

# CRnews

tracking community radio in India

## ‘Let CRs not be poor copies of mainstream radio’

Ashish Sen interviews P V Satheesh, Director of the Deccan Development Society (DDS) which has set up the Sangham Radio, India’s first rural community radio station

**Q1: Does the current CR climate in the region throw up new challenges for community radio? Is there need for a 'good' legislation to address these concerns? Your suggestions/views in this regard.**

**PVS:** I have a deep concern. Is the Community Radio in India following the community concerns or is it diverting it to become a poor imitation of mainstream radio? If this is happening I will be extremely worried about the status of CR in India. I have some reason to be so worried. I have not seen any explicit articulation by CR activist NGOs or other groups that they would use CR as a tool to bring out the community angst, their fight against their marginalization etc. For example why is it that the huge indigenous belt in India does not have a string of com-



PV Satheesh

**If this could have happened, would we be witnessing the kind of bloodbath that we are witnessing?**

munity radios that can amplify their own struggles against the corporatisation of their lands and resources?

If this could have happened, would we be witnessing the kind of bloodbath that we are witnessing? If there was an opportunity for community radios to operate from the remotest corners of the country and if they had replaced guns as the weapon of resistance, would we not have a better and non violent method of democratic expression of people’s anger and frustration? If a strong network of such CRs had been created, would it probably have replaced the corporate English media that has less than a few million viewers/readers but pretends to represent One Billion people of India, every time an anchor comes on air?

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## Message from UNESCO



Iskra Panevska

Community radio has often been referred to as “a poor man’s medium” or as the “invisible medium that transcends illiteracy boundaries.” Whatever it might be called, community radio provides a particularly rich medium to explore the dynamics of globalization and to do so from the vantage point of local communities. Autonomous, non-commercial and dynamic, this medium for grassroots communication relies on the communities it serves for survival. Community radio is about harnessing the tremendous potentials media can offer to engage people and change their lives.

India is a relatively latecomer to this promising channel of people’s empowerment. Until late 2006, only educational institutions were allowed to set up campus radio stations having a transmission range of 10-15km. The scope was only recently expanded to also include non-profit organizations, agricultural research institutes, and schools, to set up community radio stations that would involve local communities in the content production process. The progress has been steady since then but rather slow due to the license process which can take well over a year.

There is a growing need for this process to be examined and re-worked so as to make it more straightforward and transparent procedure for community radio broadcasters all over India. Similarly, restrictive policies on the dissemination of local news via community radio need to be re-visited and policies liberalized to comply with citizen’s fundamental right to know.

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# CRs transforming rural people into active media producers

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This to me is the major challenge for CR activists in the country. I am not sure of what CR laws are hampering this development. But there is an acute need for laws to be less stringent but regulatory enough not to allow socially divisive tendencies to take over the scene. I must however say that over the last 20 months or so since the Sangham Radio is on air we have not faced any legal or bureaucratic hassles even once. I must place this credit on the doorsteps of the government. I am an established "anti establishment" person. That I say so is truly a credit for the government.

**If a CR station addresses a larger population, it will lose its close touch with its listeners and their socio-cultural milieu.**

**Q2: Ban on news, cumbersome inventories, and restrictions on technology (low power transmitters): Despite these**

**handicaps, less privileged sections of society demonstrated how independent community radio can change their lives. Could you elaborate on this, particularly through the experience of DDS and Sangham Radio?**

**PVS:** I am not unduly perturbed over the ban on news - it is not a great issue right now. Probably in future this might become an issue and if CR has grown in numbers and strength, we can take care of this situation. So is my view on low power transmitters. If a 30 km radius transmitter can cover about 100 villages and a population of about 40-50000 persons [on the plains], I think this is quite adequate. If a given CR station addresses a larger population, it will lose its close touch with its listeners and their socio cultural milieu. It will not stay as a platform on which its "community" can come together. Therefore, I am against high power transmitters[except for deserts and hill country where the population is spread out] because that might emasculate the community character of the CRs and make them poor copies of the mainstream radio.

I think the fact that Sangham Radio has not been hampered by the above "restrictions" shows that its strength lies elsewhere. A news bulletin

**If Raipally Susilamma, a 34 year old farmer is participating in a discussion on the Sangham Radio, she is unpacking a number of "news items" that have a great relevance to her community.**

on a CR need not start with a typical "Headlines" where we start with the news of the PM addressing an Indo-Pak seminar and end with the latest scores from the day's IPL. If Raipally Susilamma, a 34 year old farmer is participating in a discussion on the Sangham Radio, she is unpacking a number of "news items" that have a great relevance to her community. She will be touching on the way weather is behaving, the impact of this weather on her crops, the way markets are responding to the weather and her crops, the new initiative of the local administration to provide weather insurance ..... she is packing as much news as she can possibly do without the help of any news agencies, specialized reporters or the ignominy of having to listen to the "expert panel of news analysts" who have no clue on what the import of that particular news on the communities that Susilamma belongs to. If this is not news what is news? What else do we want?

**Q3: Sangham Radio is our first independent CRS. Your role in Sangham Radio and in advocating CR is, in my memory, the oldest in the country. What differences/shifts in emphasis do you see between then (during the struggle to get legitimacy) and now. Do we need to also hark back to some of the priorities that were at the basis of the struggle pre-2005/6.? Your thoughts.**



General Narsamma making announcements on Sangham Radio

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## RADIO STORIES

### Radio Nazariya to advance youth-led community development

Drishti, a media advocacy and training group, has set up *Radio Nazariya* – a community radio unit in Ahmadabad for the city's youth to share their issues, experiences, joys, sorrows, struggles, dreams and aspirations with the people of Ahmadabad, and to promote youth-centered community development. *Radio Nazariya* has identified six enthusiastic community producers from marginalized



A community producer interviewing a member of the community.

community who are being trained in community radio.

Drishti has also started supporting three community radio stations in 2010 in collaboration with LAYA in Andhra Pradesh, MS Panwar Foundation, and Mountain Forum Himalayas in Himachal Pradesh and Mitra Jyothi in Karnataka. In the past, Drishti partnered with two community radio initiatives, in Kutch with the Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS) and in the Dang district of Gujarat in collaboration with Centre for Social Justice (CSJ). Along with other organizations and individuals, Drishti also played a significant role in the movement to democratize India's airwaves and fight for communities' rights to run and manage their own community radio stations.

**Sultan Ahmad**  
Community Radio Trainer  
Radio Nazariya, DRISHTI

### Innovative technology to make radio more exciting

Maraa, a media-training group, with support from Ford Foundation conducted a workshop for community radio practitioners titled "Radio out of the Box" in Tibetan Children's Village at Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh, from May 11-14, 2010. The workshop sought to provide an ideal framework for participants to imagine radio in exciting ways, to re-shape content, re-structure their reach in new ways, and also to inspire people to seek deeper connections with the world of new media.

A diverse set of facilitators enabled the four day hands-on workshop to explore a range of possibilities in the world of radio. This enabled the participants to substantially rethink the scope of radio both conceptually and practically. Marek Tuszynski from Tactical Technology opened up the workshop with some strategic thinking on how radio can be imagined differently. Other facilitators like Zahir Koradia from Gramvaani, Hemant Babu from Nomad India, Nishant Sharma from Unmukti and independent practitioners like Prayas Abhinav and Sophea Lerner familiarised the partici-



pants with new technologies available at our doorstep.

Rather than gaining exhaustive training for any one technology, this workshop sought to open up a vast array of possibilities through technology. It also raised some fundamental questions on notions of privacy, gender sensitivity, ownership, relations with the industry – questions which technology invariably throws up.

**Ram Bhat**  
Maara

### Kelu Sakhi completes 3 years in rural Mysore



*Kelu Sakhi*, (listen, my friend), a unique approach towards radio for the community, celebrated three years of being on air in Mysore district in February 2010. Conceptualised as a collaborative initiative by the Bangalore-based non-profit organisations, *Mahila Samakhyia*, Karnataka (MSK) and IT for Change, *Kelu Sakhi* is part of the *Mahiti Manthana* project.

The programme is broadcast weekly on Monday nights from Mysore on the Gyan Vani FM of Indira Gandhi Open University and Karnataka State Open University, with a repeat broadcast on Tuesday mornings.

*Kelu Sakhi* serves as a platform for the women's collectives of *Mahila Samakhyia* in Mysore district to express views and share information and success stories. Adolescent girls talk about caste discrimination in schools, and a number of sensitive issues like alcoholism and child marriage are addressed through fiction. MSK, Mysore also makes announcements about its meeting dates during the programme. Women are motivated to join adult literacy classes and are regularly informed about government schemes.

Through *Kelu Sakhi*, the voices, opinions and dialects of Dalit women have found a space in the otherwise commercially dominated radio spectrum. It is significant that the programme has managed to be on air for three years.

*Kelu Sakhi* is listened to collectively by the sanghas on a shared radio. It has a primary listener base of 3000 women in villages across three blocks in Mysore district.

**Krupa Thimmaia**  
Senior Project Associate  
IT for Change

## EDITORIAL

For many of us, the need for a CR newsletter is long overdue. Even since the license application processes started in 2007, there has been a need to track developments, share experiences, discuss problems and develop strategies. The formation of the Community Radio Forum (CRF) in 2007 was a step to address this through a network. Over the years, we've also realized that if community radio is to go to scale, mobilization needs to be consolidated through communication and information dissemination.

This assumes more importance given the issues that have emerged about the direction and course of community radio in the country. How can community radio gain ground among the marginalized, especially in remote areas? What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that marginalized voices take centre stage in community radio development? How do we measure the success of community radio, learn and share from each others' experiences?

This newsletter provides a platform to discuss, deliberate and dialogue some of these issues. We're conscious of the limitations. Even as we've tracked experiences of voices from the field, we need to ensure that they have access to the newsletter. To do so, please download the PDF version, translate, and share its contents with the grassroots. We hope you will support us to take this forward.

We're grateful to UNESCO for their support, and to the Department of Communication; S N School; University of Hyderabad for making it happen. We also thank the contributors, and all of you who have sent your encouraging feedback which substantially inspired this newsletter's first steps."

Ashish Sen

## FEEDBACK

Dear CR Supporters,

We thank you for sending us your valuable good wishes, encouragement, and suggestions on the launch of the e-newsletter 'CR News'. Please keep writing in to us, and do send us your feedback about the inaugural issue to help us make 'CR News' bolder and better as we go along.

Ashish Sen and Kanchan Malik

My good wishes to this good and bold initiative. I hope, much information, discussion, debate will take place. My support!

- **Dr Richie Rego SJ; Director, SARANG SAC 107.8FM Community Radio, Mangalore**

Congratulations to the Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communications for launching the newsletter on community radio. It is indeed a welcome move to introduce a platform for community radio practitioners (amongst others) to share community radio news, events, challenges and opportunities. However, as we all are aware, most community radio practitioners work in remote areas, often without access to internet facilities, and cannot read English articles! However, it will be indeed useful to advocates, academics and policymakers. Might be useful if individual community radio stations can commit to sharing the information to their reporters verbally, ensuring that information percolates to the practitioners, and ideally, information and articles come from the practitioners.

- **Ram Bhatt; Maara**

Congrats! Much needed. Perhaps we can think of doing a short audio piece that goes with the written magazine as well! I think Hindi and regional languages will be much needed...lets actively solicit volunteers ...I am sure many CR stations as well as CR advocates and enthusiasts will be willing to help!

- **Looking Forward. Venu Arora; Director of Projects, Ideosync Media Combine**

I am happy to hear that there is an effort to bring a Newsletter concentrating on CRS. I hope it will be a tool to help the grassroots level Community Radio Stations like us. Running a Community Radio Station in a remote village is really a challenge and this has to be documented as the new comers in this area will be enlightened.

- **James Rajasekaran. E; Station Manager, PARD Community Radio**

Congratulations! The decision is remarkable!! I know, the editorial team will take care of imparting knowledge to the deprived communities to fill in the knowledge gap on technology, costs, how to apply for CR and all, to maximise the number of CRs in India!!

- **Geeta Malhotra; Country Director, READ INDIA**

Wishing you all the best in this venture!

- **Indira Mansingh; Development Alternatives.**

This is fantastic news. Good luck and do let us know when and how we can subscribe to receive the newsletter. Best wishes.

- **Chhavi Sachdev; SONOLOGUE**

Congratulations on taking this step forward. As a member of the CR Forum, I would however; wonder if this can be called a "first of its kind". One World South Asia through its EK duniya anEK awaaz newsletter (see <http://newsletter.edaa.in/>) can be considered the initiator and precursor to this newsletter, having highlighted the following: Editorial, Voices from the field, Station Spotlight, Development Calendar, Resources, and Opportunities. Needless to say, we would love to be part of this and to contribute.

- **Geetha Bhardwaj; One World South Asia**

Congratulations on a very useful and required piece of work. Thanks also to UNESCO. It will be great to see articles from the ground, from CRF members, trainers etc in this. I agree with all suggestions so far to improve the newsletter and add a suggestion that local CR stations should consider converting relevant articles in audio programs and broadcasting it on their stations. This will address both the issue of language and of reaching back to the communities. I and Video Volunteers would be happy to provide any help necessary for this.

- **Stalin K.; Video Volunteers**

# CR must usher in a different media ethos...

(Continued from Page 2)

**PVS:** I guess in 1996, at the time when we started thinking about Community Radio, our primary focus was on how to rescue marginalized rural people from being passive consumers of media and become active media producers and control its content. This is still the concern. But what has changed for us is that what was once a dream has become a reality. And what a beautiful reality this has been! More about it a bit later.

Let me go back to what has changed in the larger context. In 1996 what bothered us was the fact that media was becoming more and more distant from the communities. Airwaves were being sold away to Rupert Murdochs. In spite of the Verghese Committee report and the abortive attempt of the Janata Dal Government to introduce a Community Broadcasting Bill in the Parliament, the government replied to the first CR application of DDS that “we have no community radio policy”. This was a moment of frustration which fortunately for us, kindled a determination to fight for the policy.



Algole Narsamma supervises studio recording at Sangham Radio

**In 1996 what bothered us was the fact that media was becoming more and more distant from the communities.**

Today there is a CR policy. There are at least a few genuine community radio stations. But the media context has become extremely frightening. The corporate controls and the obscene race for TRPs at the cost of trivializing media are making it irrelevant for the communities. The aggression with which the mainstream electronic media operates to dominate its audiences is still more worrying.

The celeb anchors have become media monsters.

They are not ready to have any open, democratic discussion even on their so called debates. They have a readymade point of view and a readymade agenda to which they drive their programmes with a devastating aggression. Thus they kill all the democratic diversity of opinions and monoculture the national minds. Thus instead of being a democratic option, media is becoming an anti-democratic monster of a machine.

On the other hand their capacity to trivialize the ‘broadcastscape’ is enormous. An FM station in Pune spent 30 minutes advising a girl how to win back an estranged lover! Over the last two years we have seen hours and hours of live telecasts of children stuck in an open borewell. While I don’t every say that these are not newsworthy issues, my contention is that the way media channels prime these up against the more pressing and urgent issues, completely off balance the importance of news. The less said about the elite bias of the news the better it is. Jessica Lals, Manu Sharmas and Ruchikas dominate their space whereas a million times ghastlier crimes such as the one in Nithari or the daily travails of adivasi women die very quick deaths.

It is this context that makes it

**Jessica Lals, Manu Sharmas and Ruchikas dominate their space whereas ghastlier crimes such as the one in Nithari or the daily travails of adivasi women die quick deaths.**

very urgent that the community radio brings alive a completely different media ethos into life. Something that takes up small issues of the small people without trivialising them, uses peace as a tool for all conflict resolutions, resurrects non violent community solutions as a strategy to resolve strife, acknowledges and respects community knowledge as an instrument of wise use of natural resources, digs deep into community strengths to find lasting New Age solutions for the New Age crises such as Climate Change.

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## FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT

### Local content makes *Kalanjiam Vaanoli* popular



Community radio reporters of Kalanjiam. From L to R - Porkodi, Jency, Manimekalai, and Sathya

Twenty-two year old Manjula reached the radio station before daybreak one day in August last year and started broadcasting Tsunami alerts at 5 a.m. Early morning listeners were caught unawares as they are used to the community radio station, *Kalanjiam Vaanoli*, beginning its broadcast only at eight. By mid-morning Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu and the surrounding region were given the all-clear by the district administration, but Manjula had already done her job effectively and efficiently that day.

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Driving past picturesque fishing villages and a terrain dotted with palm and coconut trees, I arrived at a rather unremarkable building that houses the community radio station supported by the DHAN Foundation in the small village of Vilunthamavadi in Keelaiyur block of Nagapattinam district, about two kilometres from where the 2004 Tsunami had wreaked havoc. Initiated in 2007 as part of a disaster management plan, with the support of UNDP, the radio project moved from narrowcasting to broadcasting in July 2009 when it went on air over 90.8 FM. Led by the unflappable Naguveer Prakash, the Coordinator of Kalanjiam

Radio, the station has a dedicated group of community radio reporters and producers, many of whom are young women who traverse approximately 50 villages on bicycles or buses collecting information and mobilizing communities to participate.

DHAN sees the radio project as a means to build the skills of the community to prepare and disseminate audio programmes on issues concerning their

socio-economic and cultural development. There is an emphasis on preservation of local wisdom and traditional knowledge. Apart from the Tirukkural, the classic Tamil aphorisms by Thiruvalluvar, with which the broadcast begins, the three-hour daily broadcast schedule includes programmes on agriculture, fishing, livelihoods, women and SHGs, traditional health practices, government schemes, and local culture and songs. Right now there is very little advertising, but they are working on offering an affordable local advertising platform.

Tamil Nadu is the state where the government gave away free television sets to farmers and villagers, so television penetration is quite high. Yet, Naguveer asserts, "by providing content that mainstream TV will never do, Kalanjiam radio has become very popular among certain sections of the people." There are some listeners who are so excited by the community-based content of this station that they use a simple PA system outside their house to distribute the broadcast to the neighbourhood.

**Vinod Pavarala**  
President  
Community Radio Forum, India



Naguveer Prakash, Coordinator, Kalanjiam Radio, outside the radio station

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD

### Radio Bundelkhand – The Struggle Has Only Just Begun

The team from the University of Hyderabad (UoH) had come to do research work with the *Radio Bundelkhand* (RB) team. On the first day they interacted with me and the other members of the radio team and we shared our over one and a half years of experience with them. In our hard toil during this period, we had never before got the opportunity to look back and assess, from where we started, how we went about and finally where we have reached. Sitting with the UoH team, we glanced back at our journey so far. This was also an opportunity for us to evaluate our work, the relationship that we are developing with the community and how beneficial RB has been for the people.

Our visits to various villages along with the research team from UoH, made us appreciate how much RB had become a part of the lives of the people. At Barua Sagar, we realized that RB had captured the hearts of the people and was looked upon as a medium for the local artists to showcase their talent. Participation in the programs of RB had led to an increase in the demand for these artists in the neighbouring villages and an enhancement in their income. We also met



RB artists in village Barua Sagar

women artists and were happy to know that their popularity had gone up after they started singing folk songs on RB.

For the first time, I personally got a chance to hear from the people about the help and advancement that RB had provided to farmers in Bundelkhand.

Believe me, this was a far more satisfying experience than getting this feedback from the reporters or through the letters that RB receives from its listeners.

*Picture by Vasuki Belavadi*

The visit to village Futera and interacting with the residents made us realize that it was not enough for RB to provide people with information about government schemes and farming practices. The radio must also serve as a platform for people to voice their concerns about malpractices that they encounter in government offices and other matters that affect their day to day lives. A high level of community mobilization and motivation is a must if we want people to come and talk boldly on RB about their rights and issues.

The visits to villages of Bundelkhand have made me feel happy to an extent but have left me with more questions than answers about the tasks and challenges ahead of us at RB. Does the responsibility of a radio station end with making of radio programs with the participation of people or should we think of new and innovative ways of involving the community and working along with them on issues that could bring about social change. The journey of RB has only just begun and we are geared up to face the challenges and learn as we go along.

**Anuja Shukla**  
Coordinator and Station Manager  
Radio Bundelkhand

(Translated by: Kanchan Malik, Associate Editor, CR News)



Women listen to radio in village Futera

*Picture by Swati Rathor*

## Participation – Radio Active’s success mantra



Bangalore’s first campus community radio station, Radio Active 90.4 MHz, operated by the Jain Group of Institutions, completed three years of its operations on June 25, 2010.

“The station is dedicated to providing programs involving the community, says RJ Auto Shiv Kumar, an auto driver by profession who has his own show ‘Gurukuladalli Badukina Hadi’, the first and only exclusive program for, by and of the auto drivers in Bangalore.

Radio Active has launched several new community-based programs in 2010, like the radio serial on disabilities called ‘Beyond Affliction – Aashritaru’. The serial focuses on the advocacy of disability-related issues and dissemination of information to physically challenged people, parents of children with disabilities, and the general public.

‘Beyond Affliction’ is designed to promote empathetic understanding of disability and to advocate equal opportunities for all. Jaydev, who is visually challenged and is the host of the show, says, “The best part of the serial is that the people involved in production are from the disability community.”

Other major programs on Radio Active include, ‘Ondanondu Kaladali’ – a story hour. This weekly show, supported by Hippocampus, is anchored by children and includes folktales, fairy tales, myths and legends, history, rhymes, facts and fantasy. Another radio serial, ‘Jeevana Spoorthi’ on HIV/AIDS is made by people living with HIV and AIDS.

**Pinky Chandran**  
Manager: Training & Development  
Radio Active CR 90.4 MHz,  
Jain Group of Institutions

## Dalai Lama inaugurates Tashi Delek 90.4 FM - the first Tibetan community radio



His Holiness unveils Tashi Delek 90.4 FM June 1, 2010

The first Tibetan community FM radio, ‘Tashi Delek 90.4 FM’ was launched on June 1, 2010 at the Tibetan Children’s Village (TCV) in Dharamsala, India by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The radio website states that, “Tashi Delek 90.4 FM is the first licensed Community Radio Station (CRS) in the Indian Himalayan Region.”

Named after the Tibetan greeting ‘Tashi Delek’, meaning hello/good luck/blessings/may good things come to you, the goal of the station is “to serve the Tibetan, Indian and expatriate communities of the region with excellent music and timely local information. We are also teaching the next generation of broadcasters at the TCV.”

Tsewang Yeshe, president of TCV School said, “The purpose of this radio station is to serve the local community, educating them about health and social issues, and at the same time to provide information and entertainment.” The radio station is currently staffed by a station manager with content contribution from six students and five staff volunteers who have received short-term training in reporting, anchoring and broadcasting.

### Sources:

<http://www.phayul.com>  
<http://www.tashidelekfm.com/>  
<http://www.himvani.com>

### Picture Credit:

<http://www.phayul.com/>

## New board elected for Community Radio Forum, India

The newly elected board of the Community Radio Forum - India has taken charge for the next two years.

The governing board which was elected consists of the following members: Algotle Narsamma, Vinod Pavarala, Nagaraj, Sajan Venniyoor, N. Ramakrishnan, Hemant Babu, Mitu Varma and Ashish Sen.

At the Annual General Body Meeting of the Forum held on February 19 in Bangalore, the governing board decided to co-opt the following additional members: Kutch Mahila Vikas

Sanghatan, Gurgaon Ki Awaz, Heval Vani and Radio Bundelkhand.

There was an election for office bearers from within the eight governing board members. These four office bearers will constitute the executive committee of the CR forum.

Vinod Pavarala – President  
Mitu Varma – Vice President  
Sajan Venniyoor – General Secretary  
N. Ramakrishnan – Treasurer

The CRF office has been set up in New Delhi.



## Narrowcasting Development – Inspiring stories from Kanpur

It all began in October 2009 with Shramik Bharti, a not-for-profit organization working with disadvantaged communities, launching Waqt Ki Awaaz, a community radio initiative in Maitha block in rural Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh). Waqt Ki Awaaz, with its nine volunteers decided to make a start by producing a program on respecting the elderly. The team visited 12 villages to narrowcast Bhul, a 30-minute docu-drama on Narayan Babu's plight.

In every village, grandpas, grandmas, men, women, and children surrounded a small mobile speaker and MP3 player to listen to the drama. As their local dialect and emotional songs streamed out of the speakers, so did the tears and laughter. After listening to the program, Guru Parsad, an elderly person from Sujanpur village had tears in his eyes. When asked what he learned from the radio drama, he responded, "To keep a little money for myself," and added with a beaming smile, "I can't believe that people from our village wrote this, and acted in this. See, we village people can do it."

Today, Waqt Ki Awaaz is recognized in the communities as an initiative to visit villages daily to talk, build relationships and together empower each other. Alongside narrowcasting,



Women gather around the speaker during narrowcast of a program in village Hindupur

Waqt ki Awaaz is also broadcast weekly on Gyan Vani (106.4) Kanpur.

**Rakesh Pandey and Radha Shukla**  
waqtkiawaaz@gmail.com

## Goa hosts 'Tuning in to Diversity' – a CR workshop

The Comet Media Foundation organised a workshop on community radio – "Tuning in to Diversity" in Goa from 23-25 June, 2010. The workshop was held at the International Centre, Goa at Dona Paula, a suburb of the state capital of Panjim. This workshop on regulations, experiences and debates in community radio was attended by nearly 50 people from various parts of India, including a fair number of Goan participants.

At the inauguration of the workshop, Nandini Sahai of the International

Centre, Goa; Iskra Panevska of UNESCO; Rajeshwar Dayal of Frederich Ebert Stiftung; Sajan Venniyoor of the Community Radio Forum-India; and Chandita Mukherjee of Comet Media Foundation, all spoke on the vital meaning community radio has for democracy. From preserving cultural and linguistic diversity, to providing a vital counterbalance to the forces of globalisation and commercialisation, to giving access to information on services provided by the state for the poor and marginalised, the speakers pointed out a gamut of ways that radio could facilitate community participation.

The "Tuning in to Diversity" workshop was the outcome of collaboration between the Comet Media Foundation, Community Radio Forum-India and Media Information and Communication Centre of India, in association with International Centre, Goa. It was made possible with the financial support from Frederich Ebert Stiftung and UNESCO.

The main resource per-

sons at the workshop were all veterans of the community radio movement associated with the Community Radio Forum-India (CRF). This body is recognised by government as the representative body of the community radio movement in this country and the agency for grievance redressal. Community Radio Forum's resource persons included Sajan Venniyoor, the General Secretary of the CRF, N Ramakrishnan of Ideosync Media Combine, Ram Bhat of Maraa, Hemant Babu of Nomad India and Ashish Sen of Voices.

Also sharing experiences were operators of community radio stations: Richard Rego of Radio Sarang, Mangalore; and Pankaj Athavle of MUST (Mumbai University Student Transmission) radio. The participants also enjoyed meeting four popular RJs from Goa: Alfie Silveira, Sachin Chatte, Savio Noronha and Bambino Dias who shared their passion for their work and some trade secrets of live radio broadcasting and handling of phone-ins. A session on free and open source software was also conducted by Lajpat Dhingra of Media Matters.

**Chandita Mukherjee**  
Comet Media Foundation  
Mumbai



# Community Radio Photo Gallery



Prachi records a song for RB



A session in progress at the CRF-AMARC Meet in Bangalore from 20-23 February, 2010



RJs Farah and Ashish in the transmission room of *MUST Radio*



Radio Reporter in Jharkhand



Algole Narsamma interviews a village elderly for *Radio Sangham*



Reporters at work in the studio of *Radio Bundelkhand*

## INTERNATIONAL

## 14 community radio stations to go on air in Bangladesh

On 20 May, 2010, the Ministry of Information, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh approved applications of two more community radio initiators for installation and operation of community radio in Bangladesh. The Ministry had approved 12 applications for the first time in Bangladesh on April 24, 2010. Now, a total of 14 Community Radio Stations will be going to on air in Bangladesh.



The main objective of community radio is to provide livelihood related information to the rural communities in an understandable way. Agriculture, education, health, disaster, women and child issues, market price, services, etc. will be cover in the community radio for the community people.

Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (BNNRC), since its inception in 2000, has been advocating with the government and with other organizations for the promotion of Community Radio to address critical social issues at community level, such as poverty and social exclusion, empowerment of marginalized rural groups and catalyze democratic process in decision making and ongoing development efforts.

Posted by: BNNRC on June 2, 2010 on CR-India

Picture: BNNRC Website

## AMARC pitches for CR broadcasting at Asia Media Summit 2010

The second day of the two-day Asia Media Summit 2010 held at Beijing on May 25-26, opened with the panel discussion on Promoting 'On Air Diversity': The Case for Community Broadcasting. Steve Buckley, President of AMARC; Supinya Klangnarong of the Campaign for Popular Media Reform, Thailand; Ian Morrison of Friends of Canadian Broadcasting; and Ashish Sen of AMARC Asia Pacific made the case for community broadcasting.

Steve pointed out that community broadcasting was today one of the necessary pillars for a diverse media landscape. "The market orientation of mainstream media has meant that many people who are socially and economically marginalized are also excluded from the means of communication," he said. He further added that media owned and controlled by communities themselves are among the most effective means of redressing this balance and assuring true media diversity.

While dwelling upon the history of Thailand's ongoing political and social transformation, Supinya presented the case of community broadcasting and its strength in balancing out extreme censorship and unregulated extremism. Ashish drew attention to need to urgently address issues related to equity, equal ac-



cess to the spectrum, capacity building, and legal reform, "if on air diversity and a 3-tiered media structure- public, private and community-based on inclusiveness has to be rooted in terra firma."

**Suman Basnet**  
Regional Coordinator  
AMARC Asia Pacific  
Source: [Asiapacific-general@lists.amarc.org](mailto:Asiapacific-general@lists.amarc.org)

## Message from UNESCO

(Continued from Page 1)

The Community Radio Forum, India, (CRF) which came into being in February 2007, has played a significant role in shaping the new Community Radio policy currently in place. The CRF continues to play a key role in the further democratization of India's airwaves. Guiding and counselling the community organizations, the CRF slowly but surely is building their capacity in search of a sustainable and viable community radio models across the country.

UNESCO as a partner organization is strongly committed to the community radio movement globally, regionally and nationally because of the community radio potential to reinforce the participatory character of development and to foster democracy. In its support to promote awareness, strengthen skills and capacities of community radios and bring about

their proliferation, UNESCO is guided by the fundamental rights of citizens to freedom of expression and access to information. In a country, as vast and as culturally and linguistically diverse as India, community radio has proven that it is an effective and popular way of disseminating information among communities whose lives otherwise could easily have remained unaffected by communication.

I congratulate the Sarojini Naidu School of Arts & Communication, University of Hyderabad for taking this initiative to start a newsletter on community radio. We at UNESCO recognize the important role played by the School in the emergence of community radio in India, especially in research, documentation, and policy advocacy.

**Iskra Panevska**  
Adviser in Communication and Information  
UNESCO - New Delhi

# Community Radio in India – A Timeline (Part I)

**February 9, 1995:** Supreme Court Judgment rules that "Airwaves constitute public property and must be utilized for advancing public good."

**September, 1996:** Bangalore Declaration advocates community radio legitimacy.

**December, 1999:** Kunjal Panchchi Kutchi broadcast from AIR Bhuj

**July, 2000:** Pastapur Initiative urges government to create a three-tier broadcasting structure -- state owned public radio, private commercial radio, and non-profit community radio.

**August, 2000:** Deccan Development Society applies for Community Radio License, Machnoor Village, and AP.

**August, 2000:** Community Radio Mailing List set up (Archives on CR-India@sarai.net since January 2002).

**August, 2001:** IGNOU New Delhi Consultation recommends community radio even as focus is on launching Gyan Vani.

**June, 2001:** VOICES-MYRADA applies for Namma Dhwani Community Radio License, Budhikote in Karnataka.

**August, 2001:** Chala Ho Gaon Mein broadcast on AIR Daltongunj

**September, 2001:** Namma Dhwani Audio Production Centre in Budhikote inaugurated.

**October, 2001:** Community Media Centre inaugurated in Pastapur.

**February 2002:** Internet conference on Community Radio carried out by The Hoot.

**January, 2002:** Loud-speaker narrowcasting begins in Budhikote.

**January, 2002:** Government turns down DDS application for Community Radio license.

**March, 2002:** India's first village FM broadcast, Oravakal, AP.

**May, 2002:** School Audio starts in Budhikote.

**October, 2002:** Oravakal Community Radio inaugurated

**December 2002:** Campus/Community Radio guidelines released by MIB. Community radio licenses restricted to 'well-established' educational institutions. (Anna University becomes the country's first campus radio station and is launched on 1st

February, 2004)

**February, 2003:** Oravakal Community Radio equipment seized.

**December, 2003:** UNDP initiates a series of consultations on ICTs for Development where community radio is strongly advocated

**March, 2003:** Namma Dhwani starts cable casting

**July 2003:** Radio Broadcast Policy Committee, (Amit Mitra Committee).

**March 2004:** Manipal Colloquium on Rediscovering Radio

**May 2004:** MIB, supported by UNDP and UNESCO organizes a workshop on "Designing an enabling framework for Community Radio." 70 stakeholders, experts, donor agencies, media-persons and broadcasters give recommendations on Community Radio in India which provide the basis of a draft Community Radio Policy drawn up by the Ministry.

(To be continued...)

**Sajan Veniyoor**  
**General Secretary**  
**Community Radio Forum, India**

## CR News Team

**SUPPORTED BY:**  
 UNESCO, New Delhi



**PRODUCED BY:**

Department of Communication, Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad

**EDITORIAL TEAM:**

**Editor:** Ashish Sen (Trustee of VOICES, Bangalore and President, AMARC Asia-Pacific)

**Associate Editor:** Kanchan Malik (University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad)

**Design and Production:** Vasuki Belavadi, Tajirani Rampersaud (University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh)

**ADVISORY BOARD:**

**Vinod Pavarala** (University of Hyderabad and President, Community Radio Forum of India)

**Frederick Noronha** (Independent Journalist, Goa)

**Anita Gurumurthy** (ITforChange, Bangalore)

**Rajen Varada** (UNESCO, New Delhi)

**Anujaa Shukla** (Radio Bundelkhand, TARAgam Orchha, MP)

**Nikhil Dey** (Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, Rajasthan).

## Call for contributions

The editorial team seeks contributions by way of news reports, features, announcements and opinions on recent community radio activities in your organization/region/nation. Voices/Stories from the field, including interviews with community members (listeners and producers) are especially welcome.

Kindly note:

- Contributions should be in English, restricted to 200 words for news/event and 250 words for opinion pieces and features, and typed double spaced.

- Contributions may preferably be accompanied by photographs/illustrations.

- Contact address and details of authors/organization should accompany the contributions.

- The last date for submissions is August 10, 2010.

- Electronic submission of contributions is recommended. Please email your articles/reports/features to:  
[crnews2010@gmail.com](mailto:crnews2010@gmail.com)

- If you are unable to email, you can also send your typed articles/reports/features to:

**Dr. Kanchan Malik**  
**Department of Communication;**  
**Sarojini Naidu School of Arts & Communication;**  
**University of Hyderabad; Gachibowli,**  
**Hyderabad 500046**  
**Phone: +91-40-23135506(O);**  
**+91-990-858-2613(M)**

- The final selection of contributions will be determined by the editorial team.

We look forward to hearing from you about your community radio station or all the community radio related developments that you are following. Please remember, the deadline for the content to reach us is: August 10, 2010. Thank you in anticipation.

Best Regards,  
**Ashish Sen (Editor)**  
**Kanchan Malik (Associate Editor)**