



Review Article

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# Empowering the Voiceless: A Systematic Review of Literature on Community Radio's Impact on Marginalized Communities in India

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Community radio has emerged as a powerful tool for empowering marginalized communities and facilitating access to information, participation, and development opportunities. Indian communities with varied and marginalized populations have community radio stations to meet their needs. This systematic review aims to critically analyze the existing literature on community radio's role in serving marginalized communities in India.

**Methods:** A systematic search of electronic databases, academic journals, and grey literature was conducted to identify relevant studies published between 2013 and 2023. Studies focusing on community radio initiatives targeting marginalized communities in the Indian context were included. The identified literature was analyzed using thematic synthesis to extract key findings and identify common themes.

**Results:** The review identified 51 studies from different databases that met the inclusion criteria. The findings demonstrated that community radio stations in India play a crucial role in empowering marginalized communities by providing them with a platform for expression, promoting social inclusion, and fostering community development. The literature emphasized the positive impact of community radio on improving access to information, promoting education, empowering women, facilitating grassroots participation, and preserving cultural heritage. Additionally, community radio enhanced community resilience, raised awareness of social issues, and encouraged local governance.

**Conclusion:** The systematic review shows how vital community radio is for meeting the needs of India's marginalized groups. The results show how important community radio is to give a voice to people who do not have one, work for social justice, and help communities grow—however, challenges related to sustainability, regulatory frameworks, and limited financial means. Future studies should focus on determining the long-term effects of community radio projects and finding new ways to keep them going and ensure they work in underserved areas.

## INTRODUCTION

The present research focuses on the rising importance of community radio in India as a significant weapon for uplifting marginalized communities. Community radio has arisen to address the unique demands and issues encountered by the country's varied and marginalized people. Indigenous peoples, tribal groups, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, rural populations, and women,

among others, are among the marginalized communities that often have restricted access to education, healthcare, basic amenities, and representation in decision-making processes.

The 1990s in India were a time of substantial liberalization and democratic developments, and this is when community radio first emerged. Initially, transmission on community radio was limited to

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educational institutions, agricultural extension institutes, and civil society groups. However, in 2006, the Indian government launched the Community Radio Policy, which eased the door for more marginalized communities to start community radio stations.

Since implementing the Community Radio Policy, community radio has grown in popularity throughout India, with new stations springing up to meet marginalized communities' specific needs and interests. Members of the local communities often manage and control these community radio stations, ensuring that the information generated represents their perspectives and concerns. Community radio has bridged the information gap and provided localized content in regional languages to marginalized communities previously ignored by mainstream media.

Given the potential influence of community radio on marginalized communities, academics, politicians, and development practitioners have expressed a strong desire to learn more about its efficacy. Over the years, many studies have been done to discover what role community radio plays in bringing people together, helping communities grow, and giving people in underserved areas access to information and educational resources.

Furthermore, community radio projects have been acknowledged for their significant contributions to women's empowerment. Community Radio has allowed women to address gender-related problems and challenge established preconceptions, promoting gender equality and women's leadership by giving a platform for their voices and perspectives.

Community radio has done much more for marginalized groups than just giving them a voice and helping them be heard. It has also done much to preserve and share its rich cultural history. Community radio stations have done a lot to keep cultural diversity and identity alive by broadcasting shows in local languages and spreading traditional knowledge and customs. Community radio projects have clear benefits but need help to ensure long-term success. Community radio stations have needed help running well and growing because of their lack of money, reliance on outside funding, and the laws governing them.

Given that community radio programs are becoming more critical. Community radio's role in India's underserved areas may be problematic. However, this systematic literature review evaluates and summarizes existing studies. By looking at earlier research, the review gives a complete picture of how community radio affects marginalized communities, how it could be used to empower people, and what needs to be done to ensure it keeps working in those areas. Furthermore, this study wants to give policymakers, practitioners, and academics helpful information about how to make India's marginalized groups fairer and help them grow.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted the Prisma method to review the literature thoroughly. A systematic literature review (McLean & Antony, 2014) involves selecting (1) criteria for inclusion and (2) Finding the sources and papers. A comprehensive literature search was performed to identify relevant studies focusing on community radio initiatives targeted at marginalized communities in India. The search was conducted across electronic databases, academic journals, and grey literature sources. The search included the following databases: Scopus, PubMed, Google Scholar, and other relevant academic repositories. The search was conducted for studies published between 2013 and 2023, ensuring the inclusion of recent developments in community radio initiatives.

### The Inclusion Criteria

The study identified research publications at various phases using the Campbell Collaboration Users Group (2019). Five media and academic experts participated. The inclusion criteria approach of Kim *et al.* (2018) was applied. The journal name, research article title, subject area, and review time range were examined for community radio journals. It usually separates inclusion considerations into three sections, such as:

1. The search criteria included all study articles about the role of Community Radio that came out between 2013 and 2023.
2. Only existing literature on "Targeted marginalized communities such as indigenous peoples, tribal groups, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, rural populations, and women" was considered. The selection of the regions was based on the perceived relevance of the subject matter and the extent of coverage provided in the study article.

### Data Extraction

The data extraction process involved collecting relevant information from the selected studies. Data extracted included details about the study (e.g., author, year of publication, study design), the community radio initiative (e.g., location, target audience, objectives), key findings, and the impact of community radio on marginalized communities.

### Limitations

The systematic review also acknowledges its limitations, such as the potential for bias in selecting studies and the reliance on published literature, which may only represent some community radio initiatives in India. The review also considers the limitations identified in the included studies, such as small sample sizes, limited geographical representation, and potential publication bias. The systematic review adopts a rigorous and comprehensive approach to examining the existing literature, providing valuable insights into community radio's impact on marginalized communities in India.



**Research Database and Article Selection**

Elsevier Scopus and Web of Science were used to find high-quality research publications. These two sources are reliable for finding high-quality research publications. Following the database selection, an advanced search was conducted using different keywords. For all searches, the words ‘Community Radio’ remained constant. Other term combinations were ‘Community Radio in India,’ ‘Community Radio and Marginalised Communities,’ ‘Asian community media,’ ‘Community Development,’ ‘Radio for Development,’ and ‘Social Inclusion and Radio.’ The selected research publications were then searched for further papers using their citations.

The articles gathered during the preceding stage were double-screened using the Prisma method, as shown in Fig.1. The preceding stages resulted in the collection of 184 articles from the research. The preliminary assessment of the research papers resulted in removing 17 duplicate studies. The two subject specialists then read the remaining 167 documents. The experts evaluated the papers based on their titles and abstracts—ninety-five research publications based on expert views were deleted during this process. The exclusion criteria were the article title (n 5 58), the abstract (n 5 28), and duplicate articles (n 5 9). The remaining 72 publications were assessed by two subject specialists and one research scholar in the following stage. The detailed assessment excluded 21 research publications based on the topic area’s relevance and inclusion criteria. As a result, 51 research publications

were appropriate for additional analysis and critical assessment.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

According to the research, Indian community radio stations strengthen vulnerable populations in many ways:

**Expression Platform:**

Community radio gives marginalized groups a voice, allowing them to express their experiences, challenges, and goals with a larger audience. It contributes to breaking the quiet and promoting conversation on critical social problems.

**Social Inclusion:**

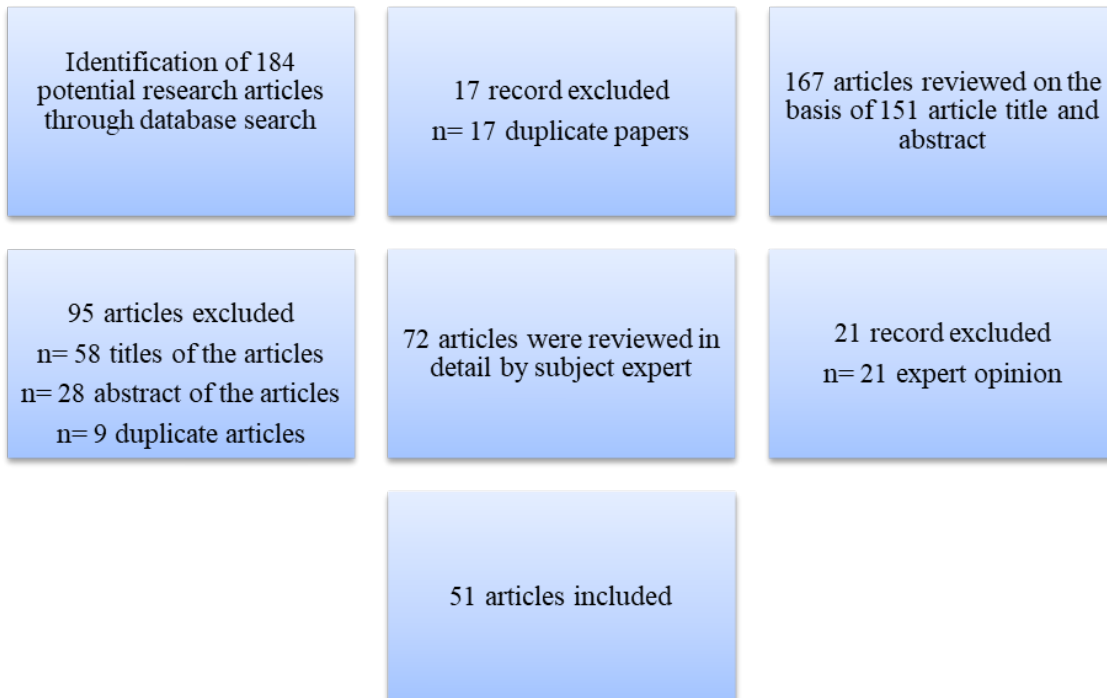
By providing a forum for marginalized communities, community radio contributes to their social inclusion. It encourages tolerance and acceptance by bridging the gap between distinct social groups.

**Community Development:**

Community radio projects promote community-led development. They inspire collaborative action to solve community challenges by facilitating talks on local development needs.

**Information Access:**

Community radio is an important information source for marginalized communities, particularly those living in distant and underdeveloped locations. It provides vital



**Figure 1:** Research Papers Selection Criteria Based on “Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (Prisma) Approach”

**Table 1:** Review of Literature WW

Sl. No.	Author	Year	Objective	Research Technique	Findings and Suggestions
1	Dahal	2013	To examine how community radio grows local communities.	Exploratory	The findings suggest that Community Radio, being a pro-people media, serves the interests and needs of local communities, playing a vital role in social reform and development.
2	Tucker	2013	To evaluate community radio conceptualization both within and outside of the development framework.	Survey Study Research	The research explores how it can serve as a solution to development issues, such as depoliticization of Radio Administration and encouraged involvement of marginalized groups.
3	Saini	2013	To investigate Community Radio's Historical Perspective.	Documentary Research	This study examines the state of community radio in India and its effects on the country.
4	Mary and Nagar	2013	To explore the Historic Perspective of Community Radio	Participant-Observation Approach	The research findings establish that Community Radio's prominence as an auditory medium, distinct from other forms of media, lies in its widespread accessibility.
5	Dutta	2014	To investigate the problems, concerns, and difficulties faced by community radio in India.	Quantitative Research	The study highlights the value of community radio in Indian society, especially in fostering a sense of belonging among excluded populations.
6	Sharma and. Kashyap	2014	To evaluate the socioeconomic makeup of rural women in Uttarakhand.	Survey Study Research	The study emphasizes the value of community radio in giving a voice to the voiceless and tackling rural women's issues at their roots.
7	Balan and Norman	2014	To investigate the possibility of community radio as a tool for rural women's future development.	Qualitative and Quantitative Research	As per findings, community radio has become the most approachable medium for mass communication for those at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale.
8	Bosch	2014	To explore the role of development communication in social transformation	Exploratory Research	The chapter concludes by emphasizing the utilization of Community Radio stations for social progress and cultural improvements despite financial viability challenges.
9	Gordon	2014	To examine how community radio has become more significant in the media world.	Descriptive Research	The study explores how media in different countries challenge government inequalities, support the transition to liberal democracy, and amplify unheard opinions.
10	Kaushal	2015	To analyze the relationship between Community Radio Activism and Change	Descriptive Research	The study advises the collaboration between persistent activism, NGOs, agricultural research centers, and recognized organizations to foster the growth of marginalized sections of society.
11	Bhatt & Kashyap	2015	To investigate Community Radio efforts in rural development.	Exploratory Research	Based on the findings, community radio is a powerful tool for addressing the welfare needs of communities and enormously empowering women because it is accessible and affordable.
12	Taraifdar	2015	To delve into community radio's function in India.	Exploratory Research	The study concludes that Radio, owing to its distinctive characteristics, stands out as one of the most captivating means of mass communication for the growth and development of marginalized communities.



13	Nirmala	2015	To examine the impact of community radio on women's empowerment in India.	Descriptive Research (Framing)	The study explored that CR plays a pivotal role in fostering self-empowerment and sparking human imagination, positively impacting the lives of local communities.
14	Sharma & Patel	2015	To examine Community Radio's potential as a novel medium for enhancing rural capacity building.	Survey Study Research	Community radio stations such as Radio UJJAS in Gujarat, Radio Mewat in Haryana, Radio Mattoli in Kerala, and Jnan Tarang in Guwahati have demonstrated the ability to inspire rural populations and showcase the capacity of community radio to facilitate rural development.
15	Sharma	2016	To examine community radio's impact in rural regions, specifically focusing on its role in non-governmental organizations (NGOs).	Qualitative and Quantitative Research	The study found Community Radio as a station serving a local community, whether within India or abroad, emphasizing its expansion in rural India's remotes.
16	Sharma & S.K. Kashyap	2016	The aim is to establish a community-based empowerment radio platform for women.	Focus Group Study	The study developed participatory group radio services on these subjects and evaluated their effectiveness through awareness testing.
17	Sharma	2016	To explore Community Radio for Women Empowerment in Gujrat	Case Study Research	The study discusses community media as a unique news delivery network compared to private and public broadcasting
18	Bhatia	2016	To examine the Democratizing of the rural development in India in the Region of Mewat, Haryana,	Survey Study Research	The study illuminated the global embrace of community radio, characterized by its participatory and democratic essence, leading to transformative shifts at the grassroots level.
19	Kamble	2016	The study intended to investigate Mandeshi Tarang's role in empowering women.	Quantitative and Qualitative Research	observed that a significant portion of the community actively engaged with Mandeshi Tarang's programming, with family members and older women finding a platform for self-expression through singing Bhajans on this Community Radio Station
20	Yadav	2017	To Examine Community health through peer learning and Community Radio	Quantitative and Qualitative Research	The study highlighted the need for appropriate training and capacity development resources for CHWs, considering their diverse expertise and skills. It also facilitated a vibrant peer study community, resulting in about 16 percent awareness improvements and enhanced trust in the community due to Radio.
21	Awaaz et al.	2017	To evaluate how community radio programming affects localities and to pinpoint development opportunities.	Content Analysis	The study's emphasis on local matters stems from the substantial reliance on field reporting and establishing connections with the local population. It also offers training in soft skills and technical education to unemployed individuals through Community Radio.
22	King	2017	To examine the Community Radio broadcasting practices comprehensively	Documentary Research	The study emphasizes the long and varied history that has affected the evolution of community radio and investigates four distinct chronological periods, each depicting community media through a different lens.

23	Krishna et al.	2017	To describe and amplify the voices of marginalized groups and communities often overlooked by mainstream media.	Descriptive Research	The study described Community Radio as a supportive medium that promotes expression, participation, and values local culture.
24	AMS	2017	To examine the audience, reach, and effectiveness of Indian community radio stations.	Survey Study Research	The study revealed that Community Radio Stations (CRSS) are pivotal in various countries' media landscapes and are more heavily consumed than any other medium in the rural Indian diaspora.
25	Khan et al.	2017	To investigate Community Radio's Role in Community Development.	Exploratory Research	The findings revealed that rural, underserved, vulnerable, and difficult-to-reach communities can utilize community radio platforms to openly express and disseminate their perspectives, concerns, and opportunities to the broader society.
26	Dhaka	2017	To investigate Community Radio's Role in Disaster Risk Reduction.		The study established that precise information and dissemination are integral to effective disaster management. Community Radio Broadcasting and broadcasting information about available resources, aid provisions, and alerts aid communities in better preparing themselves.
27	Dutta and Dutta	2017	To analyze the perspectives and elucidations of Community Radio Stations	Qualitative Research	According to the findings, the primary issues of the country's Community Radio sector are policy, programming, governance, and technology.
28	Valecha	2018	To examine the techniques of engagement of Community Radio with different sections of society	Critical Review	The study highlights a prevalent trend among radio stations, where many resources are dedicated to maintenance expenses.
29	Srivastava	2018	To Analyse the Socio-economic Transformation of Underprivileged Communities Using Community Radio in the Style of the Ancient Oral Teaching Tradition 'Aprajita.'	Qualitative and Quantitative Research	The study emphasizes that due to their lack of literacy, the ancient practice of oral transmission is the sole means to impart vital skills for livelihood generation and social upliftment among marginalized communities. Community Radio is vital in educating them on enhancing agricultural techniques, improving livestock breeding, refining business acumen for effective product selling, boosting health and hygiene, and acquainting them with beneficial government programs.
30	Pinto	2018	To investigate the role of community radio in democratic participation in four Indian states: Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu in southern India.	Empirical Analysis	This study sheds light on how the Indian community radio movement, despite its recent emergence, shows promising potential as a viable platform for marginalized citizens to voice their concerns to the government. Community radio has become a democratic channel for various underserved groups, including rural women, fisherfolk, and transgender communities.
31	Anon	2018	To illuminate the comparative analysis of Community Radio with other forms of Mass Communication	Documentary Research	The study concludes that Community Radio was authoritative during the initial three decades of broadcasting, serving as a dominant player.



32	Venkaiah	2018	To investigate the effectiveness of Community Radio Awareness Programmes of CEMCA	Longitudinal Study	The study examined how the National Council for Science and Technology Communication's Community Radio Stations drove the "Science for Women's Health and Nutrition" (SFWHN) project for the Indian Department of Science and Technology.
33	Biswal	2019	To explore the nuances of production, distribution, and consumption of Alternative Media	Qualitative and Quantitative Research	The study found that community radio has raised awareness and knowledge of local development options, including local governance, education, hygiene, and rural development. Opening markets to Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) operators has aided in developing small and medium enterprises, which has enhanced sales and earnings. In order to determine listeners' preferences and the tastes of different listener groups, it is advised that regular input from the listening audience be crucial.
34	Arora	2019	This study investigates Voice of Azamgarh, a community radio station, to assess Community Radio's commitment to women's empowerment.	Survey Study Research	The study suggests that Community Radio Stations help socioeconomically disadvantaged women to vent their problems and raise the government's attention to important topics.
35	Murada & Sreedher	2019	To evaluate the scope and effectiveness of the initiatives and methodologies outlined by the Community Radio Station Study of Alfaaz-e-Mewat	Exploratory Research	This study examined Community Radio Stations' challenges in generating participatory content and proposed strategies for effectively addressing these problems. Furthermore, it effectively fills the existing knowledge gap within the CR industry, rendering it an essential resource for students and enthusiasts within the community media field.
36	Anon	2019	To delve into the landscape of Community Radio in India	Meta-Analysis	The study concludes that research by scholars such as Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, Lucian Pye, and de Sola Pool has notably explored the impact of mass media on a country's development, which emphasizes that crucial aspect of Community Radio's success lies in participatory programming.
37	Arya and Kashyap	2019	To investigate the factors influencing the operation of community radio stations.	Qualitative Research	The study found that community radio stations can support rural development in developing countries as an ICT tool and that organizational factors, community dynamics, and community development roles affect long-term performance.
38	Verma et al.	2020	To evaluate the impact of Radio 7 in fostering women's empowerment within the context of Jaipur.	Qualitative and Quantitative Research	Community Radio plays a significant role in fostering women's empowerment, enabling them to engage more equitably in societal affairs and liberate themselves from economic exploitation and oppression. Radio 7, which provides informational and educational entertainment, has given women a platform to discuss health, education, and economics.

39	Smart	2020	To evaluate the community radio station's impact on Panchayats.	Exploratory Research	This research examines the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, a significant milestone in the history of India that implemented a three-tiered Panchayati Raj system aimed at facilitating local governance. The employment of a participatory method in Community Radio involvement facilitates enhanced administration.
40	Pathak	2020	To discuss the challenges and opportunities in Community Radio	Empirical Research	The study tries to define community radio's potential and challenges as successful alternative media in India. The key feature of community broadcasting is its participation.
41	Johnson and Rajdurai	2020	To evaluate the influence of community radio programs on rural development.	Qualitative and Quantitative Research	This study highlights how the community-centric approach can bridge socio-economic and rural-urban disparities and how community radio programs positively impact farmers' productivity and agricultural yields. In the vicinity of Kottam Patti, students exhibit an increased engagement with newspapers due to the educational initiatives of the Community Radio Station.
42	Singh and Jaryal	2020	To examine Community Radio Stations' role in Delhi and NCR in spreading information and encouraging proactive COVID-19 prevention.	Exploratory Research	Community Radio stations' impact on the COVID-19 pandemic was examined in this study. During the COVID-19 epidemic, Alfaaz-e-Mewat, CRS emerged as a robust platform that effectively served the needs of the locals in the Mewat region. The station initiated a promotional initiative wherein 21 notifications were sent over 21 days to promote vigilance among individuals. The channel airs three hours of daily programming dedicated to COVID-19, with shows such as 'Gaon Ki Chaupal' and 'Aaj ka Hero,' which effectively highlight the importance of vaccination.
43	Verma	2020	This study examines the operational, policy-related, and financial sustainability issues and prospects faced by the Campus Radio Station.	Case Study Analysis	The case study's findings indicate that achieving an organization's goals is contingent upon satisfying such goals. Furthermore, additional efforts are required to acquire a license, build, and commence operations of a radio station committed to serving the community.
44	Pavarala et al.	2020	To evaluate the current state of Community Radio across various locations in South Asia.	Quantitative and Qualitative Research	This study critically examined and conceptualized South Asian community radio's issues in empowering women. It highlighted the persistent discouragement faced by women in contributing and participating in this domain, primarily due to the male-dominated social structure. This argument posits that communication radio in South Asia and globally is valuable for advancing women's empowerment. It offers women a simple and accessible platform to express their perspectives to society.
45	Knowledge Societies	2021	To figure out how Community Radio affects the growth of rural areas.	Descriptive Research	Findings say that the absence of timely and credible information and communication excludes rural residents. Simultaneously, rural extension services are encountering diminishing government support.





46	Suresh	2021	To assess Community Radio's potential in India.	Descriptive Research	The study concludes that an adequate Information, Education, and Communication policy (IEC) is essential for governments to accomplish their macro-level goals. Despite their limited reach and resources, community radio stations (CRS) can significantly impact this situation.
47	Laskar & Bhattacharyya	2021	To talk about how community radio stations have changed their programming in response to the COVID-19 outbreak in India.	Content Analysis	The study found that these CR stations used two-way contact methods that worked well and focused more on COVID-19, fake news, and mental health in their programming. Notably, the CR stations gave the community personalized and fact-checked information, which helped spread correct information at a time when false information was spreading quickly.
48	Karam	2022	To investigate how COVID-19 has affected community radio listeners and to evaluate the specialized programming offered during this time.	Quantitative and Qualitative Research	To increase our chances of survival during the COVID-19 epidemic, the study emphasizes the critical role that community radio played. CRs used to devote the first five minutes of every program to COVID-19. They regularly broadcast brief bulletins about COVID-19's symptoms, prevention, and other general information.
49.	Kaushik and Bhuyan	2022	To find out how the Brahmaputra Community Radio Station (BCRS) is accessed and used by the Hajong tribe in the Dhemaji area of Assam.	A case study method	It shows people who listen to Hajong community radio programming and how BCRS brings people together by building things like the Bogibeel Bridge and making mobile connections.
50	Belladi et. Al.	2019	The study analyses Community Radio in India and its relationship to social media marketing, aiming to promote social ideas and change attitudes and behaviors.	A case study method	Social marketing can help transform behaviour and society. Health, organic farming, water harvesting, HIV/AIDS, drip irrigation, products for sale, crop pricing, social messages, birthday greetings, and more are covered in Namma Dhwan's radio shows.
51.	Malik	2015	This paper examines some of the values community radio in India must uphold to strengthen civil society, journalism, and democracy.	Descriptive research for CR codes	The "Codes of Practise for Community Radio in India" are based on shared values that media activists, scholars, grassroots organizations, broadcasters, and policymakers believe are necessary for the CR sector to persist globally. Other stations can modify them as a reference.

information on health, education, government programs, and agricultural methods.

### Women empowerment

Community radio empowers women by allowing them to engage, voice their thoughts, and address gender-related concerns. It challenges established gender stereotypes and encourages women to lead.

### Grassroots involvement

Community radio empowers communities to make decisions and fight for their rights.

### Cultural Legacy Preservation

Community radio stations help marginalized communities preserve their culture. They provide a venue for celebrating local customs, languages, and art forms.

### Awareness of Social concerns

Community radio raises awareness of social concerns such as health, the environment, and human rights, promoting social change and advocacy.

### Local Governance

Community radio improves communication between residents and local governing bodies, increasing openness and accountability.

## CONCLUSION

The systematic review shows how vital community radio is to meeting the needs of India's underserved groups. It shows how community radio helps communities grow, promotes social equality, and gives voice to the voiceless. However, problems like sustainability, legal systems, and a lack of money have been pointed out.

Future studies should focus on determining the long-term effects of community radio projects and finding new ways to keep them going and ensure they work in underserved areas. Policymakers should think about the sound effects of community radio and make it easier for it to grow and develop in underserved areas.

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