CRS in the community and for identifying the households that listen to and those that do not listen to area specific CRS. Questionnaire survey was used to elicit information on varied aspects of CRS from households listening and not listening to CRS. Focus Groups Discussions were conducted with resource persons/volunteers of CRS from the community, community members in general, and members of listener’s club to understand their perceptions and expectations from the CRS. Case studies were done to find out pertinent stories of interest that reflect upon the effectiveness of CRS. These case studies were analyzed to draw insights into the performance of CRS and were quoted in the report as exemplary evidence.

3 ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.1 Gender wise Distribution of data
The Distribution of frequency and percentage of people with respect to their gender wise is percentage in following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count of Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table reveals 81% of women and 19% of men participated in the study.

3.2 Age wise Distribution of data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Count of Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 18</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-25</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Above</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table reveals that 17% peoples aged Above 35; 12% people aged 25-35; 40% People aged 19-25; 31% people aged below 18.

3.3 Occupation wise Distribution of data
The Distribution of frequency and percentage of people with respect to their occupation wise is percentage in following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Count of Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table reveals that 62% peoples are working in private; 27% peoples are doing agriculture work; 4% people are self employed; 7% people are students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No %</th>
<th>Rarely %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community radio gives important to agriculture</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture programs are according to climatic changes</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It gives importance to programs related to women's health</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community radio programs give importance to women empowerment programs</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community radio programs give solution to health related doubts</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get benefit through doctors live programs</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community radio programs are helping to get solution to animal husbandry issues</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It gives significance to child welfare</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student oriented programs that are broadcasted in community radio are heard</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community radio talk about your regional problems/Water, medical &amp; others</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It helps to get employment opportunity</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government new schemes are known through community radio</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical tips that are broadcasted in community radio are useful</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General information is known through community radio</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General knowledge is developing through community radio</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New information is known through community radio</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The sections hereunder present the key findings with respect to research objectives outlined for the study: Efforts were made to capture the incidences of direct impact on the listeners due to Community Radio Station. The important case studies have been categorized into various issues and compiled as ahead.

4.1 Improved income and Agriculture Yield

A farmer named Ramaswamy was interviewed to understand the kind of positive impact Vayalaga Vanoli, Tamil Nadu has created in his life. He responded that in his 2 acre land, which he used for paddy cultivation, he used to get 1500-2000 Kg. (i.e. 20-25 bags) of paddy per acre. Since he is a listener of the CRS, he followed about 6-7 episodes on SRI Method of Paddy Cultivation and started following the instructions provided by the radio jockey. He made the following changes in his method of paddy cultivation:

- Reduced transplantation duration from 20-25 days to 14-15 days
- Followed other instructions such as land leveling, planting method, water level management, using fertilizers at different stages, using pesticides
- Avoided machineries and instead used human resource to reduce damage
- He experienced the following benefits, apart from improved yield, after following the SRI technology
- Reduction in the number of human resource used for cultivation
- Insect/Rat issues were reduced
- Damage reduced after decrease in use of machinery
- Additional income from sale of straw
- The radio channel also provides information about the market price of Madurai and other nearby government and private markets which help the farmers to store the yield accordingly and supply it to the market on a suitable date, thus, increasing their revenue.

4.2 Health and Wellbeing

A number of people interviewed during the field visit mentioned the health benefit they received after listening to health-related programs such as “Nalam Nalamariya” aired by the VayalagaVanoli, Tamil Nadu. Illarajothi from Ayyapatti mentioned that her mother was suffering from knee pain for several years. After following the advice of the doctor in the broadcasted programme, they saw a lot of improvement in the knee pain.

- A student of 12th standard named S. Sivaranjani from Mangalampatti village said that after listening to VayalagaVanoli radio, she became aware of Anaemia and started consuming iron tablets as provided by the government. She also started looking after her food habits and checks her HB count at frequent intervals.
- A married woman, B. Sumangali, from Vellinipatti village was trying to conceive for the past few years. She called the doctor who was in a phone programme of “Nalam Nalamariya” of VayalagaVanoli CRS. After consulting the doctor at the hospital, she was able to conceive.
- A woman from Manapachery village, named D. Amala, aged about 29 years, mentioned that she had always suffered from upper stomach pain and had temporarily resolved her issue through home remedies. But, after listening to the doctor’s advice on “Nalam Nalamariya” program of VayalagaVanoli radio, she changed her food habits, and also consulted the same doctor at the hospital for tablets. Her pain has subsided to a great extent and she feels comfortable now.
- Another woman, S. Vennila from Kalapur village, said that she had participated in a cooking contest organized by VayalagaVanoli CRS. After listening to the lecture given by D. Kamalasundari about nutritional foods, she understood the significance of healthy and home-made snacks and also the ill-effects of packed food and snacks. She followed the advice and observed an improvement in her children’s overall health.

4.3 Growth and Development of Kids

During the field visit, a lady named Dhanlakshmi from Mangalampatti was interviewed. She mentioned that she had been worried about her son’s slow weight gain, and started listening to VayalagaVanoli radio health program as suggested by her neighbor. In the programme, she consulted a doctor who suggested some medicines for stomach worms which was probably the reason for slower weight gain. Another programme on nutrition provided her with the information of offering small millets base snacks to children with slower weight gain. After following the above advices, she observed a 2 kgs weight gain in her son and was extremely satisfied with the radio programmes.

4.4 Socio-Demographic Profile of Listeners

Distribution of Listeners: Sector

- Vayalaga Vanoli caters totally to rural population with 100% of its listeners residing in rural areas. This is a good indicator considering the fact that major parts of rural India are still devoid of mainstream media.
- In overall terms, more than three-fourth of the listeners (77%) hail from rural areas, as against nearly one-fourth (23%) being from urban areas.

Distribution of Listeners: Gender

- 19% of the sampled listeners are males as compared to only 81% females.
- In the survey, it is learnt Vayalaga Vanoli has the highest proportion of female listeners (81%).

Distribution of Listeners: Economic Category

- Nearly half of the listeners (56%) belonged to Rs. 10000
- On the other hand, nearly (25%) of peoples economic category is Rs. 10000 – 20000.
- 19% peoples economic status is more than Rs. 20000

Distribution of Listeners: Educational Status

| Community radio helps me to develop my individual skills | 50 | 19 | 31 |
| Market rate and climatic information of our region is known through community radio | 69 | 12 | 19 |
• 2% of listeners were from Middle school. Highest proportions of illiterates were found in Mangalampatti, Pottampatti, Tharkakudi, Karunkalakudi and Vanijpatti.
• Regarding graduates and post graduates, the overall proportion was found to be 64%. It was highest in this surrounding, followed by 23 % of Higher Secondary and 11 % of Secondary school education.

Patterns of Media Ownership
- Nearly all listeners (98%) sampled for the study own a mobile and four-fifth (80%) of them own TV.
- Radio ownership was also reasonably high at 45%, but ownership in terms of newspapers/ magazines is only 38%.
- Households which receive newspaper/magazines at home were highest in Vayalaga Vanoli surrounding areas.
- Ownership of TV and Radio both were highest in case of Vayalaga Vanoli.

Patterns of Media Ownership – Category wise
- Newspaper ownership was highest among all categories of (47%).
- Since most of the listeners of education related programmes are students, this might have increased the ownership of newspapers.
- Ownership of TV was maximum for agriculture CRS (94%), while radio ownership was highest among NGO CRS (58%).

Radio Listening Habits of Listeners
- Nearly 7 out of 10 persons (21%) listen to radio daily, followed by another 11 % listening to radio for 3-4 times a week.
- With respect to individual CRS, more than 9 out of 10 listeners of Vayalaga Vanoli listen to it every day.
- With respect to Vayalaga Vanoli CRS, maximum proportion of listeners who hear radio programmes of five-six times a week were 49% whereas 19 % never hear Community radio Programmes.

4.5 Perception about CRS

Opinion about CRS: Category wise Analysis
- 22% of the total listeners preferred good music, followed by 55% who liked information that CRS provided and 3% mentioned that they liked the presenters/anchors/RJs of the radio station.
- The other popular factors liked by them were news, interactive programmes/phone-in-live and information about local community problems.
- Maximum proportion of listeners (20%) like agriculture programs.
- When enquired about the duration of listening to CRS, about 21% of the respondents from all the three categories mentioned that they have been listening to the CRS for about 1 to 2 years.
- Another 21% of the respondents said that they had been listening CRS for the past 2 to 3 years.
- About 73% of listeners rated the quality of signal strength as Excellent/Very Good.
- About four-fifth (80%) of overall listeners from all category CRS rated the quality of content as either ‘Excellent’ or ‘Very Good’.
• Around 82% of the listeners from all three categories responded that the variety of CRS programmes broadcasted was excellent / very good.

Opinion about CRS: CRS wise Analysis
- The top 3 factors for listening to the radio channel were – good music, information about new things and presenters/anchors/RJs of the radio station.
- Majority of the listeners (63%) who were interviewed were listening to the CRS on a daily basis.
- Vayalaga Vanoli radio stations, received a response of 100% satisfaction for quality of signal transmission from its listeners.
- All the listeners of Vayalaga Vanoli were highly satisfied with the quality of content of programmes aired in their CRS.

Reasons for not listening
- 45% of non-listeners for almost all the CRS mentioned that the prime reason for not listening was that they were not aware of the existence of community radio channels.
- It was seen that only 4% of the non-listeners in Vayalaga Vanoli mentioned that they were unaware of CRS in their community. This indicates that these radio channels probably have more awareness/publicity when compared to other CRS since in all other cases, maximum non- listeners mentioned were unaware of CRS. This was followed by 10% people who informed that they prefer listening to other radio stations.
- Other important factors that emerged as dominant reasons for non-listening were preference for music channels (9%), lack of variety (9%) and poor quality of broadcasted programmes (7%).
- Apart from the aforementioned reasons, there were some other factors that emerged from the focused group discussions held in community of all the CRS by the field officers:
- Lack of time and heavy work load at home. There was no solution provided by the CRS to the problems of the community due to which the villagers lost interest in listening to the programmes.
- The phone lines of CRS remain busy most of the time. Improper show timings lead to poor listenership for the CRS.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Reach and Effectiveness of Community Radio Stations in Kottampatti brought to light some pertinent findings which need to be considered while charting future course of action for this scheme. The study offers strategic insights into the performance of the scheme highlighting its efficacy and effectiveness in providing the desired impact on community. The results of the study have led us to propose certain improvements in the operation and functioning of CRS for empowerment of rural masses. It is hoped that the technical inputs derived from this study would serve to strengthen the scheme by pinpointing the areas requiring refinement or modifications to ensure optimum benefits for the community. The government should provide free license in installation of CRS in the backward rural areas for the sustainable progress of the nation.
6 CONCLUSION
The present study was aimed to find out the study on impact of community radio programs in rural development. The finding of the study revealed that the community radio programs are giving such knowledge to the rural area peoples. To increase the community radio listeners, give license to the NGO under community radios. Because of NGO’s CR stations are focused on through the community development.

REFERENCES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
This article has been written with the financial support of RUSA – Phase 2.0 grant sanctioned vide Letter No. F.24-51 / 2014-U, Policy (TNMulti-Gen), Dept. of Edn. Govt. of India, Dt.09.10.2018