

MIB initiates peer review for CR stations

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) initiated a self assessment process for community radio (CR) stations in India at a three-day workshop on 'Peer Review' for CR practitioners organised by MIB in association with the Community Radio Association (CRA) in New Delhi from February 17-19, 2014.

The peer review process has been put in place to help stations self-assess their performance and progress with the help of their peers. The workshop focussed on the need for community radio (CR) stations to assess their own growth and follow this process with similar reviews by peers. It also spelt out how stations could carry out the self-assessment processes with some of the home-grown toolkits available for the purpose.

Speaking on the occasion, Supriya Sahu, Joint Secretary, MIB explained that with the CR sector having completed 10 years in India, the time was now ripe to look back and see what had been achieved and the steps the CR stations had taken towards achieving their goals. She said that the Ministry was keen to ensure that the assessment would be by peers and not by officials. This was for the purpose of continuous improvement

of the sector and not for any punitive action.

The three toolkits from India recommended at the workshop were the Self Assessment Toolkit developed by the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia, the Community Radio Self Assessment Guide introduced by Ideosync Media Combine and the Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit (CR-CIT) developed by the UNESCO Chair on Community Media, University of Hyderabad.

MIB has appointed Dr. Rukmini Vemmaraju to coordinate the peer review. In her presentation, Dr. Vemmaraju gave details about the objectives of the process and spelt out the methodology to be adopted by the participating stations.

Dr. Kanchan K. Malik, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad spoke about the structure and philosophy of the

Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit (CR-CIT) that the UNESCO Chair on Community media has developed with support from CEMCA. She explained that a key strength of CR-CIT is that it



Rukmini Vemmaraju explains the process

seeks to move away from the externally driven 'measure' and 'prove' impact imperative to collective reflection with a view to 'understand', strengthen and continually 'improve' the CR initiatives.

Ms Jayalakshmi Chittoor presented her views and shared the Self Assessment Toolkit. Developed as a set of questions under the various operational aspects of a CR station, the toolkit is meant to enable, "regular self assessment exercises that give the CRS an opportunity to plan training and other capacity building tracks in their upcoming years work plans".

Being the first such Peer Review workshop to take place in the Community Radio sector, the three-day event at New Delhi also initiated a process of visiting stations to identify the areas of improvement for the visiting CR station and the CR station being visited.

According to Mr Naguveer Prakash from Kalanjiam Samuga Vanoli, "the whole process will help one understand their station's progress so far, and the complimentary visit between stations will help to achieve higher targets."

Compiled from EDAA and UNESCO Chair blogs



Participants at the Peer Review workshop

ANALYSIS

Field-testing the CR-CIT: To understand and improve



Pinki Chandran at the field-testing of CRCIT in Radio Active

The Community Radio Continuous Improvement Toolkit (CR-CIT) developed by the UNESCO Chair on Community Media team, University of Hyderabad, with support from the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA), is designed to support periodic self-assessment by community radio stations.

At present, CR-CIT is being field-tested in select CR stations across the country including, Radio Active (RA) in Bangalore, Gurgaon ki Awaaz (GKA) in Gurgaon, and Rudi no Radio in Ahmedabad. The respective stations that have participated as peers include: Radio Universal and Radio Siddharth (for RA) as also Radio Mewat, and Alfaz-e-Mewat (for GKA). Saiyare Jo and Radio Tilonia would act as peers for the field-testing of CR_CIT with Rudi no Radio scheduled for March 24-25, 2014. The idea is to make the toolkit inclusive and consensual, as an aid to CR stations for their continuous improvement.

The CR-CIT adopts a process through which the CR stations can set their own benchmarks and pace for improvement along a set of parameters based on internationally acknowledged, non-negotiable principles of community broadcast-

ing such as community participation and ownership, access and inclusion to marginalised groups, gender equity, community-generated content, emphasis on local cultures and identities, and transparency and accountability in practice.

The nine broad parameters included in the CR-CIT are: content generation and programming; policies and guidelines; volunteers; technology access and management;

on-air standards; governance; feedback and grievances; content-sharing and networking; revenue generation and financial accountability. Overall, the aim is that the CR stations strive continuously to match best practices followed globally.

The toolkit itself has been designed in a participatory nature, involving consultations with various stakeholders. It was ensured that the participatory approach “respects, legitimises, contextualises and draws on the knowledge and experience of local participants as well as relevant experts and outsiders.”

The Self-Assessment and Peer Review (SA&PR) process being adopted for field-testing also espouses a participatory approach which incorporates the knowledge and experiences of all stakeholders within the CR station and also of the representatives from peer stations.

The SA&PR exercise includes the following: (a) the station manager and staff; (b) regular volunteers (c) a CR Management Committee (CRMC) member; and (d) representative of the parent organisation and (e) one representative each from two peer CR stations.

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Arti Jaiman at the field-testing of CRCIT in Gurgaon Ki Awaaz

INTERNATIONAL

16 new CR stations for Bangladesh



Ministry of Information (MOI) of Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has primarily approved sixteen initiators to set up new community radio stations. Bangladesh started community radio broadcasting as recent as 2011 and is exploring the medium at a very fast pace.

South Africa to step up support for CR

In a meeting held at Pretoria recently, the State Owned Entities Communicators' Association (SOECA) and the State Owned Enterprises Procurement Forum (SOEPF) have committed to up their support for community media in South Africa. The State Owned Entities are trying to reach a situation where they spend 30% plus of their ad spend with community and small commercial media. This is also important towards community and small commercial media surviving and thriving in the quest to promote media diversity.



Source: All Africa
<http://allafrica.com/stories/201402241451.html>

Civil Radio in peril

In Hungary, community radio was functional from 1996 and by the end of 2010 there were sixty-eight small community radio stations across the country. By the beginning of 2011, the new law and political changes have been averse to the functioning of the community radio stations and the number has fallen to forty-four.

Civil Radio, Hungary, is under threat of a shut down due to



the same reasons. Civil Radio, which has a small staff base, is supported by about 150 volunteers and activists whose works a small staff base. The station has been functioning effectively for the past twenty years by sourcing funding from various grants, tenders and other funding sources. In the wake of recent events, Civil Radio has appealed to supporters worldwide to support them sustain. It is worth pointing out that here that the community media in Hungary has played a major role in shaping the civil society of the country.

Source: SOS Civil Radio <http://sos.civilradio.org/en/>

CR journalists seek safe work conditions



Community radio journalists from over thirty stations raised concerns about their security while participating in a national workshop on 'Safety of Radio Journalist' in Kathmandu in February. The program was organized by Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal (ACORAB) with support from UNESCO. The journalists voiced their demands asking the state to provide them physical and professional security. They also stressed the need for legal and practical reforms to create a safe and peaceful working environment in media houses.

Source: The Himalayan Times
<http://thehimalayantimes.com/fullTodays.php?headline=Plea+to+provide+security+to+radio+journalists&NewsID=406133>

EDITORIAL

Community Broadcasting in India: Time to review, reflect, and advance

Suddenly there is a whole lot of buzz around community radio in the country. The Government of India has announced a special scheme with an allocation of Rs 100 crore to promote community radio stations in the interim budget for 2014-2015. MIB is also all set to hold a multi-session Sammelan in mid-March where almost 250 participants from among the practitioners, activists, academics, government officials, multi-lateral organisations and civil society groups will converge to take stock of the community radio sector and discuss the way forward. The Community Radio Support Scheme has been announced to strengthen new and existing CR Stations with resources, capacity and technology support. And it all does not end with that.

Events such as the World Radio Day are specially focusing on community radio with a view to promote access to information, freedom of expression and gender equality over the airwaves

If we look at the non-governmental players, there is a flurry of capacity building activities on a range of issues that are critical to

the growth of community radio in the country. Workshops around CR awareness, capacity building with special focus on gender, community mobilisation, and self-assessment are on the rise. Events such as the World Radio Day are specially focusing on community radio with a view to promote access to information, freedom of expression and gender equality over the airwaves. It is amazing to see the growth in academic research around community radio and its distinguishing characteristics.

All the attention to community radio in India is not surprising and is indeed welcome – better late than never – given its proven potential worldwide to foreground the voices of the marginalized and as a potent tool of participatory development.

With the community radio sector all ready to take off on the path of growth, it is inevitable that there would be questions about its performance and adherence to the core non-negotiable principles that form the backbone of the CR movement in India. Taking up an assessment to track the work of a community radio station with its community, and its espousal of best practices could be vulnerable to top-down and donor-driven perspectives, which are inimical to the philosophy and tenets of the community radio sector or the station. A holistic peer-to-peer review, however, guards against such vulnerabilities. It is in this context that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's recent initiatives promoting a Peer Review process of assessment needs to be viewed.

The accent of any self-assessment or peer review undertaken by a community radio station should be guided by an imperative to improve and on tracking its course vis-à-vis the goals and philosophy of community radio

A decade of community radio in the country is an appropriate time to take stock and analyze what has been achieved and what needs to be accomplished. A peer review could serve as a useful catalyst towards this end as it would provide community radio stations themselves with appropriate benchmarks of measurement. The accent of any self-assessment or peer review undertaken by a community radio station should be guided by an imperative to improve and on tracking its course vis-à-vis the goals and philosophy of community radio. It need not be driven by a motive of monitoring and evaluation or lead to any punitive action.

**Ashish Sen
Kanchan K. Malik**

ARTICLE

Doing it better – a self-assessment guide



Venu Arora explains the Ideosync Combine toolkit at the workshop

Community radio (CR) in India has completed more than a decade since the first CR station in India went on air and it is an appropriate time to pause and reflect on whether some of the ideas that community radio was to take forward have found their way into practice. In order to assist operating CR stations to undertake this reflection, Ideosync Media Combine designed a simple tool to support members of CR stations to critically engage with their work. The objective was to improve their processes.

In this respect, 'improvement' has been thought of as moving towards greater alignment with the core principles of community radio. The vision, mission, goals and objectives of every community radio station would ideally reflect these principles, and strive for their realization through the practice of community broadcasting. The principles include freedom of expression, equality including gender equality, diversity and social justice, democracy, transparency, community participation and community ownership. Overall, any CR station needs to find ways of ensuring editorial independence and structures that enables it to serve the interests of its local community.

These principles can easily become mere words with no real meaning. They may also appear challenging from an implementation point of view in the absence of internal deliberations that bring clarity about them to every member of the CR station with regard to the work they are doing:

- Why are they making the programs they are making?
- Why is the process of reporting or content creation, what it is, and how can it be more participatory?
- How can diverse local voices to be strengthened?
- What processes may be adopted to create greater transparency and community engagement on decision making with regard to the station's operations?

In the initial days of reflection, the biggest role that self-assessment tools can play is to help CR station teams deepen their engagement with these principles so that they can clearly articulate challenges and find ways to address those challenges in the long run.

The tool has been designed as an open-ended guide to which stations can add more probes and questions. Some of the initial pilots using the Self-Assessment guide were heartening. CR station teams realized that the act of pausing and looking at their work with the aid of a structured assessment tool helped team members to think out-of-the box and find "better ways of doing what they were doing." It also helped CR stations to revisit some of the basic principles and realize gaps in what they had been able to achieve. The guide also offered everyone in the CR station a means to appreciate the amount of work they had put in and to reflect on the kinds of impact they had on their communities.

Some of the stations that have used the CR Self-Assessment guide include Gurgaon Ki Awaaz, Henval Vaani and Radio Brahmaputra. Their reflections have been documented and are available on Community Media MANCH (www.manch.net.in)

The Self-Assessment guide was also presented at the Peer Review workshop held in Delhi on February 17, 2014 under the aegis of the I & B ministry, where over 30 CR stations were familiarized with the tool and many provided feedback and inputs on how they intend to use it. The Self Assessment guide is available for download at http://manch.net.in/adda/view_media/610. It continues to be a work in progress and is available under the creative commons license.

Venu Arora
Ideosync Media Combine

WORLD RADIO DAY 2014

Who will cast the first vote for equality?

News in all forms of media in India is dominated by male subjects. This is particularly true of radio, with women constituting only 13 per cent of the subjects of news bulletins, according to the Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 (GMMP 2010). Indian print and television news boasted more female news subjects: 24 and 20 per cent respectively (albeit still less than a quarter of all news subjects).

While the pattern was similar across Asia with regard to press and TV news (20 per cent in both), women were better represented in radio news across the region (21 per cent).

The exceptionally poor representation of women as news subjects on Indian radio stations is all the more significant considering that radio news is provided solely by the public broadcaster. At present neither private nor community radio stations have permission to air news and current affairs.

The latest GMMP survey also found that only about one third (34 per cent) of the news stories in the Indian broadcast media – radio and TV – were presented by women. The corresponding figure for Asia was considerably higher at nearly half (48 per cent). Again, there were marginally more female announcers on television (public and private) than on radio in India.

All India Radio (AIR), India's public

broadcaster, was headed by a woman, Noreen Naqvi, between 2009 and 2011. However, according to employment figures received in 2012 from the public broadcasting corporation, Prasar Bharati, women constitute only 10 per cent of AIR's employees (in news and non-news positions). So it is not surprising that women are not well represented at leadership levels: 28 per cent in senior programme management, 38 per cent in senior administrative posts and none in engineering.

As the only radio news broadcaster, AIR has a unique opportunity to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment in radio. This was the theme of World Radio Day 2014. The unanimous view was that AIR could play a strong leadership role by developing, adopting and implementing gender-related policies and strategies for radio.

Privately owned FM radio stations have proliferated in urban centres across India over the past couple of decades. Women's voices are regularly audible on most of them, thanks to female radio disc-



Priyanka (left), the popular RJ of Radio Active, with Manjula

jockeys and listeners responding to call-in programmes. While current programming focuses mostly on popular music interspersed with chatter, there is tremendous potential to address more substantial societal issues through the medium.

FM radio appears to be increasingly employing women in leadership positions, even in socially conservative small cities and big towns. A proper, industry-wide survey is certainly overdue – perhaps the Association of Radio Broadcasters of India (ARBI), currently headed by a woman, will commission one soon but the fact that at least four of the approximately ten large and medium size FM radio networks in the country are led by women, and the reported trend towards more women occupying key leadership positions in such networks are encouraging.

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Panel discusses CR concerns on World Radio Day



PANELISTS SHARING A LIGHTER MOMENT: (From L-R) Venu Arora, Pooja O Murada, Archana Kapoor, Vinod Pavarala, Rajiv Tikoo

Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) in partnership with UNESCO, New Delhi observed the World Radio Day on February 13, 2014 at the India International Centre, New Delhi.

On this occasion, a panel discussion was conducted on the theme 'Community Radio: Strengthening Freedom of Expression and Empowering Communities'.

The panel discussion covered five key issues in the discourse about CR in India. These included the need for (a) allowing CR stations to broadcast news programmes; (b) closing existing gaps in efforts to raise awareness, build capacity and drive advocacy; (c) promoting gender inclusiveness at CR stations and within communities; (d) using CR to strengthen collective awareness about rights and

entitlements; and (e) addressing the training needs of CR practitioners.

Speakers on the panel included Prof. Vinod Pavarala, UNESCO Chair on Community Media, University of Hyderabad; Mr Rajiv Tikoo, Director, One World South Asia and Head, Community Radio Facilitation Centre; Ms Pooja Murada, Director (Communications), Institute of Rural Research and Development, Gurgaon; Ms Venu Arora, Director of Projects, Ideosync Media Combine, Faridabad; and Ms Archana Kapoor, Station Director, Radio Mewat, Mewat. Ms. Iskra Panevaska, Adviser, Communication and Information for South Asia of UNESCO welcomed the guests and speakers, and highlighted the importance of the World Radio Day. Dr. Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director, CEMCA facilitated the session and concluded that there are "miles to go before we sleep".

The consensus on the panel was to have more information to the people through CR, strengthen advocacy and capacity building, gender sensitisation, empowerment through people's engagement, and how to make the simple CR technology simpler.

Source: <http://crvc.cemca.org.in>



Archana Kapoor of CRA makes a point



Pooja O Murada speaking about women in radio

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

CR promotes collaborative action in the Himalayas



Compiling research outcomes to inform program design

Uttarakhand is known for its unspoiled natural beauty, ancient holy places, forests and valleys. Its people have been pioneers in community-led initiatives to nurture the fragile environment. However, in the last thirteen years 'development' has meant construction of roads, dams, tunnels, bridges and hotels, even in the most fragile regions.

The natural calamity of June 16 which continued to play havoc till June 19 was a rude reminder that the mountains need a different kind of development to maintain the balance of nature and preserve the environment.

In late September 2013, the Uttarakhand Government introduced the concept of Gross Environment Product (GEP), and provided the green signal to work which would assess the environment on a regular basis. This would be implemented through an annual Green Audit of the state's natural resources. However, no environment audit can be complete without adequate community participation and ownership. Community Radio can play a critical role in supporting the audit process and to monitor this initiative.



Understanding spring water recharge systems in collaboration with CHIRAG

Ideosync Media Combine has initiated a Community Radio Consortium for Environment Protection (CRCEP) together with the broadcasting CR Stations of Uttarakhand namely Henvallvani Samudayik Radio, Kumaon Vani, Pantnagar Janvani, Radio Zindagee and Radio Khushi. The key objective of CRCEP is to enhance capacity of CR stations in Uttarakhand to work in a concerted and collaborative manner on Disaster prevention and Environment protection.

Ideosync Media Combine is a communication for social change organization and has been working extensively in the field of community radio supporting innovation in training, research and content creation practices.

Learning workshops under CRCEP began in January 2014 after an intensive module design workshop with environmentalists, journalists and NGOs working on issues of environment, climate change and disaster preparedness. As part of the series of training workshops being



CRCEP Training

held from January to June 2014, the five participating CR stations are developing research methodologies to inform their radio programmes. They are also gaining in-depth understanding about environment issues; rules and regulations with regard to forests including community forest rights; mining laws, regulations and policies; as well as developing skills to work with new reporting and programme formats that engage communities for local action.

The face-to-face trainings are supported through long distance mentoring and sharing activities on Community Media Manch. Two residential workshops of four days each have thus far been concluded and CR stations are currently engaged in local participatory research and content designing and planning.

A first webinar where the stations will share their research outcomes is planned for the third week of March, 2014.

Leonea Fernandez
Ideosync Media Combine

UPDATES

Video awards to encourage youth engagement in CR



(L-R): Iskra Panevska, Ashok Ogra, Shigeru Aoyagi, Supriya Sahu and Sanjaya Mishra

For the first time in India, a competition was organised by Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) amongst Indian media students on the topic "Why Community Radio Matters" to engage the Indian youth in community radio initiatives and emphasize its role in community's self-expression, learning and development.

Fifteen short videos on the theme received awards in various categories. The winning film 'Aaji Kar Radio', produced by a team from the Central University of Jharkhand, Ranchi, brilliantly portrayed the life-changing role CR could play for villagers by conveying information about Government welfare schemes. Besides a trophy and certificates, the winning team was awarded a cheque of INR 20,000.

Two films won runners-up awards one among them being 'Radio Women of Patara' on community radio and women empowerment, produced by students from Department of Communication, Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad. Five films won second runners-up awards, and eight others were recognized for their creativity.

The Awards were distributed by Ms. Supriya Shau, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India.

Mr Shigeru Aoyagi, Director and UN-ESCO Representative to Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka said that considering the population of India -- the largest democracy of the world, we need more community radio stations. He emphasized that CR can convey very relevant messages and topics like climate change adaptation, empowerment of women, human rights, democracy, women rights, etc in different local languages.

Ms. Supriya Sahu elaborated on the activities of Government of India to support and strengthen community radio, and highlighted the broadcasting scenario in the country and the community radio support scheme.

Dr. Sanjaya Mishra, Director, CEMCA stated that the 3 minutes video challenge competition has been taken up by the Indian media students well, and the results are quite encouraging. This will be an annual event with the support of all the stakeholders.

The jury for the Awards was chaired by Prof. Ashok Ogra, Director of the Apeejay School of Mass Communication, New Delhi. While congratulating the award winners, Prof. Ogra thanked all the jury members for their support and explained the selection process. Arrangements were made for screening of a few selected videos, which are available at CEMCA website.

All the films have been uploaded to YouTube.

Source: <http://crvc.cemca.org.in>



Supriya Sahu gives away the awards

WORLD RADIO DAY 2014

Who will cast the first vote for equality?

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So is their involvement in awareness campaigns around issues such as women's safety and breast cancer. According to Nisha Narayanan, COO of Red FM, a leading local radio network, there is interest in diversifying programming in terms of both format and subject matter, but the present financial and regulatory regime acts as a constraint. If the expected expansion of the FM sector is accompanied by some relaxation of current restrictions, she believes local radio content can become more dynamic and relevant.

Although there is no evidence of any existing policies on gender equality and women's empowerment in the FM sec-

tor, at least one company has adopted a detailed policy on sexual harassment at the workplace and established the legally required compliance committee. This is more than many other Indian media houses have done. Perhaps ARBI can be persuaded to take the necessary first steps towards developing and promoting gender-related policies and strategies for the Indian commercial radio sector.

Both public and private sector radio may have much to learn from the community radio sector in this respect. Even though it is relatively new in India – officially sanctioned

only in 2006 – community radio (CR) has traditionally been inclusive, enabling a range of women (especially poor, illiterate, rural women) to exercise their communications rights.

In fact, some of the oldest and best known CR stations are effectively run by women from socially and economically disadvantaged communities, many of them with long experience

was adopted by the Community Radio Forum of India in 2011. The purpose of the policy, spearheaded by AMARC's Women's International Network (AMARC-WIN), is to increase women's access to and participation in CR, including at decision-making levels.

Of course, as Kanchan K. Malik of the University of Hyderabad points

out, a number of challenges need to be addressed to ensure women's progressive involvement in all elements and stages of a CR station – as listeners, producers and decision-makers – and thereby strengthen the empowerment potential of the medium.

Both she and Vinod Pavarala, UNESCO Chair on Community Media at the University of Hyderabad, also flag external challenges, such as customary so-

cial hierarchies of caste, class, religion and other identities, which often combine with gender to inhibit women's participation in community radio.

But perhaps the best antidote to such chronic ailments is gender equality and women's empowerment – through radio and other means.

Ammu Joseph
(Independent journalist
based in Bangalore)



Dynamic duo, Vandana and Sharmila, host the morning live show 'Gurgaon Ke Haal'

in radio work, using various means of communication, even before their stations were granted broadcast licenses. An impressive number of women now work in CR across the country, mainly as producers and on-air talent but also, in some cases, as station managers. Several organisations are involved in training and mentoring grassroots women broadcasters, helping to improve their knowledge base, skills and self-confidence.

The Gender Policy for Community Radio (GP4CR) approved by the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) in 2010

Source:

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/world-radio-day>

TRACKING CR

Radio station on wheels

Republic Day (January 26) celebrations at the Centre and State level in India are events not to be missed. This occasion is meant to showcase the best in technological, social and economical advancements and our cultural diversity.

At Alfaz-e-Mewat, this Republic Day was even more special as we were given the opportunity to be featured at the State-level celebrations held at Nuh, Mewat. The idea of a community radio tableau -- radio station on wheels -- seemed interesting.

Alfaz-e-Mewat has been set up under the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) funding and is broadcasting programs for farmers viz. Krishi Khabar (agricultural news); Guftgu (interview with experts); and Tohfa-e-Kudrat - Jal,



Jameen aur Kheti (Our Heritage-Water, Soil and Agriculture). Thus the Alfaz-e-Mewat tableau was part of the agricultural department tableau.

Alfaz-e-Mewat had a trolley to itself to showcase how a community radio works. This enabled the CR station to showcase different functions at the

radio station like recording, live announcements and broadcasting. Our radio listeners (Sahbuddin and Fazruddin from Sakras village) volunteered to role play and participated at the tableau as listeners.

Alfaz-e-Mewat reporters, within the short time span, gave a power packed performance and received considerable applause. About 18 tableaux from various government departments were lined up for showcase before the chief guest and the crowd. The agricultural tableau, of which Alfaz-e-Mewat was a part, won the third place in the tableau display.

For Alfaz-e-Mewat, it was a Republic Day like never before!

Alfaz-e-Mewat CR station team

Field-testing the CR-CIT

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The self-assessing stations are encouraged to pursue a do-it-yourself process that helps them to recognize their strengths and identify gaps in their practices through a co-learning approach, leading to continuous improvement. This helps to put to test the effectiveness of CR-CIT as a toolkit for self-assessment.

The Chair team endeavours to gauge if the CR-CIT injects a dose of positive reinforcement into its staff and volunteers about the good work they have been doing while at the same time allowing them to set goalposts for continuous improvement in areas which they feel need to be strengthened. Suggestions are also elicited about the suitability of the indicators and options within each parameter.



Field-testing of CRCIT at Radio Active



Field-testing of CRCIT at Gurgaon Ki Awaaz

The main advantage of CR-CIT is that it is not prescriptive and allows for its employment in a manner where peer reviewers facilitate and supplement the process of self-assessment. The peer stations participate along with the other members of the station, to act as friends and co-learners, and assist the station to carry out a productive self-assessment. They share their experiences with the self-assessing station and add new perspective, views and suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the process.

The notes and feedback gathered meticulously during the field-testing would be incorporated to bring out a revised, updated and improved version of CR-CIT.

Kanchan K. Malik
Faculty Fellow, UNESCO Chair on Community Media
University of Hyderabad

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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. Contributions should be in English, restricted to 300 words for news/event and 450-500 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 **May 20, 2014**. Electronic submission of contributions is recommended. Please email your articles/reports/features to: crnews2010@gmail.com. You can also post them to:

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UPDATES

MIB invites applications under the CR Support Scheme

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India has called for applications to avail of grants under its Community Radio Support Scheme (CRSS). The last date for applications is: April 15, 2014.

Detailed guidelines for CRSS and application form are available at <http://www.mib.nic.in/Showhome-Docs.aspx>

According to the guidelines, a new scheme "Community Radio Support Scheme" (CRSS) has been introduced by the Government in the 12th Plan for providing financial assistance to Community Radio Stations. The objectives of the Community Radio Support Scheme are to strengthen new and existing CR Stations with resources, capacity and technology so that they could provide access and voice to marginalized communities. The scheme also seeks to facilitate the growth of CRS, especially in remote and rural areas, and to further socio-economic and cultural development of communities through CR.

The grants under CRSS would broadly cover areas such as Equip-

ment Acquisition, Training Support, Emergency Grants, Replacement of existing equipment/ upgradation/ expansion as a one-time cost for existing (on-air) stations and Innovative grants.

A technical committee constituted by the Ministry has shortlisted equipment essential for operating a CRS as well as specifications/benchmarks for each item on the list.

A basic set up of community radio station may cost around Rs.15 Lakhs. The maximum grant size in the current FYP will be 50% of the total estimated expenditure, subject to a ceiling of Rs. 7.50 lakhs.

According to the guidelines, priority in the CRSS will be given to applicants from North-East Region; applicants who have not received any grant in the past, or are not presently receiving Government grants/public funds for the setting up and/or running of the Community Radio Station; applicants who demonstrate strong community participation, community ownership or strongly represent the voice of marginalised communities.

National CR Sammelan begins March 13

The 4th edition of the Community Radio (CR) National Sammelan is being organised at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi from 13-15 March, 2014.

The official MIB release for the Sammelan states that it would further an understanding among all stakeholders about the need and importance of community-based communication initiatives and their potential to change the social fabric of our country.

The Sammelan will cover issues concerning disaster and CR stations, peer reviews, social audits, and sustainability.

More than 250 community radio operators, practitioners, policy makers, activists, academics Government ministries/departments and international organisations are likely to converge on this occasion.

The Sammelan is being organised by the MIB in association with OneWorld Foundation India. Some highlights include, poster exhibition, the CRS National Awards, and the release of CRS Compendium 2014.

The special feature of this Sammelan is that it is being organised around thematic plenary and breakout sessions that would address distinct issues concerned with diverse realities within the CR sector. These include among others, a session titled, 'Sustainability Puzzle – Beyond Financial Sustainability' that would take a holistic look at the sustainability of CR Stations – technical, financial, content and sustainability of community engagement etc.

One of the breakaway sessions deals with 'CR for Indigenous and Marginalised Communities' while another one is centred on 'CR in Cities'.