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Community Radio a Social Tool for Women Empowerment in Namakkal District

Authors

R.Orusolvasagan¹, V.Chandru², Dr.G.Dalin³Assistant Professor ^{1,2}

Department of Visual Communication · AJK College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore-641 020, India

(With special reference to Paramathi Velur)

³Asst Professor & Placement Officer PG & Research Dept of Computer Science Hindusthan College of Arts & Science,

ABSTRACT

This paper presents an insight into a proposal that intends to empowerment of women. It reflects on direct and indirect impacts of the initiative that targeted hundreds of women in Paramathi Velur, Namakkal District. The major aim of this paper is to promote social and economic empowerment of women. The key factors are that the ability of women to attaining knowledge and creation, personal and community development and as a whole women's development in the society. The research also examines the recent improvements in radio broadcast coverage and the information providing the women with a platform that adequately meets their needs.

Introduction

More than two billion people live in rural areas of developing countries. There is a direct link between women development and radio. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, numerous programs have attempted to authorize women. Radio is the important source of information – far outpacing internet, television and newspapers. It is a sustainable, cost-effective medium able to reach large, illiterate populations in a way that is relevant to local cultures and oral traditions.

Community radio is defined as it serves the public interest of a particular geographic group or community. It is a medium that can give the marginalized a voice, appeal to societal calm and order, and spread credible, useful information. Community radio can play a major role in engagement, participation and developing women.

“Rural development is participation of people in a mutual learning experience involving themselves,

their local resources, external change agents and outside resources. People cannot be developed;

they can only develop themselves by participation in decisions and cooperative activities which affect their well-being. People are not being developed when they are herded like animals into new ventures” (Nyerere Julius)

Main objectives

1. To find out the socio-economic profile of women living in the study area.
2. To study the progress of women empowerment through community radio.
3. To analyze the willingness of women in participation in community radio.
4. To find out the listening habits of women.

5. To identify women's participation.

Literature of reviews

Radio

Radio has in a more personal type of presentation and in reaching many people of low literacy level. Its audience may limit in areas where electricity is not available or where transmission facilities are lacking or poor. Representation of early morning broadcast via radio, made up of answers to questions. Two-way circuit or two-way communication keeps the agricultural programmes so practical and so popular. Tabing (2000) says some unique characteristics of a community radio stations:

- An appropriate technology with economic capability of people, which not leads to dependence on external sources
- It promotes and improves community problems as well as to solve them

In developed countries, face – to – face communication takes preference over the mass media at the point in the campaign where farmers are deciding whether to adopt a new practice. The farmers rely mostly on the media for information about new farming ideas, but when it comes to deciding whether to accept a new practice in their own farming and consult other farmers or expert advisers. It is going locally and it is to involve discussion, advice, and personal influence; and it is much more likely to be a lasting decision. It made a group or community basis (Wilbur Schramm, 1964).

Brecht (1983) conceptualized the exploitation of the two-way practice of radio broadcasting in pedagogic terms, through the interface between radio and art.

Radio can also be used to announce processes of research and extension work. It provides venues for meetings with extension workers, advice on where to get inputs/services and advice on where to get technical support. The local communities' needs are often neglected by the mainstream media and commercial channels but the radio understands their needs. Even if the radio is an "old-fashioned" medium in the current

information age, says (Richa Sachan , Sneha Singh and Kirti)

Enzensberger (1974) distinguished between the repressive use of media – centrally controlled, with one-way flow of messages, produced by specialists for isolated individuals, and promoting passive consumption; and an emancipator use of media – decentralized, linking many to many, fostering interactivity, collectively produced and actively used, promoting collective mobilization.

Agricultural Communication targets specific audiences. They develop an important message that needs to be communicated. Now a day's agricultural news programmes and coverage of agriculture related topics remains its importance to the world (Ricky Telg and Tracy Anne Irani, 2011).

Community Radio

Community radio is a non-profit broadcasting service which is owned and managed by a particular community, either through a trust, foundation, or association (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). Community radio provides public space for deliberative dialogue that helps to build trust and horizontal social networking among stakeholders at a local level (Gumucio Dagrón, 2001). It engages its audience not only with listening to a station's programs, but also with taking part in station's management, program production, and evaluation (Jallov, 2012).

Community radio addresses specific needs of community's that are not covered by other public or private media (Fraser and Estrada, 2001). Several scholars claim that Community Radio acts as a tool for social change and has several advantages over the other media:

- cost-efficient in terms of investment
- local language which is ideal for rural illiterate people
- programs reflect local information to satisfy their audience needs and interests
- it values local culture, practices, and traditions

- it allows community access to and participation in station's management and operational activities (Fraser & Estrada, 2001; Gumucio Dagron, 2001; Jallof, 2012).

Costa (2012), Community Radio is initiated not by a community it's by external actors. It is not easy for a radio station to build community's participation, trust, perceived ownership, and need. Scholars argue that individual community members and local organizations are the sources of information for a community (Tabing, 2002).

It builds a horizontal social network helps a community reduce dependency on broadcasting programmes (Gumucio Dagron, 2001).

Shayamalavani is one of the community radio, sustain in Madurai district. The researcher chooses this community radio network for their project to evaluate its participation and agriculture effectiveness among village people who survive in Madurai rural areas. In this 5G world, Shayamalavani community radio passing on the information to the farming community as quickly as possible among various modes of radio broadcasting and telecasting. Community development programmes like ranging from culture, rural development, education, hygiene and sanitation, agriculture to local governance are broadcasted via Shayamalavani.

Community radio around the World

A community should have the responsibility for all activities of Community Radio sustain by the community (Gumucio Dagron, 2001). Community involvement in communication processes helps to build trust among the stakeholders (FAO, 2014).

Ray (2010) engagement of community members in communication might not allow oppressing and expresses their views in the decision-making. It's too often community radio stations struggle with becoming the voice of power holders.

The convergence of Community Radio with internet (for instance, the recently closed Kothmale Radio in Sri Lanka and Local Radio Network in Indonesia) are relevant examples of a

new dimension in content development and social networking (Gumucio Dagron, 2001).

In India very limited books related to community radios. Vinod Paravala, Kanchan K. Malik, (2007), arguably the first book on Community Radio in India, narrates the evolution of broadcasting mechanisms and policies and their subsequent bearing on Community Radio initiatives and concerns. Perspective of Community Radio and comparisons between the status of Community Radio in India and that of other countries – including the developed and developing ones are explained in details.

Community Radio in India

Radio plays a vital role in passing on information to farming community as quickly as possible among various modes of radio broadcasting. Community Radio (CR) is a powerful medium for education and development. It is 'characterized as a mouthpiece for socially, economically, politically and culturally marginalized people & as a tool for development of society improved input for agriculture, education and would encourage members of the community to associate together to design, produce and air programs (Srivastava, 2007).

One can easily understand the importance of community radio in India. It can effectively mobilize the community to undertake several developmental programs and projects which can help bring all the desirable changes in the society. 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".

This came as an inspiration to groups across the country, but to begin with, only educational (campus) radio stations were allowed, under somewhat stringent conditions. Anna FM is India's first campus 'community' radio, launched on 1st February 2004, which is run by Education and Multimedia Research Centre (EMRC), and all

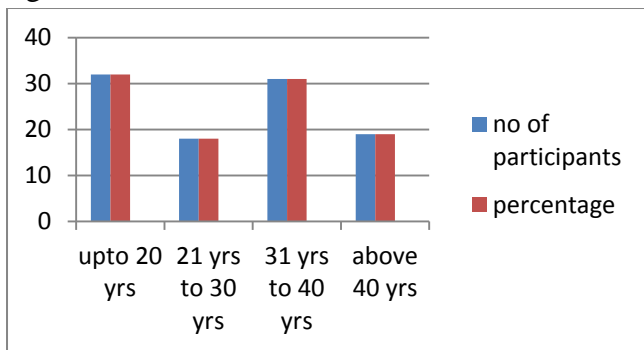
programmes are produced by the students of Media Sciences at Anna University (Khan 2010).

Methodology of the study

The present studies follows a micro level examination of the developmental sequences and the skills among the women’s in Paramathi Velur Village, Namakkal district, Tamil Nadu. For this study 100 working women have been selected for sample and they are chosen based on convenient sampling. The test materials have been constructed and the data have been collected mainly in written mode and recordings. The methods are i) individual profile sheet ii) questionnaire method iii) interview method iv) observation method. Frequencies are generated and the results are interpreted through percentage analysis.

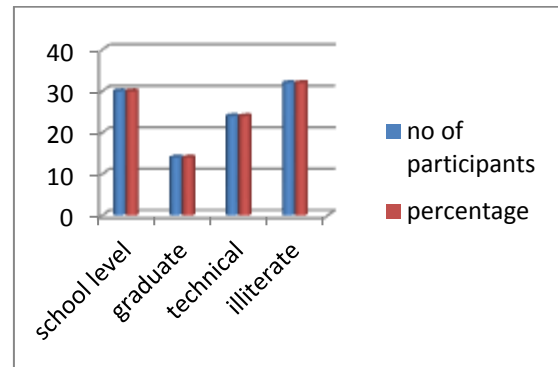
Analysis of the study

Age Wise Classification



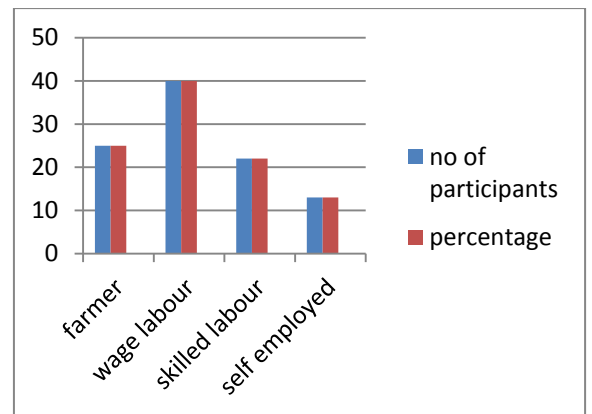
The above chart shows clearly about the age wise classification and percentage of women participants in Paramathi Velur village. Only 32% of respondents have responded up to twenty years of age. The category of the age twenty one years to thirty years only 18% have participated and only 31% has participated under the age of thirty one to forty years. Remaining 19% of the women participants of above forty years have responded.

Educational Wise Qualification Classification



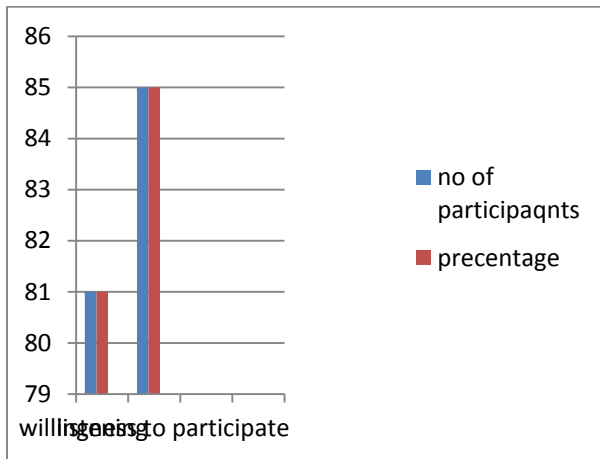
The above chart shows clearly about the educational wise qualification. Only 30% of women’s comes under category of the school level. Remaining 14% falls under the category of graduates, 24% of women’s are technical origin. Finally 24% of women’s are illiterates.

Occupation Status



Occupation status of the women’s in Paramathi Velur village is shown clearly in the above chart. Only 25% of women are in the village working as farmers and 42% of them are under the category of wage labours. The occupation as skilled labour and self employed is 22% and 13% respectively.

Listening Radio and willingness to participate in radio program



Paramathi Village women's are listening to the radio is only 81% about health programmes, environmental programs, and education, agriculture and household management programs. Only 85% of them are participating in the health program.

Findings

The active participant will be from the age group of up to 20 years. Disaggregating by age yielded no significant differences in listenership between older and younger women in any sample, however. Overall, 32% of younger women listened to radio, compared to older women. Of those women who listen to the radio, virtually 100% listen to community radio. As it is rooted in a local environment, it has far more relevance and interest to listeners than state, urban or international radio stations. The illiterate people will be more able to access community radio easily than any other medium. According to the occupation of women's in the village are mostly wage labourers.

Only three fourth of the respondents of total strength are listening to the radio. When asked what type of programming they would like to hear more of, women's programming was the most popular answer health programs. Women like listening to programmes that inform, educate and deal with the interests and issues that affect their daily livelihoods; women's programming appears the most effective platform to meet these needs. It provides a space for women to express themselves, to participate in public life, educates

them on their rights, sensitises them and gives them protection against harmful traditional mindsets.

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