

Research Paper



PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH RADIO

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), leader of India's non-violent struggle for freedom, says that "My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest." The greatest protection of human rights emanates from a democratic framework grounded in the rule of law. A functional democracy that accommodates diversity is increasingly becoming the planet's best bet against the concentration of power in the hands of a few and the abuse that inevitably results from it.

The Community Radio (CR) station is not a profit making institution. It is purely a service oriented system. The CR station can convey messages or knowledge to the targeted listeners community over the radio regarding health, hygiene, agriculture, culture, education, etc. through a variety of programmes.

Our study has focused on understanding the promotion of democracy and human rights related programmes are designed and their impact on the community of Tumkur taluk in Karnataka state. 80 respondents were selected purposively for the study. The data were collected by the respondents through direct contact and with the help of local participation. Questionnaire and Interview techniques were used for the collection of data.

The overall study indicated that the promotion of democracy and human rights related programmes are designed well and its impact on the community is really great. This kind of research would help the researchers to understand how the Community Radio plays an important role in creating awareness on democracy and human rights.

KEYWORDS: democracy, human rights, Community radio, awareness

INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth too, rejects foreign domination, authoritarian dictatorships, military regimes and one-party rule. All nations of the Commonwealth have chosen democracy as their preferred form of government. Democracy is premised on the recognition and protection of people's right to have a say in all decision making processes which is itself based on the central principle of equality of all human beings. The exercise of this fundamental political right requires a guarantee of crucial freedoms –to express one's thoughts and opinion without fear, to seek and receive information, to form associations and to assemble in a peaceful manner to discuss public affairs amongst others.

Pillars of Good Governance

Pillars of Good Governance Good governance requires that all work of the State be informed by fundamental democratic principles underpinning human rights. The five

pillars of good governance are transparency in decision making processes, ensuring people's participation, responsibility in the exercise of power, accountability of the decision makers and responsive to people's needs uphold the edifice of sustainable democracy.

Human Rights and Media

The Information Media is an important arm of any modern democratic polity through which the people exercise their freedom of information. The freedom of information, the democratic right to know, is crucial in making all other human rights effective and providing an important safeguard for the enjoyment of all those rights. Traditionally, the vehicle of public information was the Press. Today it is called the media, which include the press, the radio, the television and the internet. The "Fourth Estate" plays a crucial role in a large democracy like India, where about a number of different types of newspapers are circulated.



Since the 1970's the media in India have played a central role in sensitizing people with information about governance, development, science and technology, foreign relations and so on. Considering the totality of the impact of the media during the past decades, despite the above pitfalls, one must recognize that the contribution of the media in revealing and highlighting human rights causes has been most impressive. A colonial law relating to official secrecy, the Official Secrets Act. 1923, however, remains an impediment in the effective exercise of the freedom of information.

Democracy entails necessary participation, which in turn demands politically active people aware of what is happening around them. As Aristotle says that "A citizen is the one who plays the dual role of the ruler as well as the subject" i.e. a responsible citizen is the one who necessarily participates in the process of governance. The importance of the role of the media, i.e. the fourth estate needs to play in a parliamentary democracy such as ours.

Community radio derives its genesis from the fundamental principles of democracy necessarily entailing equal and active participation in civic affairs and freedom of speech and expression. The role of any form of mass media, as is self-explanatory by its very name is to reach out to people, but in its actual realization; generally the lower echelons of human civilization are always left out. One may argue that the media is vigilant enough to report a number of issues pertaining to the deprived or the socially marginalized of for that matter the tribal groups, but a juxtaposition of their demographic occurrence with the quantum of space they demand in our daily news shows the grave discrepancy involved.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A community radio station can be defined as one that is operated by the community, for the community, about the community and by the community. Radio is one of the powerful supporting and cheap technologies for many awareness activities. Now a days we can consider that radio stations facilitate the sharing of information and creating awareness, particularly on democracy and human rights.

Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, and regardless of frontiers".

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 59 (I) of 14 December 1946, which states that freedom of information, is a fundamental human right, and General Assembly Resolution 45/76 A of 11 December 1990 on information in the service of humanity.

Considering Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights which reaffirms the right that every individual shall have the right to receive information. The promotion and protection of peoples' communication rights are crucial in the free flow of information and ideas, which are the pillars of a functioning democracy. Respect for pluralism, culture, language, and gender diversity should be reflected through all the media as a fundamental factor in a democratic society.

Community radio plays an important role in strengthening cultural rights, and in particular, the rights of linguistic and cultural minorities, indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees by providing access to the means of communication. (AMARC, 2007)

Community radio preserves the history, achievement, local values and norms, apart from conceding to the changes and transferring the past knowledge to the future generations. They should be helping to move onward by reflecting the best practices of the past while integrating the best practices taking place in the society around them. Another task of CR is to ensure knowledge management. This leads to the development of the nation. (Mainali Raghu, 61)

OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To examine the impact of the human rights related programmes on the community of Tumkur taluk in Karnataka state.
- ❖ To study how the promotion of democracy and human rights related programmes are designed.

METHODOLOGY

This paper is based on primary data and secondary data is collected from 80 respondents who are the listeners as well as participants of local Community Radio of Tumkur taluk using the survey method with the scheduled questionnaire and interview.

Further, the secondary sources such as books and reports which reveal about the impact in the community. The study will help in understanding the power of Community Radio in the promotion of democracy and human rights.

Profile of Radio Siddhartha, Community Radio in Tumkur District:-

Radio Siddhartha FM 90.8 MHz is also known as the voice of Tumkur. It is the first Community Radio station in Tumkur district situated in Karnataka state. The main goal of the Radio Siddhartha is to provide education to the rural, urban masses through inspiring and awareness programmes related to agriculture, health, education, culture, entertainment and so on.

Tumkur district consists of 10 taluks and Tumkur taluk is one among them. Tumkur taluk consists of 374 villages. Radio Siddhartha covers 150 villages.

Radio Siddhartha is the Community Radio station of Sri Siddhartha Education Society. Shikshana Bhisma Dr. H.M.Gangadharaiah, Founder Secretary of Sri Siddhartha Education Society (R) in 1959, whose vision was to provide education to the rural and to reach the unreached. He was a true Gandhian and a follower of the Buddha and strong disciple of Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar and impressed by Saint Vinobha Bave a social reformer. His son Dr. G. Parameshwara, who is Joint Secretary of the Education Society, was instrumental in bringing about radical change in the educational system when he was the Minister of higher education in Karnataka state. He had a strong belief that education is an instrument of social change and has a vision to cover all branches in Sri Siddhartha Education Society. In view of this great vision, he has started PG courses in Media Studies and in 2009 he established a Community Radio station Radio Siddhartha 90.8 MHz in the Campus. It empanelment with Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity, a nodal agency of the government of India for advertising on 01.10.2013.

This Community Radio has given a platform to the marginalized sections of the society, and to the rural and urban masses to voice their feelings and emotions. It benefits students as well as general public. (Radio Siddhartha Souvenir, 2014)

Radio Siddhartha, Community Radio is broadcasting total 9 hour programme scheduled according to the needs of the community mainly 6A.M. to 9 A.M., 12 noon to 3 P.M.

and 6 P.M. to 9 P.M. daily. According to the Community Radio guidelines the programme committee members and radio staff discuss the concept, identify local talents and concerned resource persons, provide them platform to debate and voice their feelings and views. Programme Committee comprises different sections of the society. They are rural folk, slum dwellers, the labour class, social workers, HIV affected persons, artists, educationists, science activists and members of NGOs in and around the district.

The Radio has been getting overwhelming appreciative responses from its honourable listeners through letters and phone calls and mobile messages. According to the staff of Radio Siddhartha, listeners are so much inspired by the programmes that they have been coming out with requests for more programmes related to issues like promotion of human rights and democracy, environmental degradation, deforestation, gender discrimination, developmental programmes, especially financial assistance for the upliftment of the poor and the downtrodden.

However, two programmes of CR Radio Siddhartha related to the human rights and democracy are considered for the review. They are 1. Navu mattu Namma Hakku (We and our Rights) completed 175 episodes, 2. Namma Desha namma Samvidhana (Our Nation Our Constitution) completed 400 episodes. These two programmes are given by the Government College professor Mr. Shivarudraiah G V. Radio Siddhartha provided a digital recorder for recording the episodes during his free time. These two programmes are being broadcast by Radio Siddhartha during Monday to Friday regularly.

Further, Community radio, Radio Siddhartha broadcast programmes related to human rights and democracy by using different types of formats like talk, discussion, interview, song, etc.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

A purposive sample of 80 respondents were selected from Tumkur Taluk. They are the regular listeners and participants in the programmes of Community Radio Station.

Table No.1: Demography of Respondents

Men		Women		Urban		Rural		Educated		Uneducated	
f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
48	60	32	40	50	62.5	30	37.5	65	81.25	15	18.75

Table No.1 illustrates demographic details of the respondents. The sample consisted of 60% males and 40% females. Majority 62.5% are from towns and 37.5% from villages. The majority of them are literates (81.25%). Tumkur

district has a literacy rate of 75.14% with male literacy at 82.81% and female 67.38% showing a rapid increase in literacy among females.

Table No. 2: Programmes Most Liked

Gender	Namma Desha Namma Samvidhana		Namma Desha Namma Samvidhana	
	f	%	f	%
Men	40	83.3	37	77
Women	28	87.5	25	78.12

Table No.1 shows that 50% of male respondents and 35% of female respondents like Namma Deasha Namma Samvidhana programme. 46.25% of male respondents and

31.25 female respondents like Namma Desha Namma Samvidhana programme.

Table No.3: Benefits of the promotion of democracy and human rights programme.

Gender	Got thorough Knowledge		Created Awareness		Helped in giving information to others	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Male	40	83.3	47	97.9	36	75
Female	30	93.75	31	96.87	25	78.1

Table No.3 illustrates that among males 83.3% respondents benefited by getting thorough knowledge, for 97.9% respondents it created awareness and for 75% respondents it helped in giving information to others. Among females 93.75% respondents benefited by getting thorough knowledge, for 96.87% respondents it created awareness and for 78.1% respondents it helped in giving information to others.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Radio Siddhartha CR is well received by the local community of Tumkur taluk. They respond positively for all the programmes related to the promotion of human rights and democracy broadcasted by Radio Siddhartha. The majority of the respondents say that programmes related to the promotion of human rights and democracy are very useful. The respondents got thorough knowledge, awareness and it

also helped to give information to others. Further, this study may show an opening to many educational institutes, N.G.Os, Agricultural Universities and Krushi Vigyan Kendras to start their own Community Radio stations. This kind of research explains radio listening culture is still alive and how the Community Radio is needed for the integrated development of society. Central and State governments have to give more advertisement and sponsored programmes and thereby financial support in order to strengthen the Community Radio stations.

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