

# Benefits of the Cultural Programmes of Community Radio-A Study in Tumkur Taluk



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## Abstract

The most common medium when discussing community media is radio, mainly due to its low cost of operation. Radio is therefore also considered the best vehicle for promoting democratic communication. Community radio stations are often small, non-profit, low-budget stations that are mainly run by volunteers and owned by associations, trusts, foundations or NGOs. Community media are often distinguishable from commercial media and state media by their provision of vital, accessible and participatory alternatives. The idea of serving the community stresses the close relationship with the community, a relationship that should be characterized by community involvement and participation.

Community radio stations claim to be closer to the people, but little is known on how effective they have been in promoting, preserving and transmitting the culture of the people in the areas they are operating in. The purpose of this study, which was done at Tumkur community radio station was to establish the degree to which the radio has been able to transmit cultural programmes thereby maintaining and preserving the culture of the people. The specific objectives were to find out and evaluate the content of programmes being aired, help establish the standards of cultural values in community broadcasting, The study focused on assessing the out-put of the local content and the listeners' perception of the radio in so far as this is concerned. Triangulation of methods was employed and research tools included a survey questionnaire, in-depth interviews, content analysis and direct observations.

**Keywords:** Community Radio, Cultural, Programmes, Benefits.

## Introduction

Community radios are known as messengers of development, peace, social knowledge and the socio-economic and cultural tools of empowerment. Community Radio is effective in ameliorating quality of life and cultural diversity. CR facilitates the amelioration of quality of life, self-esteem and facilitating achieving the millennium development goals in Asia, Africa and Latin America. (Cameroon) Programs are inspired by people's life experiences. Radio deals with local problems, especially economic, social and cultural life. It uses local and national languages. (AMARC, 2007) "For several cultural and linguistic minorities, the community radio is the only place where their language is spoken and their music being heard and their culture is celebrated. Community radio a social impact in preserving languages and cultural expressions, giving additional value to them, and leading to the amelioration of the self esteem of the community and to the larger recognition people outside the community"

Common opportunities being used by community radios are the benefits that come from mixing "old" and "new" information technologies. The people centered approach leads to the use of the appropriate combination of technologies allowing capacity building and knowledge sharing conducting to voice for the excluded, marginalized and building citizenship. It also shows that the corner stone in a democratic and inclusive information society is goes well beyond technology, it about people communicating.

Local and community-based media have become recognized as having a particular role to play for people and communities facing poverty, exclusion and marginalization. They can assist in providing access to information and voice, including in local and vernacular languages. They can reinforce traditional forms of communication such as storytelling, group discussion and theatre and they can enable grassroots participation in

policy-making and democracy. They use technologies which are appropriate and affordable. In doing so, they reach out to the most remote communities and to people from all walks of life.

#### **Review of Literature**

According to Girard (2001:8) it is a kind of public service broadcasting but serves a community essentially small (by the very limited capacity of its transmitter) rather than a nation. "It (community radio) aims not only to participate in the life of the community, but also allow the community to participate in the life of the station at the level of ownership, programming, management direction and financing"

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters AMARC: (2007) conducted a social impact assessment of community radio through a participatory action research process that involved 927 CR stakeholders. Some of the key findings of the Community Radio Social Impact study were

1. Community Radio(CR) is a Voice for the poor and the marginalized
2. Community Radio is effective in poverty reduction
3. CR is effective in ensuring proper governance
4. CR is effective in achieving development goals
5. CR is effective in empowering women.

Participation implies that the local community participates in the day-to-day content creation and operation of the community radio station and is included in the discussion and decision making process of the station's activities. The community is involved in defining the goals and objectives and thus the vision and mission of the Community Radio Station. They are the deciding body for the principles the station would abide by and how the management of the station would function. The community also participates in electing issues on which content is to be produced, the kind of content to be produced, as well as the programme scheduling for various target audiences and the programme durations. Hence the decisions of the producers / community reporters are informed by the preferences and decisions of the community.

CR contributes through communication processes to building citizenship and individual participation in the public sphere. This can be measured by the recognition of individuals whose lives have been improved by community radio. The issue being not only to hear, but also to be heard and participate in political processes by having one's point of view recognized. "Only radio with the magic of sound can help the survival of local knowledge and reinforce solidarity in the communities, because it attracts the listeners in their own language and can send their message as the people of the community is producing the programs

Music is an important component of the content. The discussions are mixed with music and a large proportion of the programmes could be categorized as music shows, in the sense that they are labelled on the basis of the kind of music that is played. There are at least two possible reasons for this practice: first, music is an important component of radio production in general; and, second, it is a good

way of targeting different age groups in the community. The music shows also include interactive discussions, but the topic is decided spontaneously in interaction with the audience and often reflects current events relevant to the community.

Community radio, rural radio, cooperative radio, or development radio -- its proponents feel that radio holds the key that will unite India's linguistic and ethnic diversity and improve the economic disparity and the huge rural-urban divide. It preserves and transmit the local culture of the community.

An individual, apart from demanding social and physical needs, also craves for emotional, moral and psychological demands. That is related to the objective why an individual wants to live on while also shaping his ideals of life along. Integrative needs comprise the experience of an individual, learning process, wisdom, creativity, beauty and consciousness. These are the things which go on to create differing interests in arts, music, literature, sartorial habits and so on.

#### **Objectives of broadcasting**

1. To evolve a progressive and disciplined culture in support of justice and democracy by boosting the cause of national unity, pride and self-respect.
2. To identify and promote nation, national language, arts, culture, and folk tradition.
3. To promote and mobilize traditional wisdom, knowledge, skill and competence.
4. To evolve entrepreneurial culture by encouraging national industry and domestic market.
5. Impress upon the need to evolve a culture of collective responsibility to uphold the rights of women and children.

#### **Methodology**

This paper is based on primary and secondary data. The secondary sources such as books and reports which reveal about the respective regions of the community. 50 respondents were selected purposively for the study. The data were collected from the respondents through direct contact and with the help of local participation. Questionnaire, in-depth interviews, content analysis and direct observations.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the formats of cultural programmes are more influential in Community Radio in Tumkur taluk.
2. To study the impact of Community Radio on local communities of Tumkur Taluk.

#### **Profile of the Radio Siddhartha CR**

Radio Siddhartha FM 90.8 MHz is also known as the voice of Tumkur. It is the first Community Radio station in Tumkur district situated in Karnataka state. The main goal of the Radio Siddhartha is to provide education to the rural, urban masses through inspiring and awareness programmes related to agriculture, health, education, culture, entertainment and so on.

Tumkur district consists of 10 taluks and Tumkur taluk is one among them. Tumkur taluk consists of 374 villages. Radio Siddhartha covers 150 villages.

Radio Siddhartha is the Community Radio station of Sri Siddhartha Education Society. Shikshana Bhishma Dr. H.M.Gangadharaiiah, Founder Secretary of Sri Siddhartha Education Society ( R ) in 1959, whose vision was to provide education to the rural and to reach the unreached. He was a true Gandhian and follower of Buddha and strong disciple of Dr.Baba Saheb Ambedkar and impressed by Saint Vinobha Bave a social reformer. His son Dr. G. Parameshwara, who is Joint Secretary of the Education Society, was instrumental in bringing about radical change in the educational system when he was the Minister of higher education in Karnataka state. He had a strong belief that education is an instrument of social change and has a vision to cover all branches in Sri Siddhartha Education Society. In view of this great vision, he has started PG courses in Media Studies and in 2009 he established a Community Radio station Radio Siddhartha 90.8 MHz in the Campus. It empanelment with Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity, a nodal agency of the government of India for advertising on 01.10.2013.

This Community Radio has given a platform to the marginalized sections of the society, and to the rural and urban masses to voice their feelings and emotions. It benefits students as well as general public. (Radio Siddhartha Souvenir, 2014:20)

Radio Siddhartha, Community Radio is broadcasting total 9 hours programme scheduled according to the needs of the community mainly 6A.M. to 9 A.M., 12 noon to 3 P.M. and 6 P.M. to 9 P.M. daily. According to the Community Radio guidelines the programme committee members and radio staff discuss the concept, identify local talents and concerned resource persons, provide them platform to debate and voice their feelings and views. Programme Committee comprises different sections of the society. They are rural folk, slum dwellers, the labour class, social workers, HIV affected persons, artists, educationists, science activists and members of NGOs in and around the district.

Radio Siddhartha has its own innovative programme formats. One of the programmes 'Parivarthane' (transformation) is well heard by the listeners according to Community Radio staff. This programme is to transform the addicts and make them to give up their bad habits which ruin their family and social life. Community Radio staff interview the de addicts and their family members. It has brought awareness among the drug/alcohol/tobacco consumers.

The Radio has been getting overwhelming appreciative responses from its honourable listeners through letters and phone calls and mobile messages. According to the staff of Radio Siddhartha, listeners are so much inspired by the programmes that they have been coming out with requests for more programmes related to issues like environmental degradation, deforestation, gender discrimination, developmental programmes, especially financial assistance for the upliftment of the poor and the downtrodden.

Programme series like Shikshanavani (Educational Speech), Navu mattu namma hakku

(We and our rights), English time (Spoken English), Namma Desha Namma Samvidhana( Our Nation and our Constitution), Namma Arogya (Our Health ), Akka Kelakka (Listen Sister Listen), Krushi Kanaja (Agricultural Storage), Prathibha kirana (Rays of Talent), Amrutha Bindu (Values in brief) ,Vishesha Sandarshana (Special Interview), Janapada Jagattu (World of Folklore), Radio talks, dramas and many awareness programmes have broadcast by the Community Radio Siddhartha. Radio Siddhartha broadcast/ narrowcast/ podcast (Web) its variety of programmes. (www.radiosiddhartha.com)

#### **Success Stories**

Here is a success story of 84-year old retired teacher who hails from a tiny village Urukere. He is an arthritis patient. He rides his two-wheeler all the way from his native place to Tumkur to present programmes at Radio Siddhartha. He is none other than Huchchappadasa. He is a writer himself. He has written stories, composes poems and harikathas. He not only gives programmes but also inspires others to exhibit talents in Radio Siddhartha. He trains them, prepares them and motivates the rural talents to showcase their skills at Community Radio station. Station provides an opportunity and platform to tap his hidden talents, obviously local organizations began to recognize his talents and helped him to publish his articles. He was awarded 'Taluk Rajyotsava Award'. Because of Community Radio station's effort, now Huchchappadasa is a popular figure in and around Tumkur.

Radio Siddhartha has been continuously producing programmes to create awareness about HIV- AIDS among people. "Jeevana Nauke, Mulugethu Joke" (Life is a voyage; without care it may Sink!) a radio play written by a sales executive Aruna Kumar Kutpady, which briefs how negligence and bad habits infects a person. Radio staff was successful in persuading the artists who are highly educated to voice the play, who hesitated in the beginning, assuming that people will mistake them to be AIDS infected! The play got a wonderful response from the audience. The artists came back with tears assuring that they will definitely participate in such programmes in the future too.

Amalina Kathegalu programme created awareness in young alcoholics who listened the various sad stories of alcoholic families who suffered a lot in each episode. Some of them decided to stop alcoholism and realized it as a bad habit. One of the listener Sujatha came to our studio by crying and showed her interest to participate in a alcohol related awareness drama.Because she suffered a lot by her alcoholic husband and living seperately with her daughter. The programme has been continued with the appreciation and the effect of it in creating awareness among the community and responses received from the society.

Here is a success story of a poor muslim lady Rihan Taj a native of veerasagara, a slum area in Tumkur city. One day she contacted to Rashmi Ammembala, the staff of the Radio Siddhartha, asking whether they could help her husband Jameel Pasha, who is a multi-talented person but was sitting at home

doing nothing. Then Rashmi inquired about his talent. She revealed that he is interested in acting, writing, stage shows etc. Radio Siddhartha which is actually identifying and supporting talents of local community asked him to come to studio for the demonstration of his performance. His interview was aired from the station under the title 'Prathibha Kirana'. His fortune thus had a beautiful beginning he got offers from local theatre groups, associations also felicitated by some organizations. Now he got offers from kannada cinema where he will act as a villain role. Rihan's husband is busy in acting number of films. Now Rihan is a very happiest woman because her husband is earning handsome and become popular day by day in cinema. She and her husband is expressing gratitude to the Radio become a launching pad to his carrier.

S.C Shankaranna (65), is a folk artist of Tumkur. Nobody identified his talent because he kept a low profile in the society for his poor family background. One day Radio Siddhartha tapped and gave him an opportunity in a programme titled 'Janapada Jagattu'. He has been giving a number of 'harikatha' programmes in Radio Siddhartha .

#### Analysis and Discussion

**Table No.1: Participated Respondents in Cultural Programmes of Radio Siddhartha CR**

CR Participants	Total Respondents	%
Participated as Listeners	48	96
Participated as Artists	27	54

The above table shows that 96% of respondents participated as listeners and 54% respondents participated as artists in cultural programmes of Radio Siddhartha. This data reveals that the majority of respondents are the listeners of Radio Siddhartha.

**Table No 2: Formats of Programmes most liked by the Respondents**

Formats of Programmes	Most liked by the Respondents	%
Drama	41	82
Folk Songs	45	90
Story	33	66
Feature	27	54
Talk	6	12
Debate	12	24

The above table illustrates that 82% of respondents like drama, 90% of respondents like folk songs, 66% of respondents like story, 54% of respondents like feature, 12% of respondents like talk,

24% of respondents like debate format of the programme.

**Table No 3: Beneficiaries of participation in Cultural Programmes**

More Benefited Respondents		%
Public identification	41	82
Sharing of thoughts and experiences	45	90
Get know other participants	38	76

The above table illustrates that 82% of respondents got public identification through cultural programmes, 90% of respondents benefited by sharing of thoughts and experiences and 38% respondents get know other participants through cultural programmes.

#### Conclusion and Suggestions

This study reveals that how the community radio helps the listeners to know about art and culture of the particular region. The overall role of community radio Radio Siddhartha through its programmes on culture indicated that more listeners participated effectively. Community Radio is playing a very important role in cultural development of Tumkur taluk. Radio Siddhartha is well received by the local community of Tumkur taluk. Further, this kind of research explains radio listening culture is still alive and how the Community Radio is needed for the integrated development of society by considering an individual as a role player in socio-cultural development.

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