

# World Radio Day 2015 puts spotlight on role of CR in social inclusion



**Keynote Address by Mr. Jawhar Sircar, Chief Executive Officer, Prasar Bharati**

In commemoration of the World Radio Day 2015 (February 13), UNESCO New Delhi partnered with the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) to organize a national event on the theme 'Community Radio and Social Inclusion'.

Held at the UN Complex in New Delhi, the event consisted of an inaugural session and an expert panel discussion on the title theme. The event was attended by over 100 representatives of the media sector, Government of India,

civil society organizations, development agencies, and academia.

The event's inaugural session included the launch of the South Asia Network on Community Media (SANCOM) – a specialized knowledge-sharing network and forum spanning the SAARC region (an initiative supported by UNESCO and led by the UNESCO Chair on Community Media). The inaugural also saw the release of a manual produced by UNESCO in cooperation with Ideosync Media Combine titled *Internal Migration: A Manual for Community Radio Stations*, as well as of the CEMCA study *Innovation in the Community Radio Sector* (supported by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting). The three launches were followed by a keynote

address by Mr Jawahar Sircar, the CEO of Prasar Bharati, India's public service broadcaster.

As part of his opening address Mr Shigeru Aoyagi, Director and UNESCO Representative to Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka observed that UNESCO promotes community radio (CR) as part of its efforts to strengthen media pluralism, the diversity of content, and the representation of different groups and interests in society.

*Continued on page 11*

## South Asia Network launched

The South Asia Network for Community Media (SANCOM) was formally launched on February 13, 2015 at the World Radio Day event in New Delhi, India, organized jointly by UNESCO and the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre in Asia (CEMCA).

Launching the virtual network of SANCOM, Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, the Director and UNESCO Representative to Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka, expressed his happiness about the formation of the regional network and emphasized the importance of such groupings to promote media pluralism and diversity in South Asia.

Prof. Vinod Pavarala, UNESCO Chair on Community Media and Member-Convener

of SANCOM, explained the broad objectives of the network, at the launch. He explained that SANCOM is a forum that is concerned with advocating for a freer and open policy environment for community media to flourish in the region. SANCOM aims to promote and strengthen media development and create networks where members can easily share their knowledge and resources across international boundaries as alliances are built and peer learning and self-evaluation are encouraged.

The foundation for SANCOM was created on July 12, 2014 at a roundtable on 'Towards a South Asia Network for Community Media' at the University of Hyderabad, India. The 25 participants,

representing different countries in the region, discussed the need for such a network, and also its objectives, functioning and member eligibility. The roundtable culminated in the formation of a steering committee, comprising sixteen individuals who were responsible to take the initiative forward.

Currently, representatives from eight SAARC countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, The Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are involved with the SANCOM initiative.

*SANCOM Website:*

<http://www.sancomonline.com>

**Tajirani Rampersaud**

## A TRIBUTE



Journalist B. G. Verghese

## Radio for empowerment

*Noted Journalist B G Verghese, who passed away recently, was also a supporter of community radio in India. Apart from a long stint at Prasar Bharati in the late 1990s and early 2000s, Verghese also chaired the Official Committee on Autonomy for AIR and Doordarshan which produced a report entitled 'Akash Bharati', the progenitor of Prasar Bharati in 1978. Among the recommendations contained therein, was a pitch for community radio/low budget radio.*

*As a tribute to Verghese, CR News is reproducing here, excerpts from "Radio for Empowerment," his preface to the UNDP-VOICES publication 'Community Radio in India- Step by Step'. Published in 2004, long before grassroots community radio became a reality in the country, his impressions, insights and wisdom still remain relevant.*

Using radio for development and empowerment is an old idea in India. Unfortunately television has tended to replace radio. In turn, Indian broadcasting, more generally, has tended to cater to people who matter, rather than ordinary people, the little man and woman, the "We" who constitute the ultimate sovereign. It is time to change that syndrome, and maybe things are changing.

Long back the Punjab Commissioner for Rural Re-construction, F L Brayne wrote, "Properly handled, the wireless can be made to mean for the Indian village, such health, wealth and comfort as it has never known. Broadcasting can do more in the general spread of knowledge than all other methods of education put together in a life time." He actually ran a trial radio transmission from Lahore YMCA in 1932, an experiment that enthused another civil servant to prepare a blue print for district radio stations.

However ... with the advent of AIR in 1934, 'big broadcasting' took over. Ever since proliferation of 'regional' and 'local' stations, Indian Broadcasting has remained centralized and largely top-down.

Radio is a very versatile medium and given the battery operated transistor, extraordinarily well suited to community broadcasting. National and Regional (essentially state-wide) broadcasting are

obviously necessary and useful. However, for educational and instructional purposes in particular, the language/idiom, dress, manner, environment, content, context and time of day need to be location specific and such that the target audience is able to identify with it. This is not possible with wide signal coverage. Community radio or television therefore calls for what might be termed narrowcasting. The critical issue is not range or signal radius as much as content.

The first FM radio stations that came up following the auctioning of airwaves in 2001 were essentially programmed for elite audiences. This is understandable as these are commercial stations that have to watch their ratings in order to fetch the advertising that supports them. The commercial broadcaster is market driven and must pay obeisance to the consumer. Community Radio can help bridge the gap.

Early in 2003, the government announced guidelines for community radio licensing on the basis which it invited applications from educational institutions. The catchment is too small and the clearances to be obtained from the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Home and Defence are cumbersome.

The local radio station (that were set up earlier under AIR) were meant to be for local communities though the signal range of most transmitters would

embrace one or two or more districts – a large compass indeed in terms of both area and population. Unfortunately, there was no more than notional and short lived provisioning for their budget and personnel with the result that most have lapsed into regular relay stations of mother units. They need to be rescued from this plight.

Some of these and other regional stations have meanwhile done well to lease time to approved NGOs and community based groups to go on the air for half an hour a week or longer/more frequently. VOICES in Budikote (Karnataka), Kutch Mahila Vikas Sanghaan in Bhuj (Kutch, Gujarat), AID India in Daltonganj (Jharkhand) have initiated programmes with some success. The Population Foundation of India has also produced a series of audience participatory radio programmes to considerable success in different parts of the country. Others like Deccan Development Society (Medak, [now in Telangana]) have been denied licenses but have nevertheless reached people through taped programmes.

Whether in rural or urban areas, community broadcasting promises great potential. Local youth can quite easily be trained and communities surveyed to establish their social, economic and information needs. Listening will grow with relevant and interesting programming.



## TRACKING CR

# FREE/DEM for CR stations: a road to active citizenship



*"In a gentle way, you can shake the world." – Mahatma Gandhi*

Ideosync Media Combine has initiated FREE/DEM – an initiative designed to build capacities of Community Radio towards enhancing pluralism and strengthening democracy, in order to fulfill its mandate as a third tier of broadcasting, and be the voice of the marginalized and a tool for community empowerment. Lack of access to information presents a tremendous challenge to creating an environment where individuals can practice active citizenship, and create a truly vibrant democratic society. The FREE/DEM initiative aims to provide an opportunity to CR stations to engage with these issues and initiate these conversations in their communities.

As part of FREE/DEM, CR stations from across the country attended a series of four-day intensive training institutes where they were introduced to the Indian Constitution and the people's rights it guarantees. They also engaged with ideas around democracy

and secularism, and interacted with rights-based grassroots movements like the Right to Information. During the training institutes, CR stations created innovative and participatory content designs after a critical engagement with the issues around freedoms, accountability, citizenship and public participation in governance, social audit and transparency.

A total of four regional FREE/DEM institutes have been held between December 2014 and January 2015, with over 65 CR stations applying in response to an open call for participation. More than hundred CR reporters in all participated in the trainings.

Ideosync Media Combine worked in partnership with leading organizations like Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS), Loktantrashala, Satark Nagrik Sangathan, Foundation for Democratic Reform (FDR), Pardarshita, the Sehgal Foundation, the National Coalition for People's Right to Information (NCPRI), and the Society for Social Audit Accountability and Transparency (SSAAT)

to develop the curriculum for the FREE/DEM institutes; and to conduct the trainings and organise the learning trips to the field.

Participating CR stations got an opportunity to engage with social audits of MNREGA and the Public Distribution programs, as well as attend public meetings where communities asked questions of their elected representatives. Films and folk performances during the training institutes highlighted how community media can contribute to and provide a platform for engaging in meaningful debate on critical social and rights based issues.

Through 2015, as part of the FREE/DEM initiative, CR stations will develop and produce programs and collaborate on the Community Media MANCH platform to take forward the conversations that started during the FREE/DEM Institutes. Towards this end, following the conducting of the institutes, stations were asked to submit proposals for grants to support programme production? About 48 CR stations applied for the grants out of which 20 have been selected for support through a jury process.

***"Why did it take so long to hold such an important training on critical issues like democracy, rights, entitlements and governance? This should have been the very first training that CR stations should have received!"***

***- Anonymous feedback, FREE/DEM Institute, South Zone***

**Venu Arora and Nitesh Anand  
Ideosync Media Combine**

## SNIPPETS

### Radio Meghna 98.4 goes on air



The first community radio station of Bhola Island of Bangladesh, Meghna 98.4 is going on-air from Charfashion Upazila sadar. Community Radio Meghna 98.4 will continuously broadcast programs on diversified resources of the Bay of Bengal and in protecting lives and livelihood of small fishermen and the small islanders.

Coastal Association for Social Transformation (COAST) Trust initiated community radio Meghna. Now the poor and marginalized community members of Charfashion sadar will have direct access to discuss their own issues through Community Radio Meghna 98.4. Having a radio at their doorsteps, the community will have scope to reflect on their problems and prospects in their local dialect.

At present, 14 community radio stations are on-air in Bangladesh and they are broadcasting 120 hours programs per day. A total of nearly 1000 young men and women are involved as broadcasters in these stations. Community radio stations in the country now have an approximate audience of 4.6 million.

Source: <http://www.bnnrc.net/home/radio-meghnabnnrc>

### Vast reach of radio, a challenge for news - Rathore



Union minister Rajyavardhan Rathore said that allowing private radio to air news as a concept is valid but the vast reach of this medium poses challenges. Speaking at an interaction organised by Indian Women Press Corps (IWPC), Minister of

State for Information and Broadcasting, Rathore, however, expressed hope, saying, "perhaps we are approaching a time when this will change."

Asked why there were restrictions on private radio when TV channels could broadcast news, Rathore said that the reach of the radio is "vast" and the government wants news to go out as news is. If news is allowed on private FM radio, there is also the case of community radio, which would have to be considered.

The government's policy for the upcoming phase III expansion of FM radio, which is expected to roll out in the coming months, allows the use of All India Radio (AIR) news bulletins on private stations but not from any other source.

Source: <http://www.outlookindia.com/news/article/News-on-Private-Radio-Vast-Reach-a-Challenge-Says-Rathore/881393>

### Two Punjabi CR stations to go on air in UK



Ofcom has announced the award of two Punjabi community radio licences in Wolverhampton and Coventry.

The first station Gulshan Radio will be run by Gulshan Dhingra, who has previously been associated with Sanjhi Awaz Radio, Sangat TV and Sunrise Radio. It fought off competition from another applicant by the name of Sajan Radio to the licences. Gulshan Radio has previously been available in Wolverhampton during Vaisakhi celebrations.

The second station, Radio Panj will be a Punjabi entertainment station managed by Jas Dhesi. In its application, Radio Panj said much of the Punjabi music it will play will come predominantly from UK. The UK Punjabi music scene is vibrant and is actually what appeals more to second generation Punjabis and the youth, more so than the music produced back in India and Pakistan.

Both stations will compete with Radio XL and Panjab Radio (DAB) that are also available in the two cities.

Community radio services are provided on a not-for-profit basis and focus on delivering specific social benefits to a particular local area or community of interest.

Source: <http://www.media247.co.uk/bizasia/two-punjabi-radio-stations-awarded-in-midlands-2015>

### PU CR launches free-of-cost radio production course

Punjab University's community radio Jyotirgamaya 91.2, in collaboration with Municipal Corporation, Chandigarh, is introducing a free-of-cost certificate course in radio production. The course will start under the National Urban Livelihood Scheme of the Government of India. The required eligibility for joining the course is Class XII. Any person between the age group of 18 to 35 years, who has been a resident of Chandigarh for the last three years, can apply for the course. The family income of the applicant who wishes to enrol for the course, should not be more than Rs 1, 50,000 per annum.

"The selected applicants will receive a stipend and local travel allowance along with a study kit," informed Jayanth Pethkar, chairperson of the School of Communication Studies. Briefing about the course, Sunil Sharma, Radio production head, Jyotirgamaya 91.2 MHz, mentioned, "It is a skills training program of 430 hours duration particularly made for underprivileged children."

Source: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chandigarh/PU-community-radios-course-in-radio-production-for-needy-students/articleshow/45994010.cms>



## EDITORIAL

# Broadcasting for youth and by youth

World Radio Day seeks to raise awareness about the importance of radio as Marshall McLuhan's 'hot' medium or the 'tribal drum' with a tremendous amount of untapped potential, both as an entertainment apparatus and as a tool for social change. Every year, on February 13, UNESCO and the numerous radio enthusiasts around the world, celebrate radio as a medium vital to the "mission of creating a more peaceful, more sustainable and more inclusive future for all."

The theme of the fourth UN annual World Radio Day this year was 'Youth and Radio' that stressed the need to empower youth voices for a sustainable future. This occasion foregrounded the need for greater social inclusion in radio, especially of the generation under 30 years old, which accounts for more than half of the world's population.

Many countries of South Asia are witnessing the slow, yet sure growth of community radio as a third tier of broadcasting. This sector is specifically suited to encourage youth to get involved with radio not only as listeners but also as producers. Several initiatives are now beginning to make youth-oriented shows and to run workshops in community radio production with a view to involving young people as team members for creating local and meaningful programming.

Young people are motivated, energetic, and idealistic and community radio can provide an enormous avenue for them to express their views. Young women and men have novel stories to share, and refreshing ideas that need to be given a platform for expression. Their collective potential must be channelized constructively to strengthen the effectiveness and power of community radio and to break the media stereotype about contemporary youth culture.

In India, and other countries of South Asia, such as Bangladesh and Nepal, community radio stations are endeavouring to give greater voice to young men and women by creating opportunities for civic engagement for



youth, and providing them with a means to represent their concerns through radio. The capacity-building workshops for community radio producers – whether they are through the Community Learning Programme approach or in the form of issue-based training institutes – are bringing together youth to train them with skills to spearhead social change, mobilise participation, and mediate public debates in their respective communities.

This issue of CR News covers the World Radio Day celebrations in India and simultaneously includes a curtain raiser on AMARC 11, which will take place between 10th and 14th August 2015 in Ghana. With the launch of the South Asia Network for Community Media (SANCOM), CR News too is now making a pro-active effort to cover more South-Asia wide stories. This issue, for instance, includes a write-up on the climate-change radio shows in Nepal. While there are concerns expressed about the challenges of real-time broadcast radio monitoring being planned by MIB in India in one article, Pete Tridish's interview highlights the struggle for the radio band in the US.

This issue is going to print in time to be distributed at the Fifth National Community Radio Sammelan being organised by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in New Delhi from March 16-18. More than 250 community radio operators, practitioners, policy makers, activists and academics are likely to converge on this occasion with the stated purpose of generating intergenerational dialogue on community radio in India.

***Young women and men have novel stories to share, and refreshing ideas that need to be given a platform for expression.***

## INTERNATIONAL

# We got in the habit of travelling to build radio stations

Community radio movement in the United States got a big boost with the passing of the Local Community Radio Act in 2012. **Kanchan K. Malik and Vinod Pavarala** spoke with **Pete Tridish**, one of the key activists in the movement. Following are excerpts from the interview:



**Pete Tridish, Low Powered FM (LPFM) activist from the US**

Our group in Philadelphia, we called ourselves Radio Mutiny [founded in 1996], got to hear that they would start to come in force against the stations. We called for a demonstration and we dared them to come out on Monday, high noon (like a showdown), in front of Benjamin Franklin's printing press because we are going to turn our radio station back on in front of this symbol of liberty. So we had this little protest there, and we turned the transmitter back on and much of the media showed up and we said, "if they think what we're doing is so wrong, they can put the handcuffs on us right here..." We put forward at that time, what we called "the seven point platform for how we will make the FCC's life really suck if they do not give out community radio licences." And that we were not interfering with anything. Everyone before had wanted large radio licences. But nobody had really tried to get small, neighbourhood radio licences and there was actually quite a bit of room.

### On the pirate radio years and the fight with FCC:

Over the years, as both the commercial and the non-commercial band filled up in the US, there was no longer much room to start a new radio station. By the time I got involved in radio, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), our regulators, said that there was nothing left. But, we discovered that, that wasn't actually true. It was just that everybody had been thinking that they wanted big radio stations. So Stephen Dunifer, an activist, built a transmitter and operated it [Free Radio Berkeley] from 1993 as an act of civil disobedience and when he was caught, he said, we recognise the authority of the FCC and they are allowed to abridge our freedom of speech to have an orderly band. But they are supposed to be doing it in the way that's the least harmful to the First Amendment. His lawyers said if my client has no radio stations, and Clear Channel has 1200 radio stations, how could this be the fairest system? The judge did not rule against Stephen Dunifer for about four years. So, from 1994 to 1998 there were about a 1000 unlicensed radio stations across the country.

Finally, after four years, not on the merits but on a procedural issue, Stephen Dunifer was ruled against. So, he had to turn his transmitter off in 1998. But, by that time there were already a thousand of these stations and FCC had a very big job to go around and shut them all off.

### On the change in rules for low power stations:

Of the thousand pirate stations and over the course of three or four months, they raided about 400 of them. But, in the meantime something strange had happened, which was, that the chairman of FCC - his name was William Kennard, who we thought was going to be completely against us, changed his mind. He had visited South Africa and he had met Zane Ibrahim and was very impressed by the way that Bush Radio station was integrated with the community and Zane was very effective at lobbying with him. Also, after my station was shut down, I decided that as a further escalation, we would have a protest in front of headquarters of FCC and at the National Association of Broadcasters. It was a very funny protest. We had a giant puppet showing the corporations controlling the broadcasters and the broadcasters controlling the FCC. We dressed the FCC Chairman like a puppet, like Pinocchio, and he was on the strings of the broadcasters. And he thought it was the funniest thing ever. For the next six months or so, every time he gave a big public speech, he would say there were these crazy people, they came outside, these pirate broadcasters, and they made a puppet out of me, you know, and they said I was a puppet of you guys, of you broadcasters. In 2000, Mr. Kennard announced the adoption of rules by FCC, creating a new low power FM radio service.

# ing around and teaching people tions: Pete Tridish

*Community Radio Act of 2010, with about 3000 low-power (about 100 watts) FM stations spread all across the country; during his recent visit to India.*

## On the Prometheus Radio Project and barnraisings:

Prometheus was officially launched with that Philadelphia protest in 1998. Once the rule makings opened, we got in the habit of travelling around and teaching people to build radio stations [called 'barnraisings' by the group in the spirit of the Amish barnraising tradition, where everyone gathers together to support one family and build together.]. The big broadcasters, National Association of Broadcasters, were very, very upset that they had been beaten... by us! They said we caused all sorts of interferences; we cause airplanes to fall out from the sky, you know, all kinds of things. They went to the Congress and got it to pass a law [the Radio Broadcasting Preservation Act, 2000] that limited the FCC's authority to give out these radio licences. The way they did it, they didn't ban it completely but they said the FCC would have to follow very tight technical criteria. What the FCC did was they had to implement this new rule, which said, instead of having two clicks on the dial between stations, you had to have three, and that meant that, there were no opportunities in the top 50 urban markets and in a lot of small towns. There was only one frequency made available and there was a competition for that one from churches, schools, activist groups and everyone. Anyway, we started building the rural stations because we weren't going to say no to the stations that we could have, and we started to campaign in Congress to change the law back. The anti-low power FM law was passed in 2000 and the pro-low power FM repeal eventually happened in 2010. It took them seven months to pass the anti-LPFM bill and it took us 10 years to pass the other side. [President Obama signed into law the Local Community Radio Act of 2010 in January 2011.]

## On his work in Colombia, Nepal, Guatemala, Tanzania, and Jordan:

I've been very privileged to get a lot of opportunities to go to other countries. There's much more emphasis on development outside the United States. There are also legal systems that are just completely different. And, so, I'm often cautious. What did work in the United States, I don't necessarily advise it for every place else. In other systems, in Nepal and Jordan, it's a monarchy; in Colombia there's been this very long armed insurrection. I have been very happy to just learn about the challenges that are completely different.

I would say, in comparison, the United States is one of the places where the sector is the most volunteer-driven, but it's not necessarily true... there are definitely other places where there are traditions where people don't see it as a job but they see it as part of a social movement. One of my biggest inspirations has always been Radio Venceremos which was the radio station of the FMLN in El Salvador which was fighting a war against the Unites States-supported dictator. They had this radio station running for 11 years of the civil war almost completely without interruption. So, there's a long tradition of this kind of insurrection or social movement radio and when I think about the risks we took [running pirate radio stations in the US], it was very small compared to the risk that they took.

## On the CR scene in India:

We don't really have the same ideas of [using community radio for] development, although, we certainly do have ideas of creating our economic opportunities and those sorts of thing. One of the things we advocated was that none of these stations could be used for commercial interests, and one of the key provisions was that they should be owned by local entities. I'm coming to understand more of this development framework and NGOs' role in community radio in India. I see a lot more challenges around staffing because, you know, in this country, people don't have as much free time to do something like voluntarism and there's more of a culture around radio as being a very serious business. It's not something fun.



*Pete Tridish tests transmitter with Sanghan Radio staff*



## CR UPDATES

# Indian community radio monitored, expanded



Following the change in the country's government earlier this year, the Indian Information and Broadcasting Ministry has ordered that its Electronic Media Monitoring Centre (EMMC) begin real-time broadcast radio monitoring as soon as practically possible.

The organization checks the contents of broadcast programming for compliance against the Indian broadcast content and advertising codes. This new policy has been gradually implemented over the recent months.

The EMMC already collects and analyzes the output of some 300 of India's nearly 800 television stations, but the additional monitoring, initially of more than 100 private commercial FM stations and some 30 or more of the longest established non-profit community radio stations, on a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week basis, will demand considerable additional resources.

## OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

It will be particularly challenging when it comes to retrieving signals from some of the more rural community services that broadcast to remote small (10- to 15-kilometer radius) areas spread out across many parts of this very large country.

The technical mechanisms that will be used to gather the various broadcast radio signals are primarily based on broadband Internet capture and streaming of real-time audio. Such an approach will work where suitable infrastructure exists and where electrical power and telecommunications networks are generally reliable.

However, in parts of India, even in some of the large cities, this is not always the case and any power outages will inevitably degrade the ability of the EMMC to capture station outputs comprehensively. In certain rural areas, alternative approaches may be required, because fixed broadband infrastructure and even mains electricity are not universally available.

Assuming that the various practical technicalities of capturing station outputs are successfully overcome, the EMMC is also likely to encounter subsequent challenges when it comes to translating the many and various minority languages used on some stations.

Given the scale of monitoring proposed, it seems highly unlikely that EMMC staff will always be capable of fluently understanding all of the spoken word content being broadcast. Under such circumstances, when concerns are raised, it is likely that recordings may require further analysis by specialist linguists.

Established in 2008, as a result of government policy developments, the EMMC is currently enjoying a period of considerable expansion. As well as the introduction of broadcast radio monitoring, on the television side, the number of stations monitored is expected to double to some 600.

## MORE COMMUNITY STATIONS

At present, approximately 100 people are employed at the EMMC central office in Sochna Bhawan, New Delhi, where they work around the clock in eight-hour shifts. Initially, around 15 members of

staff are expected to take responsibility for radio monitoring. The group's 2013–14 operational cost of INRs 717 million (approx. US\$11.7 million) is expected to almost double in 2014–15 to INRs 1,375 million (approx. US\$22.4 million).

The ministry has been careful not to claim that all licensed broadcasters will be comprehensively monitored immediately, suggesting that the output of "selected" stations will analyzed in the first instance. If comprehensive monitoring is the longer-term goal, then the EMMC is going to need to grow considerably more over the coming years.

At present, India already has well over 170 operational community radio stations, and the government in New Delhi has also issued permissions for up to a further 400 new stations. Clearly planning to extend the sector still further, the central government budget of 2014 included INRs 1,000 million (approx. US\$16.3 million) which Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced would be used to "support about 600 new and existing community stations" in a move intended "to encourage growth in this sector."

Prior to the announcement of this new policy, private commercial radio stations were expected to store 90 days of output recordings for delivery to the EMMC as and when required, but community radio broadcasters were not being routinely monitored at all by the Indian state. [Editorial note: CR stations are also expected to keep three months of content for scrutiny.]

Because there has been no suggestion that any serious licensing violations have been occurring, it is not yet clear what the driver behind this new policy might be. However, the fact that stations in more remote areas are currently almost entirely beyond any form of practical regulatory oversight could well be a factor.

In terms of wider policy issues, the introduction of centralized monitoring of radio outputs may however be linked to helping advance the issue of news and current affairs broadcasting on the country's private and community radio stations.



## CR UPDATES

## Pete Tridish visits UNESCO Chair

Pete Tridish, Low Power FM (LPFM) activist and founder of the Prometheus Radio Project in the US visited the UNESCO Chair on Community Media in mid-February, during his recent visit to India. The Chair team introduced him to their work on community media in India and the wider South Asian region, following which he visited Bol Hyderabad 90.4 FM, the campus community radio station located at the University of Hyderabad, and interacted with staff and students.

Tridish spent a day with doctoral researchers working in the area of community media, at the UNESCO Chair on Community Media and the Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad. As part of a one-day workshop titled, 'Community Media, Politics and Social Change: India and the US', Tridish spoke at length about the history of radio broadcasting in the US and the LPFM movement that he led for over a decade. The technicalities of frequency and license allocation, activist lobbying and the process of law-making in the US, were among the things he shared with the Chair team and the doctoral researchers. Dr. Kanchan K. Malik and Prof. Vinod Pavarala gave a brief overview of the community radio scene in India, including its history, the



*Pete Tridish with the UNESCO Chair Team*

policy, and emerging issues facing the sector. This was followed by individual presentations by the doctor researchers: Preeti Raghunath presented her research work on policy-making for community radio across four countries of South Asia, namely, India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka; Arun John outlined his research project on construction of 'community' at two CR stations in South India; Vinesh Kondra shared his work on CGNetSwara and GramVaani, two mobile-based community media initiatives in central India; Tajrani Rampersaud spoke about her project on children and community

video; and presentations were made on research on citizen journalism and community newspapers being carried out by Lauella Amy and Annapurna Sinha.

Tridish also visited Sangham Radio in Pastapur village of Medak district, Telangana. He interacted with the women community radio and video practitioners at India's first community radio station. Tridish's visit was an enriching experience for the Chair team and inspirational for the doctoral researchers working on various aspects of community media.

**Preeti Raghunath**

## Indian community radio monitored

*Continued from page 8*

### BROADCAST NEWS?

At present, the government's All India Radio (AIR) is the only terrestrial broadcaster permitted to provide such output, but Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar speaking in Mumbai, asked "why should FM channels be banned from broadcasting news? EMMC is considering allowing privately-owned FM radio channels to start their own news."

A report published at the end of August by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), "Recommendations on Issues Related to Community Radio Stations," concluded that, in future, community stations should be permitted to rebroadcast the news outputs of AIR

and be permitted to accurately translate such news into relevant local languages and dialects.

However, although the Authority recognized the importance of self-generated local news and current affairs for community radio broadcasters, it noted the "scope for misuse of this facility" and concluded that in absence of an "effective monitoring mechanism" it should not yet be permitted.

The prohibition on news and current affairs broadcasting has been a source of considerable contention since experimental private commercial radio stations began operating in India as long ago as the early 1990s.

It is particularly problematic for community stations, which have now been operating in the country for over 10

years. These stations typically focus on fostering community cohesion and development, broadcasting a wide variety of locally relevant information in support of such aims.

Observers point out that if the Indian government is really serious about driving forward the development of this sector, then this is an issue that needs to be resolved as quickly as possible.

**Lawrie Hallett**  
**University of Bedfordshire**  
**United Kingdom**  
**lawrie@terella.com**

Reproduced for non-commercial use from: <http://www.radioworld.com/article/indian-community-radio-monitored-expanded/273907>

## INTERNATIONAL

# Get ready for Accra, Ghana

*AMARC 11 will take place between 10th and 14th August 2015 in Ghana when the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters will organize its 11th World Conference in Accra, Ghana in partnership with the Ghana Community Radio Network (GCRN). AMARC Secretary General, Francesco Diasio gives us a glimpse of the issues that are likely to take centre stage.*



**89.3 Fiila FM radio station**

Even more than in the past and regardless of the region, community radio finds that its everyday world has become one of dualities - of growing and tangible insecurity even as people aspire and struggle for basic security at multiple levels. The "global village" has become not even a global marketplace but a global mall and, all too often, a global stage for conflict. More than ever, the unique character and attributes of community radio need to be leveraged to build, transform and aggregate the strength of diverse communities desirous of and working towards people-centred security.

To celebrate as well as strengthen the capacity of community radio in responding to multiple dualities, the 11th World Conference of AMARC (AMARC 11) will focus on the following themes: (1) Community Radio, holistic security and sustainable development; (2) Community Radio, culture and identity security and (3) Community Radio, conflict and institutional security.

## 1. Community Radio, holistic security and sustainable development

The world is increasingly facing natural disasters, often related to climate change and the irresponsible management of natural resources. These disasters are both symptoms and illustrations of global inequities and those who pay the biggest price are the vulnerable communities and groups for whom community radio is a critical resource. The current Ebola

epidemic highlights not only the interdependence of food security, nutrition security and health security but also how quickly their absence can threaten and impact global security and well-being. In transitioning from the Millennium Development Goals towards Sustainable Development Goals, the international development community led by the United Nations is further giving recognition that peace, inclusion, equity and accountability are at the root of sustainable development. These have always been the values of community radio and AMARC 11 is a perfectly-timed opportunity to ensure that it performs even more effectively and proactively.

## 2. Community Radio, culture and identity insecurity

Culture is another prism for the duality of security and insecurity. On the one hand, the globalized society is often projected as reflecting the identity pluralism of the so-called "multicultural" society. Yet, even in states that characterize themselves as open and democratic, political leaders are denouncing multiculturalism as a threat. This induced fear, sometimes related to a perceived loss of identity, is one of the reasons for extremely negative reactions to migration. By its nature, and whether in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Latin and North America, community radio has developed an inclusive process towards citizenship and is an instrument for social cohesion and intercultural dialogue. It has preserved and renewed multiple languages, thereby not only revitalizing their communities but also enriching the heritage of the world. At the same time, it is harnessing the newest technologies, taking advantage of non-terrestrial platforms and social media. In this regard too, AMARC 11 will highlight its success stories and illuminate its challenges.

## 3. Community Radio, conflict and institutional insecurity

Community Radio has not been immune to, and in fact has often been targeted in, the growing incidence worldwide of conflict and violence and general physical insecurity. Threats by armed groups in conflict situations, censorship, terrorist attacks on installations increasingly undermine the security of community radio as well as their journalists and activists. Where the threats may not be overt, various mechanisms, including legislation and regulation or their deliberate absence or distortion, are used to dim the dialogic voice of community radio. Throughout, community radio has played a key role in conflict prevention and resolution at all levels, from the community to the national sphere and even across boundaries. The question is how to put in place mechanisms, from capacity-building to institutional protection, that would guarantee that community radio is always able to fulfil its peace-building role.



## SOUTH ASIA

# ISET Nepal supports radio shows on climate change

Poor and marginalized communities remain highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. They lack both the economic and social capacity to deal with climate induced stresses which increase their vulnerability. However, making them understand the implications of climate change and its impact is difficult, particularly in countries where the literacy rate is low.

Community radio is a valuable means to reach vulnerable groups like women and marginalized communities including the poor as a medium to raise the level of awareness about the adverse impacts of climate change.

Institute for Social and Environmental Transition-Nepal (ISET-Nepal) is a think tank based in Kathmandu that conducts academic studies related to climate change, food security and other developmental issues.

In 2009, ISET-Nepal conceived, developed and produced a radio drama called Jalvayu Puran (climate story) with the aim of transmitting 27 episodes (30 minutes each) through community radio stations. In the drama, puran is recited by a dalit in place of a Pandit of higher caste. Efforts were made to capture the diversity of people in terms of gender, caste and

languages spoken in different ecological regions of Nepal. The objective was to disseminate knowledge on climate change to people in the language they understand. The drama was broadcast over several community radios across Nepal at different times.

Jalvayu Puran began a process. Over time, ISET-Nepal learned that, to get the community to change its attitudes, behaviors and develop adaptive strategies, capacities of community radio managers need to be enhanced. Station managers can act as a catalyst to highlight local problems and promote discussions.

In 2014, ISET-Nepal partnered with a community radio network to broadcast the drama and build the capacity of 17 community radios across the country to design their own radio programme. A training module was designed to help station managers understand and identify indicators of climate change. It is anticipated that locally developed radio programmes will draw attention of local stakeholders and help get their support on issues of climate change.

A template to record local environmental changes was designed and provided to the radios. These filled templates and community prepared episodes of the



*Sketch of the concept "Jalvayu puran"*

programme are being analyzed to glean lessons for its climate change research programme.

These programmes have received overwhelming responses from the listeners, who suggest that the drama changed their behaviours. It motivated them to pursue environment friendly livelihoods. ISET-Nepal is currently planning to scale up the activity across Nepal and involve more community radio stations in the process.

**Kanchan Mani Dixit**  
Programme Manager, ISET-Nepal

## WRD 2015 focuses on social inclusion

*Continued from page 1*

He noted that UNESCO's CR initiatives have focused on policy development, capacity building of community members, research, advocacy, and technological innovation. Dr Ramesh Sharma, the Director of CEMCA emphasized the need to map and promote innovation in the CR sector, and drew attention to CEMCA's recent interventions in the Maldives and Sri Lanka.

UNESCO and Yes Bank are currently working towards launching a project that will support the inclusion of internal migrants in the economic, social and cultural life of the country. Speaking on the occasion of World Radio Day, Ms Preeti Sinha, Senior President and Global Convenor at Yes Bank outlined certain areas of mutual interest for Yes Bank and UNESCO, and noted that the

UNESCO-Yes Bank partnership would include the capacity building of community members and CR stations to help integrate internal migrants within society.

The second part of the programme comprised an expert panel discussion on the theme 'Community Radio and Social Inclusion'. The panel was moderated by Prof. Vinod Pavarala, Chair holder of the UNESCO Chair on Community Media at the University of Hyderabad. The discussion focused on ways in which CR stations – through their processes of community mobilization, participatory programme development, and stakeholder engagement – helped build a more cohesive and inclusive society. However, several panellists agreed that the pace of establishment of CR stations in India would need to be accelerated. Likewise, efforts to

operationalize the national CR policy would need to be intensified, for CR to effectively strengthen the social fabric of communities in different parts of the country.

Finally, as Mr N. Ramakrishnan, the Executive Director of Ideosync pointed out, CR ought to be re-positioned within movements for free speech and the right to information, rather than being placed exclusively within a development agenda. This would allow a richer profusion of marginalized voices to be heard, understood and acted upon. This would foster a more inclusive society and re-validating the raison d'être of CR stations.

**Anirban Sarma**  
National Programme Officer  
Communication and Information Sector  
UNESCO New Delhi

## CR News Team



**SUPPORTED BY:**  
CEMCA, New Delhi

**DISCLAIMER:** CEMCA/COL does not endorse or take responsibility of the views expressed in the Newsletter

**PRODUCED BY:**  
UNESCO Chair on Community Media, Department of Communication, Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India.

### EDITORIAL TEAM:

#### Editors:

**Ashish Sen** (Former President, AMARC Asia-Pacific)

**Kanchan K. Malik** (University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India)

#### Design and Production:

**Vasuki Belavadi** (University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India)

**Tajirani Rampersaud** (University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India)

### ADVISORY BOARD:

**Vinod Pavarala** (UNESCO Chair on Community Media, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, India),

**Ramesh Sharma** (CEMCA, New Delhi, India)

**Anirban Sharma** (UNESCO, New Delhi, India)

**Ammu Joseph** (Journalist, Bangalore, India)

**AHM Bazlur Rahman** (BNNRC, Bangladesh)

**Raghu Mainali** (CRSC, Nepal)

## Call for contributions

The editorial team seeks contributions by way of news reports, features, opinions announcements 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 **April 10, 2015**.

Electronic submission of contributions is recommended. Please email your articles/ reports/ features to: [newsr2010@gmail.com](mailto:newsr2010@gmail.com)

You can also post them to:

**Dr. Kanchan K. Malik,**  
Department of Communication,  
S N School of Arts & Communication,  
University of Hyderabad,  
Gachibowli, Hyderabad, India, 500 046  
Phone: +91 40 2313 5506

## RESEARCH

# Community Radio in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka

While the impact of globalization has led to an increase in access to information, a major concern has been the absence of community specific concerns and participatory approaches to development. In this global debate, participatory community media has gained momentum, re-building communities and including the marginalized voices in development discourses.

Community Radio (CR) as a tool for self-expression has been gaining momentum in the Indian context, building its ground through an established policy structure. In Nepal, however, despite the absence of a separate policy for commercial and community radio stations, the movement has paved way for CRs to broadcast on the FM band. The current Sri Lankan scenario on the other hand is grim with the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation not giving up hold over CR management and operations to communities, making them external in ownership for people. In such a situation, it becomes imperative to learn from the good practices being followed, extracting experiences in community participation, sustainability and empowerment.

Different models operate in the three countries. However, the two major categories found in the landscape of community radio include: educational-institute run stations and the non-governmental organization owned stations. On one hand, while issues of content, human resource, finance, and technology exist, participation has been seen to play a key role in defining the sustainability of the stations. Varying degrees of participation pave way to understand the impact in terms of basic community listenership, and in the level of empowerment.

The cross-country understanding of policy, genesis and current sustainability challenges becomes of prime importance in studying the South-Asian picture of the community radio, with different political backgrounds and similar socio-cultural contexts. Further, the study also attempts to document an in-depth understanding of the impact the radio is creating in the lives of the participants and community members, which not just adds up to the credibility of the CR in the area, but also helps take the CR to another level of functioning. In this context, women's participation in CR is seen to be of prime importance, especially in the light of the challenges they face in talking about their issues.

The study that was conducted in these three countries gave insights into the practices and challenges posed at community radio as an ICT based tool for development. With countries positioned at different phases, the presence or absence of a policy/ legal framework is critical for the CRs to grow. In this context, measures that will go a long way in making CRs a sustainable community media include: enhancing participation of community members in all aspects of CR, promoting a national policy that facilitates their growth, developing a self-evaluation strategy for them to map their performance, along with the government looking forward to CR as a medium to understand ground realities.

**Suchi Gaur**  
University of Delhi

## ANNOUNCEMENT

### 5th National CR Sammelan announced

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is organizing the 5th Community Radio National Sammelan to be held at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi from March 16 to 18, 2015. According to Mr. K S Rejimon, Director, MIB, the Sammelan would give participants an opportunity to understand the need and importance of community based communication initiatives and their potential to change the social fabric of our country. More than 250 community radio operators, practitioners, policy makers, activists are likely to converge on this occasion.