

Role of Community Radio for Tribal Empowerment

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Abstract: The issues of the marginalized people are less discussed by the mainstream media. The community radio stations give importance to those people who find it difficult to raise their voices. The tribal people get opportunity to listen to radio in which the programmes are made in their own dialects. They themselves become programme producers and are able to make it useful for their community. Their traditional programmes are also transmitted without any interventions. Sometimes the anchors approach the people directly and get the responses of the audience. The women get opportunity to produce programmes of their interests. The farmers also get information about the agricultural products and the related demands. The expert advices are also made available to them. So Community Radio helps people to include themselves in the schedules of radio programmes and uplift their conditions. This study aims to analyze how Community Radio help to raise the voices of the oppressed by focusing on the problems of tribes, women, farmers etc. This study focuses on the impact of various programmes of Radio Mattoli in Manathavady belonging to Wayanad District of Kerala that helps in bringing out the voices of the marginalized communities. Random sampling method is used to make a Quantitative analysis.

Keywords: Community Radio; Tribal Colonies; Dialects; Marginalized.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are people who normally have less access to mass media or lack opportunity to air their views/concerns on varied issues. Community Radio Mattoli functions as a platform to give voice to the voiceless. The intention is to build a self-reliant, interactive and harmonious society abounding in self-respect that seeks its own development, fully harnessing locally available resources. The efforts reach across masses and create new waves of change.

The programmes aired open up possibilities for everyone especially the marginalized sections, to express them socially, economically, culturally and spiritually in order to become masters of their own destinies. It provides an avenue for the free flow of beneficial information aimed at bringing socio-economic changes in the society. Radio Mattoli serves as a catalyst for integral development of individuals and societies belonging to heterogeneous sections of the society [5]. It functions as an alternative to mainstream media. Some people of Wayanad depend upon Radio Mattoli for specific information or guidance that has direct impact on their lives. The programmes in Radio Mattoli give enough respect to the tribal dialects. The tribes participate in various programmes and spread their culture and tradition among themselves. The rich traditional culture is preserved. The media generally neglect

programmes for the tribes as the business conglomerates own the mainstream media. Radio Mattoli is the only electronic media channel in the whole of Kerala to broadcast programmes in tribal languages [8]. The station has a team of active volunteers from tribal communities who first train and then produce creative content on their own in the form of scripting shows, lending their voice for radio dramas etc.

Review of Literature

(Girard, 1992) states that via its vibrant community broadcasting system, community radio will promote pluralism and diversity. The involvement of people in the community in the creation of programming and the development of content makes the whole process of broadcasting a completely different experience. Community radio is called the radio of real people. Listeners are viewed not as mere target audiences, but as engaged people and creative media content creators. For a meaningful shift, Community Radio Programs may be regarded as the Fifth Estate. The mass media frequently struggle at grass root level to understand and resolve the needs of people. There is approximately 179 community radio stations in India, a number that is too small compared to the planned 4,000 by Government of India. (Joseph, 2014) discusses that In order to become masters of their own destinies, Mattoli opens up opportunities for all, particularly the oppressed segments, to express them socially, economically, culturally and spiritually. It offers an outlet for the free flow of useful data to bring about socio- economic improvements in society. Radio Mattoli acts as a catalyst for the integral transformation of heterogeneous parts of society through individuals and communities. As an alternative to main stream media, it works. People of Wayanad rely on detailed information or advice from Radio Mattoli that has a direct effect on their lives. (Deepthi, 2011) in her paper states that Radio Mattoli is exceedingly popular in Wayanad among the tribal community. They still listen to Radio Mattoli for updates on government programs, supports or special packages for indigenous people, information that seldom reaches the tribal people because it only exists in mass media such as television and newspapers that have limited or no access to the tribal community. The efforts of these young volunteers to support their communities are extremely important in this sense.

The role of community radio in the development of the community is inevitable. The members of the community become part of various programmes. There are many volunteers who work with this radio. The financial support is through WSS (Wayanad Social Service Society Ltd.), advertisements, funded projects etc.

Thudichedham

The programmes in Radio Mattoli are selected such that the culture and lifestyle of the tribal communities is preserved. The members from different tribal groups such as the Paniyas, the Adiyas, the Kurichyas etc. reside in various parts of Mananthavady such as Thalapuzha, Thavinjal, Kurukkanmoola, Koodalkadav, Payyampally, Arattuthara, Kuruva Dweep etc. and get access in the vicinity of community radio. 'Thudichetham' refers to the rhythm of Thudy, a small musical instrument of the tribes. The health issues, health campaigns, services provided in the health sector etc. are discussed. The educational oriented programmes to avoid dropouts, information exchange etc. are transmitted. The traditional art and culture of the tribes such as folk songs help in enriching their own programmes. Thudichetham broadcast the complexities of the issues faced by tribals and suggest remedies in their own dialects and slang. The tribal communities of Wayanad develop a very strong and personal sense of ownership with regard to the programme.

The aim of this programme is to make a general awareness among the tribes about their basic rights. The programmes of the government to uplift their standards are discussed. Even though there are several funding schemes to improve their living, many of them are unaware about them. The highlights of the programme for tribals are:-

- Tribal stringers for the production of programme episodes.
- Awareness programmes on adverse effects of alcohol.
- Awareness programmes on various tribal friendly legislations.
- Programmes to introduce books written on Tribals/Tribal Culture etc and their authors.
- Programmes to identify and preserve tribal ethnic groups which are on the verge of extinction.

Radio Mattoli with its recording and broadcasting equipments visit villages and select certain places like bus waiting sheds to conduct innovative programmes. It is conducted once or twice a month. The tribals actively participate in various programmes of Grama Mattoli. There are projects from government which are intended to convey messages to people through studio based programmes and outreach programmes.

Programmes for Farmers

Majority of the population in Wayanad are farmers and therefore the bulk of the radio programmes are geared towards their needs. The best practices in the farming sector are promoted through various programmes. Each and every programme produced specifically address the core issues and concerns in the respective fields. Considering the district's economic and educational backwardness, Radio Mattoli constantly produces and broadcast programmes that can address the issues directly. The channel also gets on board relevant experts from government authorities who acquaint farmers in the Wayanad hills with the methods to preserve of water bodies, dairy farming, organic farming, and precision farming. Njattuvella programme discusses the current issues or concerns of the farming sector. Njattuvella is highly popular among the farming community. Farmers receive information on all aspects of farming or agriculture through this programme. Vayalnadu presents the success stories of farmers and research centres. The information on weather updates (obtained from Ambalavayal or Thamarassery through e-mail) and farming methods such as bio farming are transmitted. The experts in the field of agriculture give interviews or talks. The agricultural officer's live programme is conducted once in a month. Vayalnadu is broadcasted on Saturdays and Sundays. Ksheera Vani is a programme broadcasted on all Thursdays at 7:10 pm. It is focused on the needs of dairy farmers. The issues like the shortage of green fodder, feed concentrate, fluctuations in both the domestic and global markets etc are discussed and suggestions from experts are provided. Kambola vila nilavaram gives information about the market values of various agricultural products. This is very useful for the farmers as they get adequate market price for their hard work.

Programmes for Women

The primary objective of Vanitha Mattoli is Women empowerment. All these programmes are produced by women from various walks of life. Vanitha Mattoli programmes strive to address various issues faced by women through informative as well as educative radio programmes. The physical needs, anxieties and solutions related to a house are discussed in Veetukaryangal. Kudumbavedi broadcasted on all Mondays deals with positive human

interest instructions to the public. Sthree Saurhuda Varthakal refers to women-friendly news stories broadcasted on Saturdays and Mondays. The empowerment of women is the aim of this programme. Ponpulari presents the entrepreneurial efforts of women in Wayanad region. Radio Mattoli has identified and interviewed several women who are running small businesses such as that of Pickle and Namkeen of value added products. Ruchikoot is broadcasted on Thursdays by professional in the field. The preparation of food products giving importance to health and nutrition is discussed. Adukkala visesham is a cookery programme recorded with the own voice women home makers. They share their experience on all Wednesdays.

2. METHODOLOGY

Quantitative analysis among people in tribal colonies, women and farmers in Mananthavady region of Wayanad District is required. This paper examines the effect of Community Radio in marginalized communities such as tribes, women and farmers. In order to obtain a more in-depth understanding of the influence of Community Radio, the researcher has employed interview schedule as the tool for data collection. The researcher has prepared an interview schedule and itemized rating scale. The schedule is designed such that the required data for the achievement of the study should be easily obtained. The tool has translated into Malayalam or regional dialects and again back translated with the experts in the field, both academicians and practitioners.

Expected Outcome include the following:-

- The tribal people would listen to their problems and solutions being discussed and make habitual changes
- The programmes through Community radio would help the farmers to obtain agricultural knowledge
- The women would be motivated by listening to inspirational stories of other women

Analysis and Interpretation

The researcher collected 150 samples from the tribal colonies in Mananthavady of Wayanad district out of which 89 are female and 61 are male (Table 1.1).

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	61	40.66
Female	89	59.3
Total	150	100

Table 1.1: Gender of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
15-24	18	12
25-34	16	10.66
35-44	52	34.66
45-54	16	10.66
Above 54 years	48	32
Total	150	100

Table 1.2: Age wise distribution of respondents

From Table 1.2, among 15-24 years category, there are 18 respondents. Among 25-34 years category, there are 16 respondents. Among 35-44 years category, there are 52 respondents. They actively listen to various programmes of Radio Mattoli and give suggestions for improvement. Among 45-54 years category, there are 16 respondents. Above 54 years there are 48 respondents. Many of the respondents above 50 years and few women of all categories regularly watch Radio Mattoli programmes. 10% of the respondents listen to the programmes with their family during night. The children prefer to listen to radio using mobile phones. Radio sets are available in this colony when Grama Mattoli was conducted earlier. The adults prefer this facility. The category of respondents above 40 years is interested to listen to folk songs in their own dialects. They also prefer health related programmes. Almost all categories of adults prefer to give feedback of the programmes. Few of them prefer writing letters whereas others prefer visiting the studio directly and give feedback. But many cannot do it regularly due to their work schedules, health issues etc. The respondents belonging to 45- 54 years age group are interested in listening to news and useful information related to government aids and special allowances for them. The children shared their bitter experiences in schools and Mattoli School clubs helped in improving their conditions.

Nature of listening	Frequency	Percentage
Regular listeners	22	14.66
Occasional listeners	44	29.3
Rare listeners	49	32.66
Non listeners	35	23.3
Total	150	100

Table 1.3: Frequency of listening to Community Radio Mattoli programmes

Programmes	Frequency	Percentage
Njattuvela	44	29.3
Vayalnadu	31	20.66
Ksheera Vani	29	19.3
Kambola vila nilavaram	46	30.66
Total	150	100

Table 1.4: Response towards programmes of Radio Mattoli among farmers.

From Table 1.4, Njattuvela is a popular programme among the farming community. 23 respondents regularly listen to this programme whereas 21 respondents occasionally listen to it. Vayalnadu which presents the success stories of farmers has 31 active listeners. The agricultural officer's live programme is an interesting programme for male respondents. Ksheera Vani, focused on the needs of dairy farmers is of interest for 29 respondents. Kambola vila nilavaram that gives information about the market values of various agricultural products gets popularity among 14 respondents regularly and among 32 respondents occasionally. The researcher collected samples from the women in Dwaraka in Mananthavady of Wayanad district by visiting them personally to share their views. They listen to various programmes of Radio Mattoli for entertainment and for getting tips to manage their household works. Some retired women participate in Radio Mattoli programmes by visiting the studio.

Programmes	Frequency	Percentage
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Veetukaryangal and Kudumbavedi	42	28
Ponpulari	31	20.66
Ruchikoot and Adukala Visesham	44	29.3
Women-friendly stories	33	22
Total	150	100

Table 1.5: Response towards programmes of Radio Mattoliamong women.

There are various programmes for women listening to radio. From Table 1.5, Veetukaryangal is a programme listened by 42 respondents. Kudumbavedi broadcasted which deals with positive human interest instructions to the public is also popular among them. The women-friendly news stories broadcasted on Saturdays and Mondays gets popularity among 33 women. Ponpulari presents the entrepreneurial efforts of women in Wayanad region gets the support of 31 respondents. Ruchikoot and Adukkala visesham are programmes listened by 44 respondents. So the programmes broadcasted by Radio Mattoli are inspirational and provide relaxation for the majority of women respondents. Thus there are programmes for farmers, women and tribal listeners.

3. CONCLUSION

The tribal people listen to Community Radio that discusses their problems and solutions make habitual changes. Programmes in various tribal dialects specifically designated to disseminate information in a simple, easy to understand way, considering the socio-cultural-educational implications of the tribal community. The hesitation of these tribal communities to integrate with the people in the mainstream is an issue considered with care through Community Radio. The programmes through Community radio help the farmers to obtain agricultural knowledge and access to experts in the field. Radio Mattoli constantly produces and broadcast programmes that can address the issues of farmers directly. The channel also gets on board relevant experts from government authorities to guide them in this field. Vanitha Mattoli programmes strive to address various issues faced by women through informative as well as educative radio programmes. The women are also motivated by listening to inspirational stories of other women from radio.

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