

# Community radio for development of Schedule Tribes of India

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## Abstract

India is home of the large variety of indigenous tribes, they have their own arts, values, culture, customs, communication modes and living standards. They are not only living in isolated and inaccessible areas of the country but also in populated plains. They have their own traditional system to communicate and aware themselves but in dwell of time most of the tribal societies of country left behind from the sphere of mainstream democracy. Poverty, illiteracy, alcoholism, malnutrition, superstitions etc. are spread over these communities. In that matter community radio has a potential to play an important role to make these communities aware and led to them for development. As communication is the key aspect of development and if it associates with the participatory mode of communication, then it certainly aware communities for their needs, their rights and lead them to the development. In India there are some community radio stations which are serving different tribal community. This study explores the relationship between community radio broadcast and the development of tribal community. It is believed that this study assess the increasing scope of community radio broadcasting for development of the tribal society of India.

**Keywords:** Schedule Tribes, Awareness, Development, Community, Community Radio.

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## I. Introduction

India is home of a large variety of indigenous people, who are living here with their own custom, culture and belief. They have been following their own traditions, knowledge communication process, skills and art from generation to generations. Schedule Tribes (STs) population is 8.6 percent of total population of India (Census of India 2001). As they show a big number in population but they are very poor in development standards like they have comparatively low literacy rate, poor health condition, malnutrition, Substandard living condition etc. In India STs are inhabited in all part of country except Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Pondicherry (Census 2011). Statistics provided by office of Registrar General, India 2011 shows that there is a low literacy rate of only 59 percent among STs Comparative to total population of India i.e. 73 percent. Among female population of the STs Literacy rate is even worse, estimated only 49 percent. 45.3 percent of STs Population is below poverty line in rural area and 24.1 percent in urban area (Erstwhile planning Commission 2011-2012). This segment of Indian population is not only socially economically backward but also faces some discrimination and crime or atrocities. Some constitutional provisions have been made for the protection and development of STs in India. Government wants to take them in mainstream of democracy but they are neglected even by the mainstream press and media. Some of the traditional beliefs are today faded because of their negligence. Health, Poverty, Agriculture, Access to water, Sanitation, alcoholism, low income, superstitions, there are the major issues to look after for the development and improvement in their society. Participatory communication plays a vital role for the development needs of underprivileged groups. It gives voice to the suppressed and oppressed community of the society. In that case it is very necessary to know that how effectively a community media can perform for the development needs of the STs. India more people have access to radio than to any other medium. A radio receiver is cheap and portable. Its programmes usually friendly and entertaining. In Indian context it is most suitable medium for the communication, because:

- Radio is most economical electronic medium
- Radio can reach remote areas
- It can reach to the people who cannot read or write
- It is most appropriate for Indian culture and Society.

Community radio is comparatively a new concept for Indian media and the communication system but from almost 15 years, community radio is playing a vital role as it makes aware to the community for their development needs. Community radio is a local broadcasting system which known as peoples own media, it also popularly known as a medium of the people, for the people and by the people. We can say that a community

radio is a community oriented democratic medium of communication. It caters the development needs of a specific community living in a specific geographical area. It is a tool for empowerment, development and voice for voiceless and marginalized.

### **Philosophy behind the Community Radio**

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcaster (AMARC), an international non-governmental organization of community radio broadcasters founded in 1983 makes clear in its mission statement that:

*“It should be made clear that community radio is not about doing something for the community but about the community doing something for itself, i.e. owning and handling its own means of communication.”*

Community radio is tend to be a community oriented democratic medium of communication. It is a radio for the people, of the people and by the people. It is a tool for empowerment, social development and voice for voiceless. Community Radio is best defined as having three aspects i.e. Non-profit making, Community Participation, Community Ownership and control. In this way it can say that Community Radio is a social process for a better access towards the development goals. In which members of a community federate to design and produce programmes, and air them. For India community radio broadcasting is quite new concept but struggle behind community oriented broadcasting system is not new. Community radio broadcasting in India is a result of very long struggle to getting a platform to speak up about the need for development for the underprivileged people.

### **Present status of community radio in India**

As per the information available on the website of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, there are 364 CRs working across the country for the development and awareness of the communities (as on 01-07-2022). As community radio disseminate information effectively to the grass-root level, that's why recently central government has issued some advisory to CRs for continuously broadcast messages related to health and nutrition for PoshanAbhiyaan, and also broadcast yoga based programmes regular basis on the occasion of international Day of Yoga. Government of India laid the policy guidelines for setting up Community Radio Station in the year 2002, it was amended in year 2006, 2017 and 2018. Indian policy to establish a community radio station is very comprehensive and it also ensures that development process runs smoothly.

### **Community radio as a tool for development**

**DhanrajPatil (2019)**, discussed on his article in Asia-Pacific journal of rural development (July-2019) on the topic Participatory Communication Approach for RD: Evidence from Two Grassroots CR Stations in Rural India. After the case study of Sangam Radio and Radio Bundelkhand, he mentioned in his findings that it is the era when the alternative communication medium like community radio (CR) is accepted as a tool of participatory approach of rural development in developing country like India. **Mohammad Faisal Amadu and Amin Alhassan (2018)** discussed in their paper on the topic Community Radio in Rural Development in Northeastern Ghana: the experiences of Radio Gaakii in the Saboba district, about the relationship between community radio broadcast and community development. This study draws attention to the special role of radio in development work by analyzing the programming style and formats of Radio Gaakii and its impact on the community's development drive. **B.K. Natarayan (2013)**, stated in his article on Community Radio: Prospects and Challenges, in his study he analyzed the role of community radio in creating social awareness in the community it serves. In his study on PSG Community Radio, he find that the PSG Community Radio station does its best in disseminating knowledge to the local community and also creating awareness among people. **Dr. Arpita Sharma (2015)**, a scholar in the field of Agricultural Communication mentioned in her book, Community Radio for Women Empowerment, that participatory communication is a true answer for the development of vulnerable segment of society as women, marginalized segment and extremely underprivileged group.

### **Community Radio for Tribal Development.**

Community radio serves as a catalyst in development process. In India the tribal community is living a substandard condition even today. Time to time government proposes and launches plans and programmes for their betterment. But irony is that even the information about these schemes and laws does not reach them. In such a situation community radio working in the country are proving their relevance and significance. The **Radio City Itanagar 90.8 MHz** is the first community radio station which started in year 2018 from Itanagar, the capital city of Arunachal Pradesh. This station is run by TarhukSamaj which is serving the need of local tribal people. This station mainly focuses on education, health and agri-allied activities. Aajkiawaz, Arunachal Rhythm, lokkathaye are some signature programmes of this station. It promotes their language and gives them a platform to share their problems. It also ensures their representation in content production and function of community radio station. **Brahmaputra Community Radio Station 90.4 MHz** is a CRS situated near the bank

of river Brahmaputra in dibrugarh district. This community radio caters the people living along the river bank and island of upper Assam and also the different tribal communities, who are living in this area from generations. This station focuses on women and child health, disaster management, environment, governance, education, agriculture and folk culture. brahmaputra live, GramyaBartaDinlipi, Puwar Brahmaputra, krishka Katha etc. are some programmes given by the station. This station introduced a concept of radio Bandhus that means the volunteers from the community, in this way this station ensures the active participation of community members. **Hamar Radio 90.4 MHz** is a CRS situated in Surajpur district of Chhattisgarh. VikasAnusandhanSansthan is running this CR station with the help of UNICEF. It focuses to preserve local traditions, culture and enhance the livelihood and sustainability of prospects in the region. This community radio largely serves the Schedule tribe community of this region. Tribal people of Surajpur are affected by alcoholism, illiteracy, poor livelihood opportunities, low-income, malnutrition, epidemics and other health issues. Also, superstitions and ignorance about scientific practices for well-being are major issues that are being addressed through station initiatives. Programmes like likeHamarSwachchhata, Samudaya Radio Kendra and MatdataJagrukta, the station focusses on women empowerment, livelihood, ending child marriage and continuing education. **VanyaRadio Bhabra 90.4 FM** situated in Bhabra, which is a dense habitant of STs of Jhabua and Alirajpur district of Madhya Pradesh. Here the community does not have any access to morden media or any other communication channel which serves them in their own dialect or language. this CRS helps the tribal community to preserve their culture and to promote education. In this way this radio is striving towards social change for the betterment of the community. Badhtekadam, doctor kisaalah, kheti-kisani, Aapsnivaat are the signature programmes which are broadcasting from this radio station. **Panzarawani Community Radio Station 90.4 MHz** in Dhule, Maharashtra run by Lupin Human Welfare and Research Foundatio. This CRS basically serves the tribal community living there. Its main focus is the socio-economic development it also helps to preserve the culture of the tribal communities living there. Programmes dedicated for the development needs are Gramodaya, MazaSandesh, Panzarakath Chi Gani, AhiranTadka, Kadyach Bola. In Odisha **Radio Muskan 90.4 MHz** caters the tribal community living in hilly landscape and dense forest of Kandhmal, Odisha. It addresses the basic needs and rights of the tribal people living here. Agriculture, Rural development, environment, women's empowerment, forestrights, tribal rights, natural resources management are the main focus area. It also promotes the folk and traditional culture of local tribal. Programmes are made in Hindi, English, Odia and a local dilect, Koli. Pholbani Express, srabani, Ama Katha AmaKahani, Badu BenaMandeGadinga, Muskan live are the popular programmes of this CRS. Banswara district is comparatively backward area of Rajasthan. Local people and the Schedule tribe community of this region speak a local dialect i.e. Vagdi. **Vagad Radio 90.8 MHz** caters the need of the people of this area. It promotes local art, traditions, culture and interest in this local dialect. Child rights, youth development, sustainable livelihood, agriculture etc. are the main issues which is discussed by this CRS. HamariDharohar, SachhaSwasthya, SachhaBachpan,,samasyaSamadhan are some handful of programmes aired from this CRS. Nilgiribiospherereserves, in kotagiri, Tamilnadu is the home of several indigenous communities and schedule tribes. People of these communities have very poor livelihood and living standard. **Radio Kotagiri 90.4 MHz** is running by the Keynotes Foundations for enhancing the livelihood of the people living here. The local communities have their own and specific oral knowledge but in dwell of time some knowledge and traditions have forgotten. Radio Kotagiri is working for preserving and promoting culture, tradition, knowledge and information. It also worked for ecology, environment, farming, food and nutrition and health.

## **II. Summary and Conclusion**

Study of these community radio stations explores about the aims and objectives of the radio stations running for tribal community of different area of the country. Core objective of these rado station is to disseminate development and empowerment through broadcasting. Community radio is uniquely capable of meeting the development, information and entertainment needs of the area it serves. It must provide what are in fact 'essential services' to the community served. It must provide unbiased information, links and feedback that are difficult to duplicate and of great value to the community and particularly in areas where literacy rates are low, or women are under-represented in media.

Issues such as crime, corruption, poverty and unemployment, violence and interpersonal conflict, consumer literacy and health and nutrition related problems confront a typical community on a daily basis. Information and guidance towards solution of such problems is yet another vital function of a community radio station. Community radio functions as a versatile mechanism for delivering access to information for scattered and remote populations. The aim in all these initiatives is to provide easy access to the broadcast for the people and their development needs.

A combination with the internet enables community radio broader community participation, despite whatever barriers of language or access that may prevail. Unique and innovative, community radio's main

function is to become a mechanism for authentic expression and empowerment of people at the local level. The community radio sector is the reflection of development as it rolls out at the grassroots.

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