

## MIB to hold National Consultation on Community Radio in December



UNESCO, MIB and CRF India to collaborate for National Consultation 2010

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), Government of India is organizing a National Consultation on Community Radio in New Delhi, in the month of December in collaboration with the United Nations, and the Community Radio Forum (CRF). The three-day consultation seeks to bring together community broadcasters and other key stakeholders in the community radio sector such as non-governmental organizations, media activists, academia and the policy makers to explore ways to take this movement to the next level. The consultations will also take stock of the achievements of this burgeoning sector of radio broadcasting by analyzing the “on air” experiences of the CR stations licensed under the new CR policy.

Nearly 15 years after the Supreme Court of India declared that “the airwaves are public property,” India now has the beginnings of a vibrant community radio sector. Since the announcement of the first phase of the community radio policy in 2003, and, subsequently, that of the second phase in 2006 permitting community-based organizations to enter the field, we have about 85 operational radio stations licensed under the

policy. Of these, about a quarter are stations owned and managed by community-based organizations.

In spite of these promising numbers, there is a growing perception that we are nowhere near realization of the huge potential for community radio in India. The factors for this rather slow growth could include: time-consuming licensing procedures, lack of awareness about the policy, lack of capabilities to do audio production and set up broadcasting facilities, the seemingly prohibitive costs of technology and infrastructure, and, more generally, the absence of a strong movement for community broadcasting.

In the last three years since the previous such consultation was held, no doubt efforts have been made by the Government, multilateral agencies, capacity-building and advocacy agencies, and by associational groups such as the Community Radio Forum (CRF) to address many of these issues. These could be evidenced not only by the number of awareness and capacity-building workshops that have been organized around the country, but also by a gradual increase in the number of applications, exploration of technological possibilities, research studies, and the

launching of new communication channels to get the word out.

Those that have been on air, both campus and community-based, have already expanded the media landscape in the country by offering fresh voices and perspectives, many from the margins, that have hitherto not been heard. There is a palpable excitement as one hears about revival of the full range of radio formats (as against just music radio) as well as the effective articulation of local information, local identities and culture. The successes are often accompanied by struggles to just keep the stations on air, leave alone manage a steady flow of volunteers, ensure community-based content generation, sustain financial support, and to bring back a radio listening culture around the idea of locally relevant content in local languages by local people.

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# From disaster to relief – Another world is possible through Community Radio...

Steve Buckley discusses the recent floods in Pakistan and AMARC 10 with Ashish Sen



Steve Buckley with the AMARC team in Pakistan

Interactions with the President of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), Steve Buckley, post his recent visit to flood hit areas in Pakistan, brought back memories of a similar journey that Steve and I had embarked upon in December 2008. It was a few months after the River Kosi had changed course and played havoc with the lives of people in North Bihar and the Indo-Nepal border. Time had clearly not played healer – even though four months had passed since the floods had hit Bihar. Amidst the prevailing gloom, radio and mobile technology had indicated silver linings. During our conversations with community groups, the BBC Hindi service was unanimously applauded to be the most comprehensive information player. All India Radio featured – but it came a distant second except for its farm radio programmes. Even in terms of popular entertainment, FM radio stations from Nepal and their programmes in Mythili and Bhojpuri scored over AIR. Underlying these reactions was a strong articulation for local and community voice – indicating just why community radio is/can be a vital player in disaster mitigation and preparedness.

AMARC's International Assessment Mission to Pakistan (September 30th to October 10th 2010) which Steve Buckley led, strongly confirmed this need

when it (along with the Pakistan Press Foundation) called on the Government of Pakistan to allow the establishment of "at least 30 non-commercial flood relief radio stations through community based organizations in the severely affected districts." As Steve and the mission affirmed, while existing FM local radios had played an important role in flood response there were "gaps in the provision of relevant local information in some of the severely and moderately affected communities which are unlikely to be met on a commercial basis."

What could be done to reach those who were not reached by mainstream media? In this context, Steve asserted that it was for "community radio to complement the role of FM radio..." He also pointed out the need for communities to run the stations themselves in the flood hit areas and to "develop localized network "using modern tools (like) mobiles to "record their own experiences."

Both the Pakistan and India experiences underscore the need for community radio in strengthening disaster preparedness (and indeed development). The question is: How can we make this happen? What can be done to build the case for community radio and strengthen its network? Efforts like the CRF and AMARC are steps in this direction and their hands need to be strengthened. Next

month, Steve points out, "AMARC 10 will bring together, in La Plata, Argentina, more than 400 community media activists and stakeholders from over 100 countries."

Steve Buckley's observations provide glimpses of what we can expect and how these could shape community radio in the days to come. "AMARC 10 will be a place to reflect on the growth of the community media movement and to respond to the challenges that we face in defending and extending the means of popular communication. It will be a place for building advocacy to improve media policies, laws and regulations. It will be a place for planning joint action for social justice, gender equity and a sustainable planet...."

"There are many challenges ahead: The commercialization of the airwaves – putting spectrum for sale to the highest bidder and creating new gatekeepers to critical communications resources; the growth of powerful media corporations which deter even progressive politicians from acting in the public interest; the continuing reluctance of authoritarian governments to respect the right to communicate and the social value of popular communication. The fact that community media activists continue to operate in sometimes very dangerous conditions where to take voice and to speak out can carry the highest cost...."

"In community broadcasting we build from the bottom up, organizing at the grassroots, connecting our communities, engaging in mutual support. But we know also that to secure the space for popular and participatory communications we have to be heard at the national and the international level – in the channels of opinion and the corridors of power. That is why, at AMARC 10, we will come together to renew our solidarity, to strengthen our international movement and to reach out to others engaged in communications for social and economic justice...."\*

*\*Excerpts of Steve Buckley's comments on AMARC 10 have appeared in an article in Cara y Senal, a publication of AMARC Latin America*

## RADIO STORIES

# Hevalvaani waits for the green signal



**Hevalvaani team member recording an interview**

While they thought they would take pride in running one of the first Community Radio (CR) stations in the country and the first CR station in Uttarakhand, their enthusiasm is slowly turning into dismay. This dismay stems from the fact that they are indeed not even the first CR station in the district.

Hevalvaani Samudayik Radio, situated in the hilly valley of Chamba, Uttarakhand has been a part of the community radio struggle in this country for the past 10 years, but their wait for a license continues more than two years after their application was submitted to the I & B Ministry.

A group of volunteers from the valley embarked on this journey when they were introduced to the then nascent concept of CR by two organizations – VOICES and the Himalaya Trust in September 2001.

Soon these enthusiastic volunteers began to call themselves Hevalvaani Samudayik Radio – a name inspired by the main river that flows through the valley and has been a source of livelihood for the people of Chamba for generations.

Under the patronage of a small community-based organization, Aastha Jan Kalyan Evum Vikas Samiti, which has been working in the region for several years, Hevalvaani Samudayik Radio slowly began to gain acceptance in the community in the community and initiated discussions around media ownership, voice and freedom of speech at the local level. They received small grants for equipment and technical training and in the beginning of 2004 joined hands with Ideosync Media Combine to help them establish a cadre of well-trained community reporters who could run a self-sustaining CR Station.

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## MIB National Consultation on CR in December

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It is in this context that the proposed national consultation will provide a platform for CR practitioners to share and learn from each other's experiences while the advocates, academics and policy makers would get an insight into the real, on ground issues that need to be addressed before we can aspire for a vibrant and thriving CR sector in India.

The overarching goals of the National Consultation on Community Radio Policy in India, 2010 are to:

- Assess the on ground situation of community radio sector in the country through an analysis of community voices and good practices;
- Define the strengths and weaknesses of the CR policy in facilitating an enabling environment for community radio in India;
- Work out a plan to plug gaps in capacity building as well as in technological prowess of NGOs and CBOs to set up com-

munity radio stations;

- Discuss issues of financial and social sustainability of CR initiatives, including horizontal skill sharing, community mobilization, etc.;

- Deliberate joint action strategies to link community radio with such pressing issues as the reduction of poverty, disaster management, good governance, and women empowerment and social inclusion;

- Reinforce the need for monitoring and research to evaluate the effectiveness of community radio initiatives in deepening democracy; and

- Determine the role of organizations such as UNESCO, CRF and others in strengthening the CR movement and achieving the above goals.

The expected outcomes of the National Consultation on Community Radio Policy in India, 2010 include:

- A concrete action plan to facilitate a vibrant and an enabling environment for community radio in India – in policy and

in practice

- Significant push to implement specific awareness and training campaigns for scaling up the numbers of community radio stations in the country

- Enhancement of stakeholders' coordination in developing a sustainable community radio sector through knowledge, experience and skill-sharing

- Furthering of the use of new media and innovative/appropriate technology in the community radio sector

- Increasing scope of partnership and collaboration with organizations working on developmental issues such as poverty reduction and good governance

- Strengthening of commitment to allow poor people, women and excluded in rural areas to be heard and empowered through community radio.

*For updates on the National Consultation, check [www.communityradioindia.org](http://www.communityradioindia.org)*

**Vinod Pavarala and Kanchan K. Malik**

## EDITORIAL

AMARC 10, or the 'Tenth World Conference of Community Radio Broadcasters' is being held from 8-13 November, 2010 in Ciudad de la Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina. Organised by the International Board of Directors of the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), this is the first global conference of AMARC to be held in South America, the region recognized as the birth place of the community radio movement. AMARC 10 is also one among the year-round multiple activities planned throughout the world to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the World Social Forum.

The community radio movement has grown over the years to become a worldwide phenomenon and the all-inclusive motto of AMARC 10 – '*Comunicacion comunitaria*' – embraces the large variety of actions of community radio, including poverty reduction, social inclusion, good governance and sustainable human development. AMARC 10 will be attended by more than 400 community broadcasters and stakeholders from over 110 countries and all diverse regions of the world where the community radio movement has a presence. The Indian delegation, led by the Vice President, AMARC – Ashish Sen, will include, among others, the president of the Community Radio Forum of India and Professor of Communication & Dean, University of Hyderabad – Vinod Pavarala.

There is an increased acceptance, internationally of the role that community radio can play in social change. As the global media-scape gets transformed to include radio stations owned and run by the communities, AMARC 10 promises to provide space and opportunities for exchanging experiences, and strengthening alliances among civil society organizations, peoples and movements across the world. Marcelo Solervicens, Secretary General of AMARC International, explained in a recently published interview that AMARC 10 "will be a place to reflect on the growth of community media worldwide and to respond, through international solidarity, to the challenges that we continue to face in creating new forms of popular communication."

The community radio broadcasters, activists, advocates and stakeholders participating in AMARC 10 are looking forward to engaging, open, democratic and participatory knowledge sharing that would address issues such as, lack of recognition of the community radio sector; lack of capacity building and knowledge sharing; insufficient content development leading to social change, inappropriate assessment tools for evaluation of community radio stations and exclusion of women. Through this, AMARC 10 seeks to review the successes of community radio, evaluate current activities, and determine the way ahead in terms of establishing enabling environments for to fulfil the mandate of community radio in facilitating inclusive, sustainable, democratic and participatory human development.

We at CR News, are full of anticipation that AMARC 10, through sharing of experiences and concerns among community radio stakeholders, will emerge as a seedbed for new ideas and strategies; partnerships and alliances; and approach and capacity sharing; that will give the global community radio movement a fillip in the direction of vibrant and thriving community radio sectors worldwide and in India. It will generate exchange of information and deliberations in areas such as technology, content generation, volunteerism, feedback mechanisms, and sustainability, etc., all of which can then be brought back to the National Consultation happening in New Delhi in December for further discussion and debate about their bearing and implementation in the Indian context.

**Kanchan K. Malik**

## FEEDBACK

I have been a regular follower of the cr-India mailing list and it has gone a long way in developing my interest and enthusiasm for community radio. Cr-India has served as a platform for community radio (CR) advocates and practitioners to connect, interact and also contribute to the movement itself in a substantial way. The CR News is another step in this direction along with the setting up of the website. I would like to express my views here on how I think networking can help CR movement to grow from strength to strength.

Community radio stations (CRS) established by rural communities are gaining momentum in India and have also started demonstrating that they can cater to the media needs of the marginal communities, which have been ignored by both the public and private media. There are 82 CRS in operation at present in India, out of which 19 are run by NGOs, 55 by educational institutions, five by State Agriculture Universities and three by Krishi Vignan Kendras.

The Indian mediascape is witnessing a blurring of boundaries between the senders and receivers of media content in this relatively recent area of developmental practice termed as participatory communication.

The success of community radio (CR) initiatives lies in

it being able to encourage democratic participation among the community members in all aspects the production process and in ensuring a greater space for the self-representation. The small motivational success stories of CRS at micro level create positive mobilization and inspiration for new initiatives to spring up in various parts of the country. We are at the cross roads of a digital era which can facilitate the building of networks and connect community radio stations across the country. These networks can benefit CR stations and the movement in several ways some of which I discuss in the following paragraphs.

By being part of a CR network, the community broadcasters can share and discuss the issues and concerns faced by grassroots level CR practitioners. The network can serve as a think tank for innovative developments that have implications for financial as well as social sustainability of CRS. It can be used as a platform for advocacy to seek a progressive CR policy support and also for building a team of goodwill ambassadors for CR. Sharing of formats, programmes and talent may be seen as another advantage of networking.

**Nookaraju Bendukurthi**

# The story of GRINS – Gramin Radio Inter Networking System

GRINS is a radio automation system designed by the Gram Vaani team at IIT Delhi. Some of you may have even seen or read about it, but this article is not to tell you more about GRINS. I am writing to tell you about the story behind GRINS so that you can understand our vision, and join us.

It was back in 2005 when I was my doing my PhD that I discovered an entirely new area of using information technologies for development. The ideas that computerised tools could simplify land record management, microfinance, and health diagnosis were absolutely mesmerising – a technology geek like me could not think of a better way to put my skills to good use. I focused my thesis on building low-cost Internet connectivity systems for rural areas. But as I started taking deployment trips and interacted more with different communities, I realized that technology was just a small part of the problem. Social dynamics, cost, and operational issues were much bigger challenges. Moreover, I realized that merely providing Internet access to rural communities was not a relevant problem to solve at all – the Internet did not have much information of local importance in the first place, and to try to use it for just local communication was too much effort.

It was during this phase of deep confusion that I stumbled across community radio. India was just about to announce its new policy, and community radio seemed like the perfect medium for communities to share knowledge, and improve trust and bonding. I met several people during 2006 - 2007, including names we all know now – Ashish Sen, Sajan, Stalin, Ram and Venu from Ideo-sync, Ram and Ekta and Nagaraj from Maraa, Ben Grubb, Bandana Mukhopadhyay, Shaddy, Veronica Peris, and many more. Together, we discussed about challenges that community radio would face in India, and how to address these challenges. Thanks to all these fabulous mentors, we identified three significant challenges:

- Simple and low-cost technology to run the radio stations
- Business models to sustain community radio stations financially
- Networking of stations to help them develop interesting and informative content



**GRINS installation in progress**

Things slowly started to fall into place. Together with Mayank and Parminder, two long time friends well versed in business strategy and marketing, we put together a proposal to address these challenges. Miraculously, we got the grant in the Knight News Challenge, and thus Gram Vaani was born. It was the end of 2008 by the time I completed my thesis and returned to India. Bala and Zahir, two other long time friends, joined the technical team of Gram Vaani in the New Year and we got working without further procrastination.

We started with trying to address the first challenge on the technology front. We looked up automation systems such as that of Google, RCS, Synergy, and a few open-source implementations, and realized that they were not appropriate for community radio settings. Either they were too over-featured and could only be used with expensive hardware elements, or they were woefully under-featured. Most importantly, they were all missing out on the mobile phone revolution that was shaking the world – radio without mobile integration did not make sense. We could see clearly that this was going to be the age of Radio 2.0!

Thus we started building GRINS. There were a few things we saw were going to be very important. First, the system had to be extremely simple to use. Second, it had to be low-cost. Third, it had to be extremely robust. Fourth, it had to be installable in a plug-n-play manner to be able to fit into any kind of a radio station setting. We had the first version out in a few months and piloted it at Radio Bundelkhand and at Gurgaon ki Avaaz.

But it was after countless trips and invaluable feedback from Shukla ji and Anujaa at TARAGram, and Arti at TRF, that we finally got the features right. GRINS now supports a number of crucial functions – through a single interface radio station operators can schedule programs and plan their activities for the day, archive live speech made on the mic, store and categorize content, plot statistics, and with the click of a button they can pick up calls, put them on air, conference among multiple callers, and send and receive SMSes. GRINS is currently deployed in eight CR stations, and has helped the stations create several interesting programs. Our team has also grown and you will surely meet Kapil and Siddhant during some community radio workshop or installation trips. We have also partnered with Hemant from Nomad Networks to offer GRINS and the Nomad transmitter as a combined package. We are continuously adding more features to GRINS and remain committed to pushing the Indian community radio movement forward.

It has indeed been a long journey for us. We started with an outsider's background, purely from a technical point of view, but slowly learned more about community radio and important issues that arose on the ground. We can only thank all of our mentors for their advice, and our partner pilot stations for important feedback. A long journey still remains though.

*Please visit <http://www.gramvaani.org> or write to us at [contact@gramvaani.org](mailto:contact@gramvaani.org) to know more about our work.*

**Aaditeshwar Seth**

## FIRST PERSON ACCOUNT

# Hamara echoes loud and clear in the hills of Solan



**Hamara stands tall in Solan**

Perched on a hillside in the picturesque Shivalik ranges of Solan, Himachal Pradesh, the facade of the M S Panwar Institute of Communication and Management (MSPICM) is deceptive. From the road, one can only see a radio tower and the front office. As you enter it, you realise that you descend into a four-storey building!

The second floor of the building saw the inauguration of *Hamara*—the campus radio station—on March 13, 2009. Again, campus radio station may not be an apt description since its programming is actually aimed at the villages within the range of its transmitter. *Hamara* evolved out of a pilot project *Karol Ki Awaz*, launched by the institute in association with One World South Asia. The students of the institute double up as reporters contributing to the station, as radio training is part and parcel of their curriculum.

Says the institute's website: "Through this initiative, MSPICM seeks to serve the community residing in a radius of 15 km from the institute. It would also help in grooming professionals in broadcast journalism. The students of the institute would get hands-on experience in

scriptwriting, reporting and editing for radio. They would thus be exposed to the real experience of working in radio studios/stations." The institute's Director, Dr BS Panwar adds, "The content revolves around developmental issues of health, agriculture, employment, government opportunities, literacy programmes and life coping skills etc. The plan is to increase such content to about 60-70%."

Perhaps Dr. Panwar, a Ph.D. (Communication) from University of Hyderabad also realises that music occupies a significant space on the fixed point chart. Phone-in requests are a regular feature as are birthday greetings. Ghazals are another important feature on *Hamara*. "Radio is quite a popular medium in the ranges and *Hamara* considers the young audiences as a special sort of sub-community. However, we are not competing with the other commercial FM channels.

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**Although music, phone ins and birthday requests are a regular feature, *Hamara* is committed towards community-based programming.**

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We are on a different trip altogether," says Dr. Panwar. People walk into the studio to sing folk songs. Talented children from the local schools and colleges actively participate in *Baccho Ki Paathshaala*.

Initially broadcasting for two hours, the number of hours increased with the MoU that the institute entered into with IGNOU to become a training centre for radio jockeying. Today, *Hamara* broadcasts mostly in Hindi and Bhagati (local dialect) for 12 hours. The RJ training programme has also ensured a steady stream of human resources to the station.

Anita, an alumna, is a powerhouse! From RJing programmes on greetings to conducting interviews on the field, editing them and creating a playlist for the day's programme, she does it all. "My diffidence and techno-phobia vanished into the air once I was 'pushed' into the studio," says Anita.

Amit Pundeer, Chittaranjan and Manish, manage the studios. "We often meet people who think that they can't enter a radio studio. But when we cajole them and playback what we have just recorded, they are amazed at their talent! Now-a-days people are more confident."

Avadesh hosts a ghazal show. "Mine is the only show that gets maximum requests and feedback," he boasts. Madhu anchors most of the other shows. She attributes involvement of youth to the popularity of her show Youth Express.

MSPICM is collaborating with DRISTI, a media advocacy and training NGO, and Mountain Forum Himalayas through which six radio producers from MFH and four reporters from Solan will be trained over a period of one year at the Panwar Institute. Drishti will locate a trainer at the Institute. "This can be seen as a step towards our deeper commitment towards community-based programming," says Dr. Panwar.

Despite the presence of commercial FM stations in Solan, *Hamara* still stands tall both literally and figuratively!

**Vasuki Belavadi**

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD

# Gurgaon Ki Awaaz – Moving beyond film music

It's appropriate that I look back at the journey *Gurgaon Ki Awaaz* Samudayik Radio Station has covered so far - just as the station turns a year old. What a year it has been. From zero to 24-hour broadcasts, a brimming music library all created completely within the Gurgaon community of amazing performers, in-depth programmes with the city's administration, hospitals, doctors, teachers, students, sportspersons... and a deep connect with our primary audience i.e. Gurgaon's economically, socially and culturally marginalised.

The key to whatever success we can claim so far is an unwavering focus on our community - especially communities living in villages in and around Gurgaon: migrant workers and inner city residents for whom the gloss and glamour of malls and glass-fronted office buildings is simply a testament of the uneven development that has taken place in this town.

It is this focus on community that has also shaped our music library. When we started work over a year ago, we were apprehensive whether we would be able to build a bank of purely folk music without paying professional performers. Instead, we recorded, performers living in and around Gurgaon who were looking for a credible platform for their talent. We



**Pramila at a *Gurgaon Ki Awaaz* recording**

reached out for help to the community itself. The response was inspiring. A *Ragini* performer Dharampal living in village Narsinghpur in Gurgaon generously offered to take along our reporter for *Ragini* performances (called "competitions" in Haryana) so that we could record them. From villages as far flung as Kota Khandewal and Daulatabad to nearby ones like Narsinghpur and Khandsa, our reporter lurched across Gurgaon in overcrowded autos, armed with a digital recorder,

recording all-night *Ragini* competitions, bringing the first songs to the radio station.

From the day we started playing the *Raginis* on air, a jolt of electricity seemed to go through the rather large population of seemingly hidden folk performers in Gurgaon. By word of mouth, the news spread – Gurgaon has this new station and they play "our" songs. Not film songs, not cassettes and CDs, but songs that we sing and play. From a trickle it became a flood, and soon our studio booking register was booked nearly two weeks ahead. From Haryanvi folk singers to Bhojpuri performers, the singers lined up. Many of them earned their bread and butter by working as call centre drivers by day, and let loose their creative juices by either bunking work or taking to the stage at night. Regardless of their limitations, they came at their own cost, on their own time, to make use of a free platform for their creative expression.

The result: today we have listeners who refuse to listen to any other station. They say, "There are 10 stations in the NCR, but where can we hear *Raginis*? Nowhere, except *Gurgaon Ki Awaaz*."



**Dharampal performs *Ragini* competition**

**Arti Jaiman**

## Chale Chalo... Orissa chalo

As community radio gains momentum in India, more and more civil rights organizations see this as a means of giving voice to the voiceless and promoting it as a tool for development.

An NGO *Chale Chalo*, working with the marginalised communities in Orissa, is now using radio to air the voice and concerns of the tribal population living in the KBK (Koraput-Balangir-Kalahandi) districts of the state on All India Radio, every week.

These programmes are produced by the tribals from the KBK region, long considered as one of the poorest and underdeveloped areas of the country, and are broadcast on AIR Sambalpur and AIR

Bhawanipatna.

About a year ago, *Chale Chalo*, based in Orissa's Naupada district, bought air time to broadcast the programme *More Haq* (My Rights) based on the content produced by the tribals themselves. It was an attempt to engage the community in local governance structures in the 60 villages of KBK region.

The NGO narrowcasts the programme in the community meetings in villages to bring about discussion and debate among the members of the community.

Thousands of villagers congregate to listen to these programmes and issues that are discussed range from

NREGA, rights of the disabled, unemployment and skill development.

*Mor Tune Mor Kathani* (It's My Voice: It's My Story) is another community radio programme initiated by *Chale Chalo* that involves children of the area with a view to create awareness about social issues among them.

These programmes are recorded with local children in their local language. These are broadcast by All India Radio Station, Bhawanipatna from 1.20 PM to 1.50 PM on the second and fourth Sunday of every month. So far 60 Episodes have been broadcast.

**Esther Kar with Rakesh**

## Hevalvaani volunteers set to go on air

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CR volunteer from *Hevalvaani*, at a recording

Several capacity building workshops followed that helped the team build their perspectives on local issues and learn how to create interesting audio content. The volunteers learned to work on digital platforms and had the opportunity to broadcast on the World Space Satellite system and All India Radio through a partnership with Equal Access. The team also cable-cast using the local cable television network. UNESCO supported *Hevalvaani* with a computer and a couple of digital audio field recorders.

Since support for *Hevalvaani* was available in fits and starts, the volunteers tried several ways of ensuring some local funding support by creating advertisements for local vendors and businessmen, providing media training to local government

school children, community announcements that went on the local cable network and other such small revenue generation activities. The team is currently running a membership drive to revitalize their community partnership.

They have for the past three years been producing two weekly shows *Yuva Manch* and *Hamara Gaon* which focused on social issues and provided opportunities for local community members to voice their opinions; talk about their local problems; and to showcase their talents.

They have a special show called *Bal Jagat* which showcases young local talent, as well as popular talk show called *Chhuin Baat* which deals with social and political issues of the area like alcoholism, displacement, natural disasters and local governance issues. These programmes have elicited a good response from the people of the valley.

A conversation with some of the older volunteers, however, leads to an invariable rant of committed community members, who have devoted nearly 10 years of their lives in trying to realize a dream which they believed would change the way development worked in the hill regions.

As there is hardly any local means of information sharing, the only AIR station heard in the villages around Chamba is the one that broadcasts from Najibabad in Uttar Pradesh. The hilly terrain makes mobility difficult especially for those living in villages that are far away from the main road.

In this scenario *Hevalvaani* station with its trained volunteers would be able to cater to the needs of the local communities if they are able to get the license to broadcast.

**Kriti Dheer**

Photographs Courtesy: Ideosync Media Combine/ Henvaivaani



## Namma Dhwani hosts CR awareness workshop

Forty one enthusiastic participants representing NGOs and community based groups from Karnataka participated in the two-day community radio awareness workshop "Community Radio - Voice of the Voiceless" Organized jointly by the Media Information Centre Of India (MICCI), Fredrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) and MYRADA at Lekkanahalli, Karnataka on 18th and 19th of September, 2010.

The aim of the workshop was not just to create awareness, but also to showcase and discuss challenges confronted by community radio through the experience of functional community radio stations.

The workshop was led by representatives from the *Namma Dhwani* team, and also included Naghuveer Prakash (Radio Kalanjiam), Ashish Sen (CRF and AMARC), Ramnath Bhat (CRF and MARAA). Other resource persons in-

cluded representatives from Radio Active Campus Radio Station and Gram Vaani.

A substantial part of the workshop took place at *Namma Dhwani*, Budhikote so that participants could experience the actual running of a community radio station. They were taken to the studio and the *Namma Dhwani* reporters explained to them how programmes were produced and broadcast there.

Participants were shown the different equipments used for recording and transmitting. They were also given a presentation on the emergence of the *Namma Dhwani* community radio, how it has been used to create awareness among the local community and how it has helped empower the women to participate and also to run the station on their own.

This was followed by a session on the procedures involved in procuring

a community radio license. The participants were then taken to the nearby villages to interact with the *Namma Dhwani* community which was broadcasting a live programme on Ayurvedic medicine. The participants were surprised with the response and amazed that equipments were being handled and programmes were being made so efficiently and effectively by the local youth.

The second day was devoted to discussing the challenges and opportunities of community radio – as experienced by operational stations like, Kalanjiam, Radio Active and *Namma Dhwani*. Based on the experiences, models of sustainability and content programming were thrown up. Finally, the issue of amplifying voice was taken up and showcased through the *Gram Vaani* model.

**Archana Ramachandran**

## Radio Dhemsas reporters transform adversity to triumph

Travelling from a village called Giralaguda, at a distance of 80 kilometres from Koraput town in Orissa, a community reporter, Narsingh Kamar, rows his boat across a river to reach Radio *Dhemsas*, the Community Radio Station (CRS) at the rooftop of South Orissa Voluntary Action (SOVA) office. In the event that the boat capsizes, he swims his way through.

Narsingh sets out every Friday on this two-hour journey to the station where he spends two nights and goes back to his village on Sunday. Occasionally he makes a trip in the middle of the week as well. A 27-year old, lone breadwinner supporting a family of four, Narsingh spends most of his time doing farming in paddy and ragi fields, or in fishing to meet the daily needs of his family.

However, he doesn't shirk from sparing the time to shoulder his responsibility as a community reporter for Radio *Dhemsas*. A class two drop out, not only does he accurately execute the process of studio and field recording, but is currently learning how to edit on the computer by use of symbols and numbers in lieu of alphabets. He also composes music by playing, what in Oriya is known as *tidibidi* or a *dhol* for various radio programmes produced by Radio *Dhemsas*.

This is one example amongst the dedicated group of young community re-



**Radio Dhemsas team learns to edit**

porters of Radio *Dhemsas*, the new CRS on in Koraput, Orissa. Narsingh and his fellow volunteers are on their way to becoming capable community reporters, independently producing innovative radio programmes and preparing to broadcast. They are eagerly awaiting their license.

Narsingh has many personal experiences to narrate, many questions to ask the local administration, many songs and rhythms to play that are unique to his

community and he sees the CRS giving him and many of his community members that opportunity.

*Note: Radio Dhema is being supported by UNICEF. Under the project Ideosync is working with the volunteers and with SOVA providing technical support and capacity building.*

**Kiriti Dheer**

*Photograph Courtesy: Ideosync Media Combine/ Hevalvaani*

## IN BRIEF

### CR station in Shivpuri

India Blooms News Service

Shivpuri (Madhya Pradesh), Oct 9: District Collector Shivpuri Raj Kumar Pathak pressed the button and the voice of Champa Adivasi was on air in Shivpuri on FM frequency 107.8 MHZ. "This is frequency of Radio Dharkan," With these words, the community radio station set up at Shivpuri went up on air. Tania Goldner, Chief UNICEF office for Madhya Pradesh and Supriya Mukherjee, Programme Communication Specialist were present with him.

### 'Backward' Haryana district to get CR

Raj Kumar Sharma; Press Trust of India

New Delhi, Sep 30: Considered as one of the backward regions in Haryana, Mewat is set to get its first CR station that will focus on women empowerment, education and development in the district. A Delhi-based NGO, SMART, working in the district since last 8 years will launch the station in the second week of October which will have a reach of around 20 kms and will cover 50 to 60 per cent of the villages in Mewat. "Women have a low status in Mewat. They are married when they

are kids and do not have a space in the development here. We'll make them aware of their rights through our radio," says Archana Kapoor, General Secretary, SMART.

### Arogya Sarang on Radio 107.8FM

(Press Release) Mangalore, Sept 26: Radio SARANG 107.8FM is celebrating its first birthday in a unique way: it is starting a new community-based live phone-in program 'Arogya Sarang' beginning 26 September 2010. Arogya SARANG is a weekly health program in collaboration with the Arogya Medical Centre, in Kannada. Medical experts and practitioners would be speaking on various health issues, and answering people's questions on the Community Radio, every Sunday at 11.00 a.m.

### Coming soon: a competitor for your morning cuppa

Joanna Lobo / DNA / July 9, 2010:

It could be your new morning alarm: a healthy dose of information fun and music. Adjust your frequency to 90.8 Jago Mumbai and tune into the latest buzz from your neighbourhood. A community-driven radio station, launched in May by

the Union Park Residents Association (UPRA), it broadcasts from 8am to 12pm. "We offer infotainment on issues that appeal to children, students, parents, housewives, and senior citizens across all demographics," says Bharati Kakkad, secretary, UPRA.

### Broadcast Launch of Community Radio in Lalitpur

Alapur, Birdha Block, Lalitpur; 6 Sept, Citizen News Service

The first CR station in UP was launched on 3rd September 2010. 'Lalit Lokwani' went on air in Uttar Pradesh (UP) state, India, and officially began its broadcast to over 80 villages in Lalitpur district of Budelkhand region. A combined effort of UNICEF, Ideosync Media Combine and Sai Jyoti, a Lalitpur based NGO, the radio station was jointly put on air by Ranvir Yadav, District Magistrate (DM Lalitpur, Jugal Kishore, Joint Director Bharatendu Natak Academi UP and well known theatre personality and Rajeshwari Chandrashekar, Programme Manager, UNICEF Lucknow at a gala function in Alapur.

Source: CR-India Mailing list

## Remembering Professor Eapen



Prof. K E Eapen, who passed away on Saturday, October 23rd, has been justifiably acknowledged as a pioneer in journalism and communication education in India. Less articulated has been Professor Eapen's vital role as a development activist and his contribution to development/community communications. Professor Eapen was one of the key minds and voices that pushed for community radio during the initial years after the landmark Supreme Court judgment of 1995.

A senior trustee of the NGO, VOICES for several years, he actively engaged and helped to develop the Bangalore Declaration of 1996. Many hold the declaration to be the first and the basis for community radio in the country. His age did not dim his enthusiasm for commu-

nity radio and he continued to contribute his time and energy towards its development long after the guidelines had come into place. As recently as 2008, he participated at the second Community Radio Forum meeting Bangalore in 2008. Earlier, he played a significant role in the implementation and evaluation of SITE especially in Karnataka. As we look ahead it is also an appropriate time for 'auld Lang sine'...

I first had the privilege of interacting with Professor Eapen in the late eighties when I was with the Media Centre in Bangalore. The Centre was, arguably, one of the first community-centric media centres in the city inspired by the likes of Chitrabani (Kolkata) and the Xavier Institute of Communications (Mumbai).

The Centre's emphasis on low cost, community friendly media production and media education programmes benefited substantially by Dr Eapen's wisdom, generosity and active participation.

Professor Eapen had a formidable media library which he passed onto the Centre in the late eighties. The library was one of the first of its kind in the country and was used by scholar and activist alike.

At a time when many in the media world were swayed by the "big" sweep of the communication explosion, Professor Eapen was relentlessly focused in his belief and practice that small is beautiful. I was fortunate to glean this more intensely during most of the past decade when I was the NGO VOICES, where he was the Senior Trustee. His guidance also helped to shape many of VOICES' associations and involvement with marginalized and vulnerable groups like people with disabilities and senior citizens. While public memory may be short, many of these communities, as well as his students and fellow workers in development, will always remember him with great affection, regard and respect.

Ashish Sen

## INTERNATIONAL

## eBario becomes Malaysia's first CRS

eBario Sdn Bhd, has been granted the Content Applications Service Provider (CASP) Class license by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC). With the CASP Class license, the company will be the first to deploy a CRS in Malaysia. eBario Sdn Bhd is a social enterprise that was established to operate the remote and isolated eBario telecentre located in the Kelabit Highlands of Sarawak.

"The concept is relatively new in Malaysia. With the registration of this license, we hope to transform the community radio services in Malaysia, and we are also pleased that this would allow us to play a part in delivering our innovative approach to the use of Information and Communications Technologies for the social and economic development of the people living in the remote Bario area" said John Tarawe, CEO eBario Sdn Bhd.

To ensure compliance to the new guidelines on CR service issued out by MCMC, eBario as the CR service provider will encourage members of the community that it serves to participate in both the operations of the service as well as in the selection and the provisioning of its programmes.

Coverage of a community radio station should be limited to the particular geographical area of the targeted community and the service should not be operated for profit or as part of a profit-making enterprise, as stipulated in the guidelines.

CRS have blossomed in much of Africa and Latin America and they are springing up in neighbouring countries in Asia. Within their limited reach of 15-30 kilometres and the relatively low cost of setting up and ease of use, they are used by communities to broadcast information of local interest. Broadcasts are usually by the residents themselves in local languages or dialects that national media do not cater to.

The Bario Radio CRS is funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), under its Indigenous Peoples Assistance Facility (IPAF). Mr. John Tarawe, CEO of eBario Sdn Bhd, District Councilor, stated that "eBario's proposal to set up the station was one of 40 successful submissions to the IPAF out of more than 800 worldwide. The station is intended to serve the people within the Forum of the Indigenous People of the Highlands of Borneo, which is known by its acronym FORMADAT (Forum Masyarakat Adat Dataran Tinggi)."

The eBario telecentre currently provides information services to the Bario community via shared public access to the internet. Having won multiple awards for its innovative approach to the use of Information and Communications Technologies, the radio station is seen as a natural extension for delivering information right into the homes of the residents.

**Source: Orangasal Blog**

## Sad news from PARD Vaanoli



On September 8, 2010, PARD Vaanoli celebrated one year of its launch. To mark the anniversary, they broadcast for 12 hours. Earlier their daily broadcast was one hour per day initially and by the end of one year, they are broadcasting programmes for three and a half hours that is from 1.30 pm., to 5.00 pm. As they were all set to step into the second year of broadcasting, the CR-India got a mail from James Rajasekaran, E, Station Manager, on September 22, 2010 that PARD Vaanoli 91.2 had been struck by lightning in the night which had caused heavy damage to the tower, transmitter, UPS and batteries in its broadcasting and recording sections. He informed that they were unable to rectify the problem and wasn't sure if it could be in the near future as it involves heavy financial commitment.

"We were running the activities of our CRS with our own available funds along with the support of UNESCO for the transmitter and training. Though we made enough arrangements for the lightning prevention setup in the Tower it was totally ruined and we are in a status of whether we can restart our broadcasting" wrote James.

## AMARC deploras murder of CR worker

The World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, AMARC expresses deep shock and anger at the murder of Devi Prasad Dhital (Hemraj) Chairman of Community Radio Tulsipur on 22nd July 2010. According to initial reports, Dhital was shot at Urahari, about 12 kilometers from Tulsipur in western Nepal on Thursday around 8:45 p.m.

Dhital, a resident of Tulsipur bazaar was riding a motorcycle on his way back from the Fulbari VDC. He succumbed to chest injuries at the Rapti Zone Hospital, later in the night. His pillion rider sustained minor injuries. The assailants are absconding and the motive behind the attack is still unknown. Police sources have informed that investigation is underway.

"Hemraj's murder has shocked the entire community broadcasting sector of Nepal and we deplore such heinous crim-

inal act," said Raghu Mainali, Vice President for South Asia in the AMARC Asia Pacific regional board. "I call upon the concerned authorities and the local police administration to not to leave any stone unturned to ensure that the absconding criminals are brought to justice.

Media persons are increasingly under attack from criminal groups and any negligence in investigation will only encourage such elements," he further said.

Dhital was 45 and is survived by his wife, two daughters aged 7 and 9, a younger brother, and parents. AMARC expresses heartfelt condolences to Hemraj's family as well as to Radio Tulsipur at this time of great sorrow and loss.

**Source: <http://www.amarc.org>**

# Community Radio in India - A Timeline (Part II)

**November 2004:** Parliamentary consultative committee meeting on community radio

**December 2004:** TRAI recommendations on CR

**February 2005:** 10th anniversary of Supreme Court judgment on airwaves

**October 2005:** Cabinet refers community radio policy to group of ministers for recommendations

**September 2006:** Group of ministers approves community radio policy

**November 2006:** Cabinet approves community radio policy

**December 2006:** New community radio policy published

**31 January & 1 February 2007:** Community Radio Forum announced

**6 & 7 March 2007:** National Consultation for CR Operators

**2007:** Regional Workshops on CR in Pastapur, Bangalore, Chennai, Shillong, Ahmedabad, Dharamsala, Dehradun, Jharkhand, Dahanu, Lucknow etc.

**2 Feb 2008:** 2nd Annual Meeting of Community Radio Forum in Bangalore

**26 February 2008:** Community Radio Forum, India registered

**15 October 2008:** First Community Radio Station in India starts broadcasting. Sangham Radio launched in Pastapur, Andhra Pradesh

**23 October 2008:** Radio Bundelkhand 90.4 Development Alternatives launched in Orchha, Madhya Pradesh

**16 December 2008:** 'Namma Dhwani', Budikote Village, Kolar District, Karnataka Receives Wireless Operating License (WOL)

**26 January 2009:** MVSS Community Radio Launched in Mhaswad (Satara), Maharashtra

**5 February 2009:** Dhan Foundation signs GOPA for 'Kalanjiam Community Radio', Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu

**13-14 February 2009:** Community Radio Forum holds 3rd Annual Meeting in Orchha, Madhya Pradesh

**25 February 2009:** Indian Society for Agribusiness Professionals (ISAP) Signs GOPA

**19 March 2009:** Smart, New Delhi, Signs GOPA for CR Station at Nuh, Mewat, Haryana

**19 May 2009:** Social Works And Research Centre, (Barefoot College) Tilonia, (Ajmer) Rajasthan Signs GOPA

**8 June 2009:** Wayanad Social Service Society, Mananthvady, Wayanad, Kerala signs GOPA

**24 August 2009:** Datamation Foundation Charitable Trust, New Delhi receives Letter of Intent

**8 September 2009:** 'Pard Vaanoli' Community Radio Station launched in Madurai

**19 November 2009:** 'Gurgaon Ki Awaaz' launched in Gurgaon, Delhi NCR -

**Sajan Venniyoor**  
General Secretary  
CRF, India

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## 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:

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- 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: February 14, 2010. Thank you in anticipation.

Please also send us your feedback about this issue to make CR News bolder and better as we go along.

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

