

Amplifying Women's Voices: Programming Strategies of Community Radio Stations: A Case study on Community Radio JIMS, Vasant Kunj 90.4Mhz

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Abstract:

Mass media serves as a vital tool for reaching and engaging the masses, offering platforms such as newspapers, radio, television, magazines, and the internet to disseminate messages effectively. Radio and television, in particular, play pivotal roles in swiftly delivering messages in an engaging manner. While television captivates audiences with visuals, radio, as a pioneering medium of information and entertainment, educates and entertains diverse audiences simultaneously.

Radio holds immense potential for engaging with large audiences compared to television. It broadcasts various talks, discussions, and programs tailored to different age groups, particularly benefiting students. Moreover, radio supplements interactive teaching methods, fostering educational broadcasting, which encompasses subjects like science, mathematics, social sciences, and the arts, enhancing learning experiences for both students and teachers.

Community radio, a distinctive form of radio service, extends broadcasting beyond commercial and public realms, catering to communities in their regional languages and dialects for enhanced comprehension. The advent of community radio in India, exemplified by the establishment of Anna Fm in 2004, marked a significant trend towards localized radio services.

The research delves into the interaction among mass media, community radio, and their influence on women, examining temperamental studies to comprehend the dynamics of community radio involvement. Through scrutinizing community radio's contributions to education, entertainment, and information dissemination, this study elucidates the importance of community radio as a means to empower and engage diverse audiences.

Key Words: Mass Media, Community Radio, Women, Temperamental study.

Introduction

Mass media encompasses various mediums that disseminate information about global events, creating a sense of presence and immediacy for the audience. It caters to the masses simultaneously, offering a collective experience irrespective of geographic location. Through mass media, individuals can immerse themselves in the unfolding moments, transporting them to different realms of existence.

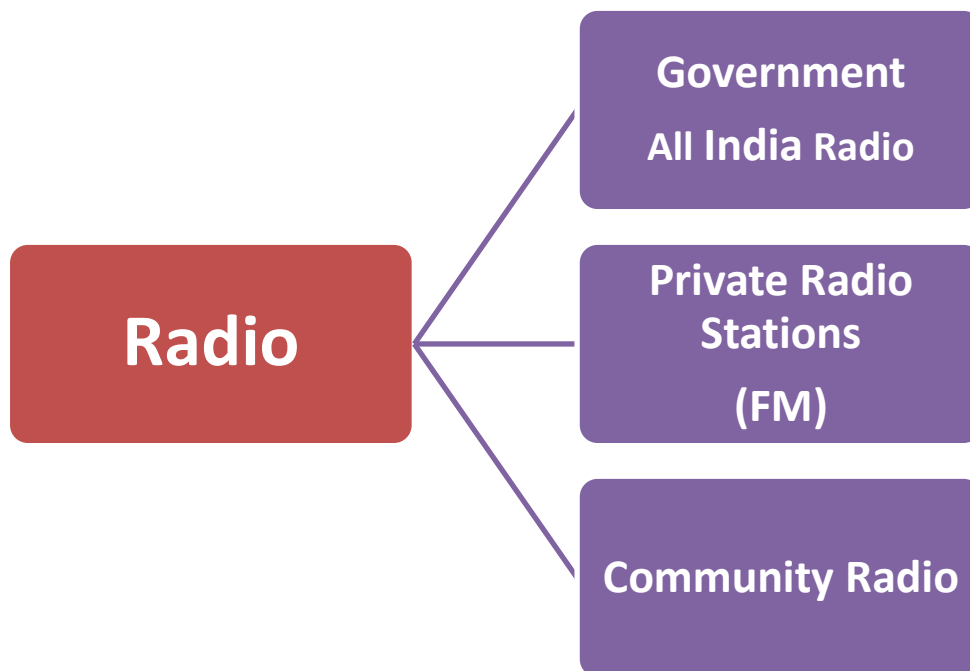
Functioning as a potent influencer, mass media instills a belief in the absolute accuracy of its content, sparking audience curiosity and driving the quest for further knowledge. Its diverse forms include television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and online platforms, each serving as conduits for information dissemination.

Among these, radio, the oldest mass medium, boasts extensive global reach without the need for elaborate setups. Its affordability and accessibility through simple devices like transistors or FM-equipped phones make it a vital source of entertainment, providing solace and lightness amidst daily routines. Radio serves as a medium of mass communication, blending news, entertainment, and music seamlessly while offering a plethora of talk shows, debates, and musical programs catering to audiences of all ages.

Furthermore, radio transforms information delivery into infotainment, merging entertainment with substantive content like public opinion, scientific facts, and cultural insights, fostering curiosity and engagement. Its educational significance extends to supplementing classroom instruction across diverse subjects, including social sciences, science, language, politics, and current affairs, offering expert insights and enriching learning experiences.

In essence, mass media, epitomized by radio's enduring influence, shapes global perceptions, stimulates intellectual curiosity, and serves as a cornerstone of modern communication and education.

Among the diverse array of mass media platforms, radio emerges as a venerable medium with unparalleled reach and accessibility. This section explores the enduring significance of radio in broadcasting news, entertainment, and educational content to diverse audiences worldwide. Through a nuanced analysis of its programming and impact, the paper elucidates the pivotal role of radio in fostering informed discourse and community engagement.



Radio is divided into 3 major categories 1st is Government radio setup or All India Radio

2nd is Private FM stations

3rd Community Radio

Only AIR holds the exclusive rights to broadcast news and news-based programs among the three types of radio stations. Private stations focus primarily on airing music and entertainment shows, while Community Radio stations concentrate on programming tailored to the communities they serve. Community radio operates as a platform for communities to address issues pertinent to their interests or concerns, without the necessity for professional radio jockeys. It serves as a voice for the people, providing a platform for individuals to raise issues that affect them and seek intervention from authorities. Utilizing the resources available through the radio platform, communities can organize and broadcast a series of programs aimed at addressing local challenges and fostering community development. Community radio thus serves as a vital tool for grassroots activism, social cohesion, and problem-solving within diverse communities.

Community Radio Station

Community Radio represents a significant third tier within Radio Broadcasting, distinguished from Public Service Radio broadcasting and Commercial Radio. Community Radio Stations (CRSs) are characterized as low-power Radio Stations, intended to be established and managed by local communities. In December 2002, the Government of India sanctioned a

policy for granting licenses to establish Community Radio Stations, initially limited to well-established educational institutions. Subsequently, in 2006, the Policy Guidelines were revised to allow community-based organizations such as ICAR institutions, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Registered Societies, Public charitable Trusts, etc., to own and operate Community Radio Stations, facilitating broader participation in addressing issues related to development and social change.

Community Radio serves as a platform for communities to broadcast local perspectives on topics concerning Health, Nutrition, Education, Agriculture, and more. By broadcasting in local languages and dialects, Community Radio facilitates immediate resonance with its audience. Additionally, Community Radio has the potential to enhance people's engagement in development programs through its comprehensive approach. In a diverse country like India, where each state boasts its own language and cultural identity, CRSs also serve as custodians of local folk music and cultural heritage. Many CRSs undertake the recording and preservation of local songs for future generations, while providing local artists with a platform to showcase their talent to the community. The unique role of CRSs as agents of positive social change positions them as an ideal tool for community empowerment.

Women Empowerment

A woman's role in life and society is pivotal, encompassing various responsibilities throughout her lifetime. She serves as the cornerstone of family creation and protection, nurturing generations and shaping society's fabric. Despite the fundamental significance of her role, women often endure minimal respect within society's framework. Throughout history, women have remained constrained by societal shackles and limitations, impeding their freedom and agency.

In response to this longstanding inequality, spurred by the relentless efforts of women's liberation advocates, governments worldwide have enacted legislation aimed at safeguarding women's rights and promoting gender equality. These measures include provisions for women's representation and empowerment, such as reservations in elected bodies, to ensure their participation in decision-making processes at different levels of governance.

Women empowered to live with dignity and contribute as equal partners in development, within a violence-free and discrimination-free environment. Additionally, children nurtured effectively with ample opportunities for growth and development in a safe and protective atmosphere.

As per Ministry of Women & Child Development “Advancing the social and economic empowerment of women through comprehensive policies and programs that address gender issues, raise awareness of their rights, and provide institutional and legislative support to help them achieve their human rights and maximize their potential. Ensuring the development, care, and protection of children through integrated policies and initiatives, promoting awareness of their rights, and facilitating access to education, nutrition, institutional support, and legislative measures to enable their full growth and development potential.”

Achieving women's empowerment isn't easy because it faces resistance from family, society, and the mindset of disempowered women. However, special attention is needed for strategies to empower women. There are various ways to empower women, such as education, entrepreneurship programs, forming self-help groups, activism, laws, and using mass media. Mass media, especially TV, influences people's opinions about the world. It should play a role in empowering women, but often women are shown in traditional roles or as mere decorations in advertisements. Having more women in decision-making positions in the media can change this. Governments, organizations, and activists are working in their own ways for women's development.

From the beginning, All India Radio (AIR) aimed to inform, educate, and entertain the public, with a focus on serving women's needs and promoting their welfare. When Community Radio (CR) guidelines were issued in 2006, the primary goal was to use it for community development, which indirectly benefits women's welfare.

Community radio serves as a catalyst for women's empowerment, transforming the lives of those who were previously voiceless and empowering them to advocate for their rights. It fosters awareness on critical issues including rights, healthcare, maternity, violence, and education. Moreover, it educates women on their political rights, voting privileges,

and reservations within Panchayati Raj institutions. CRS provides a platform for women to openly discuss topics close to their hearts, instilling them with the confidence to live life on their own terms. In essence, community radio acts as a remarkable agent of women's development (Sengupta, 2019). It proves highly beneficial to listeners, primarily women, enriching their knowledge and enabling them to express their talents and concerns, particularly in areas such as education and health.

Objective of Paper:

1. To find out the impact of Community Radio's signature programme on Women Empowerment.
2. To find out the role of Community Radio in familiarizing the women's sensitive topics among women in community.

Methodology:

The methodology employed in this paper is primarily based on case study on community Radio JIMS, Vasant kunj. The study will focus towards the programme structure and impact of community radio's signature programme on Women Empowerment. Individuals within the community served as the primary providers of information, forming the cornerstone of the temperamental study aimed at understanding the mindset of families living in the community area.

Radio is an effective medium of communication. It plays a very important role in communication and development of community in the field of science, technology, health & hygiene, nutrition etc.

Community radio stations, being non-profit organizations, are operated, owned, and fueled by the communities they serve. This paper aims to shed light on the often overlooked issue of women's empowerment, which is perceived by many as a hyper or irrelevant topic. The lack of self-confidence among women regarding their rights further complicates the matter. Addressing women's self-development is challenging due to the complexity of the subject matter, including intricate concepts and statistics. Understanding the mindset of individuals concerning women's empowerment proves to be a formidable task.

The research and cultivation of the community's mindset regarding gender equality, particularly the perception that women are equal, utilized Community Radio Jims, Vasant Kunj 90.4 MHz as its platform. To achieve this goal, specific points were carefully considered to emphasize within the community members' consciousness.

Radio JIMS, Vasant Kunj 90.4 MHz is community radio station of Jagannath International Management School, affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, New Delhi. Radio JIMS, Vasant Kunj was set up in year 2005 with objective to provide a platform to voice the issues of community in and around Vasant Kunj area. It's an open Platform for students and community of targeted group to share their views on issues like Government Policies, Women Empowerment, Spirituality, Education, Health and Nutrition, Tourism, Maths, Migration, Career counseling, Electoral literacy and other current and contextual issues. During the pandemic, the community radio took the initiative of raising awareness on following of Covid appropriate behavior and sensitizing people on Covid vaccination. It also organized sessions with Doctors on different common health related issues and concerns during the pandemic. Sessions were also organized on mental health issues with experts. Radio JIMS 90.4 MHz was awarded various projects for raising awareness.

Thematic focus of the programmes of Radio JIMS is on behavior change, raising awareness on Mental Health, COVID appropriate behavior, Health Awareness, Women Empowerment, Interview with representatives of community. Community Radio Station was selected as one of the lead 24 Community Radio Stations by Ministry of Information & Broadcasting 2021.

Signature Programmes

- Aatmchintan: Programmes related to spirituality
- Mansha: Programmes related to Women Empowerment

- Baat Pate Ki: Programmes related to Information
- Jeevan Disha: Career related programmes
- Aao Sair Kare: Travel based programme
- Inse Miliye: Interview based programme
- Duniya Khelon Ki: Sports related programmes

The station is currently working for Sustainable Development Goal no.-05 Gender Equality and other SDG's as well under the head Satat Bharat ki Aur.

In this paper the study chosen signature programme 'Mansha' which is based on Women Empowerment which talks about not only empowering women but also to make them aware about day to day issues.

Common topics on which the programmes are produced and broadcasted:

1. Eve-teasing
2. Domestic- violence
3. House budget
4. Health care
5. Nutrition
6. Menstruation
7. Gender biasness at work-place
8. Education
9. Saving Management
10. Time Management
11. Product Utilization etc.

Under all the headings the station has tried to involve a community representative for better understanding of the issue at their part and quality which also solves the purpose of the reach and listenership of radio.

Community involvement takes the programme level up with one stage as the problems faced on a particular topic are raised in a form of question by community member itself which gives voice to them.

Programmes are also recorded outside the station in the target area with the help of a voice recorder to provide ease to the population. Basic set of question is prepared before going for an outreach activity.

The language was kept Hindi because community people understand Hindi or their regional language like Haryanvi, Rajasthani, Bengali, Gujrati etc.

A sample of questions asked to the community members is included below. Few questions are included or excluded as per the requirement of the response as per profession.

Questions for Outreach Activity

Hello, we are here from Radio JIMS Vasant Kunj 90.4 MHz, and today we would like to ask you a few questions. Our program is called "Mansha," for which we would like to ask you some questions here.

1. What is your name?
2. What do you do?
3. What are your working hours?

4. What is your educational qualification?
5. What things do you pay attention to while working, and how do these things make your work more attractive to people?
6. What kind of problems do you face while working
7. How important is education?
8. Why do you not go to school?
9. Is there any issue you want to talk about but can't discuss at home?
10. What message would you like to give to people?

Outreach activities of community radio are based on initiatives aimed at training community members, particularly illiterate and semi-literate women, to utilize technology for addressing daily concerns, struggles, and accomplishments of women. The programs also aim to facilitate connections among female listeners and empower them with knowledge and skills. CRS supports women in leveraging radio both for entertainment and as a tool for self-education and empowerment.

Priyanka Bai Koli living in Mahipalpur shares that “she feels more confident after listening to the programmes on different aspects of women’s life as she is a student & her mother was very scared of her moving out and work due to various problems which can lead to eve-teasing, gender bias etc. and after 2020 for covid-19 as well. From ‘Mansha’ they got the confidence that everything can be done with few precautions and it is considered as new normal.” After the same she continued her higher studies along with vocational course and job.

Priyanka Bai Koli is now applying information received from the programmes in her daily life and is a part of community radio listenership members for creating awareness about the programmes and information received from them.



Omvati a house maid at Masoodpur Dairy resident of Rangpuri Pahari comes daily for work at Masoodpur Dairy and takes rest with her fellow maids after work in afternoon at a nearest park and then continues to work in the evening time. She has a 5 months baby girl whom she brings with her while coming for work. She has been counselled about exclusive breast feeding of her daughter for 6 months and to start complementary feeding on completion of 6 months. Initially Omvati was apprehensive but after the outreach activity she was convinced to start complementary feeding of her daughter as advised by the Doctor.



Conclusion:

The research underscores the pivotal role of community radio stations in fostering women's empowerment. Through initiatives that provide platforms for women to voice their concerns, share experiences, and access information, community radio stations have become instrumental in promoting gender equality and women's rights. Here with 'Mansha' it became very easy to get connected with the women from community and giving the trust that every problem will be given solution to the possible extent. The findings of this study highlight the transformative impact of community radio on women's life, enabling them to become active participants in decision-making processes, advocate for their rights, and access essential services such as healthcare and education.

Moreover, community radio stations have proven to be effective tools in raising awareness about gender issues, challenging stereotypes, and promoting positive social change. By amplifying women's voices and creating inclusive spaces for dialogue and discussion, community radio stations contribute to the creation of more equitable and just societies.

However, while community radio stations have made significant strides in advancing women's empowerment, challenges such as funding constraints, technical limitations, and limited outreach to marginalized communities persist. Therefore, further research and investment are needed to strengthen the capacity of community radio stations, expand their reach, and ensure that they continue to serve as catalysts for women's empowerment and social transformation.

In essence, the findings of this research underscore the importance of community radio stations as powerful vehicles for women's empowerment, advocacy, and social change, and emphasize the need for continued support and investment in this critical sector.

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