# Community Radio: A Psychological Review in Indian Perspective

## Sadhana Srivastava[1], Ranjana Tiwari[2*]

[1]Department of Journalism & Mass Communication, U.P. Rajarshi Tandon Open University, Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India.
[2]Department of Psychology, C.M.P. Degree College (A constituent P.G, College University of Allahabad), Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, India

ABSTRACT

History itself proves the force behind all revolutionary change in society is communication. There are many modes of effective communication like newspapers, television or radio. Community Radio is also one of them. However, community radio (CR) is not as much in the limelight as other modes of media. In India, community radio plays a pivotal role in different time phases and still contributes to emotional and behavioral changes in our society. These multi-directional changes foster positive change in our lifestyles, thought processes, beliefs and social behavior. The present paper aims to analyze the psychological impact of community radio on indigenous behaviour and lifestyle of Indians.

## INTRODUCTION

In India, radio works in three different modes; the first is government radio, which is used for providing information, education, and entertainment to the general public. The main objective of the second mode is FM radio, which works only for entertainment; the third is community radio, which works according to the needs of the specific community.

Our country is full of cultural and lingual diversity and community radio fulfils the demands of our diversified society. In the present paper, we will try to understand the development of Indian community radio in reference to its current social and psychological impact on our society. Community radio forms programs for the community people, by the community people, and of the community people. Equal participation of community people leads to a great social and psychological change in the mindset of community people. CR leads to strong mental health and behavioral change in community people because it broadcasts programs that are closely related to community members with more clarity and vision. These behavioral changes are gradual and it start with our hygiene, lifestyle, rituals or daily activities. CR tries to attract people on the basis of their current crisis, needs, and effective solutions; community people adapt such solutions with the passage of time. It's easy for CR to understand the local public's psychological, social, and health issues at the community level. CR has two crucial features: first, it understands community people at a deeper level, and second, it receives feedback from community people very quickly. This process maintains curiosity and zeal among community people that if they do not understand episodes, they have a chance to communicate and participate CR directly and have the opportunity to do conversations with experts of the program.

### Radio in India

Since the very beginning, radio broadcasting has been strongly connected with the psychological needs of the public, the period of 1923 is important in the field of radio broadcasting in India. In the same year, the Radio Club of Bengal was temporarily given permission to broadcast radio. Broadcasting programs with small transmitters' help was started in November 1923 in

Calcutta. It was called the Radio Club. The present form of radio broadcasting in India was licensed in 1926 and broadcasted in 1927 (Sharma, 2007). A major change came into existence with FM Radio. It was a revolutionary change in the entertainment world.

Bigger broadcasting will lead to endless challenges to entertaining and fulfilling the audience's demands. Audience demands and psychological requirements are diverse, giving birth to community radio. The purpose of community radio is to understand the needs of the community audience, their psychological perspective and their development, and also link them to a mainstream stream of the country. In the journey of the historical development of radio with a statement of justice Sawant in 1995 There is a need to understand developing India in a more novice way. There was a frantic need to understand Indian people at the community level.

## Footsteps of Community Radio in Indian Society

Mainstream media were unable to serve the emotional, social, and psychological needs of community people more effectively. As the existence of community radio came into the air, a new beam of expectation arose among the public. In 1995, Supreme Court Justice Sawant had given a historical judgment over radio broadcasting that 'everyone has right over airwaves and it can be used as public property (Shreemali, 2013). This Supreme Court decision had given a new direction to public expression and provided radical social change. In 2002, the Government of India passed policy guidelines for opening community radio. After this, the government started giving licenses to run community radio stations only to educational institutions like ITI, IIM, including all the schools, universities etc.

The country's first campus radio was opened in 2004 at Anna University, Chennai. It is India's first community radio. The Education and Multimedia Research Center operates it and all programs are produced by the media science students of Anna University. The transformational year in establishing a community radio station was 2006 when the government permitted a non-profit NGO to open CR. In the history of the community radio uprising, the years 2002 and 2006 are very important. On these two years, the government launched instructions, licenses, and permission for CR establishment. Only educational institutions, NGOs, and agricultural institutions are allowed for CR (Society for Media and Social Development 2008).

In a significant move, the government has issued a ruling that prohibits the opening of Company Registrations (CR) for personal benefits, monetary gain, and political advantages. The government has given clear instructions that CR is for the satisfaction of community needs.

## Basic Traits of Community Radio

It's has a few basic working traits like reporters of community radio visit from person to person at the community level and try to understand the requirements and problems of the local public. This is the duty of community radio to gratify the psychological needs of community people not only in India, foreign countries; community radio studies are also showing similar findings. Medows and Foxwell (2011) used the focus group and interview transcripts method for two years to generate evidence to prove the positive impact of community radio on the emotional and social well-being of Australian and Indian people. Community radio has changed the perception of people's health perspective of Bali village of Indonesia.

In India Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Shri Anurag Thakur, conferred in the inaugural session of the two-day regional community Radio Sammelan (North) and awarded first prize in the thematic category " Hope jeene ki rah" Radio Mind tree Ambala Hariyana" this initiative itself showing the prominent role of community radio as psychological support to community people for their survival.

Community radio follows a democratic system. It provides a platform for community people to have conversations and express their thoughts and emotions. Community journalists care for the rights of the local public and provide them with equal opportunities for information exchange. This process provides social justice and psychological satisfaction to the local public. To promote creativity CR goes close to the local public, does their psychological analysis, and tries to understand their feelings. Giving the opportunity of equal participation is the strongest assumption of CR. It emphasizes the participation of each community member, especially those who are the main audience of CR programs. This process develops a psychological bond and satisfaction between CR and the community public. CR promotes creativity and cooperativeness (Dutta & Mishra, 2015).

## Psychological Determinants of Community Radio

The psychological impact of community radio is very strong on people who are in interior areas, living in different regions or societies or have intricacy in connecting themselves with mainstream media. CR produces all its programs in the local language, focusing light on local problems and their solutions. All these factors promote a personal bond between the local public and community radio. CR also provides emotional healing and guidance. Traditional radio is not as psychologically successful as community radio because traditional radio represents a large area of the country so it's a challenge to fulfill such pinpointed emotional demands of the local community. Traditional radio provides less opportunity forth local community to participate.

CR effectively develops psychological well-being and healthy and strong relationships among community members. Currently, 323 records in the community radio compendium 2023 "tools for community empowerment" generated by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the government of India is showing a significant positive

role of community radio on "good health and well-being"(sustainable development goals especially SDG3). Communication skills and active listening are the most effective psychological tools for maintaining good interpersonal relationships. CR programs give a variety of exposure to local participants while public speaking how to provide correct answers without hurting others' emotions, understanding feelings and sufferings of others, what are public expectations from the program while designing the public programs keeping psychological views of the audience, etc. These factors are the backbone of community radio, which psychologically connects it with community people and develops strong psychological bonds within community people.

## CR has sense of belongingness to local culture

CR provides a media platform to the local public and develops emotional bonds; hence is an option for such demands. With the participation of community members, CR promotes local culture and tradition and popularizes local languages among the local public. When community people perceive their traditions, values, languages, and cultures more fascinatingly on the media platform, they receive psychological satisfaction and feel a strong bond with CR.

## Using local language for mental and emotional connection

Informal languages are used on FM radio in which both Hindi and English are used or a new type of language called Hinglish is used. Local language and accents are only used in community radio; modern language is completely prohibited in community radio.

Only folk songs, music, and local languages are allowed in CR. CR expresses the emotions and psyche of the local public. Local public participation is an essential part of CR. CR develops programs at the local level, which are created and presented by the local public. Such activities strengthen self-esteem and self-confidence in the local public. When we hear our own voice and song it gives a psychological boost. As a consequence, people become more motivated and participate more in CR programs. Directly or indirectly, CR produces positive behavioral change among community members. On the other hand, traditional Vividh Bharti programs do entertain the public but lack local connectivity. All the above-mentioned discussions, especially Compendium 2023 on the tool of community empowerment, have proven that community radio is making bridge between the local public and radio. This psychological bond or local emotional connectivity is impossible with other radios.

## Fostering problem solving mindset at the local level

Since the very beginning, CR has focused on local community problems and provided approachable solutions to them. This steady and gradual work helped CR win the local public's trust. People know that CR will take care of their problems well, so they listen carefully and with their full faith. CR has a deep impact on the behavior and attitude of community people. CR broadcasts several good wishes and promotes local festivals and rituals. CR protects as well as emphasizes the role and values of such traditions at the community level. CR fills the psychological gap between two generations at the local level. Community people feel interconnected with others, which reduce mental health issues also. CR facilitates social revolutions by resolving social issues, reducing blind faith, and maladaptive social practices, and connecting people with the mainstream. Other traditional radios failed to play such a role because they don't go to a deeper level of community practices. Community people can do better discussions (pros and cons) over community practices and come out with better and more applicable solutions. Community people and CR have active reciprocal interactions, and both reduce social malpractices effectively with joint hands (Panwar, 2021) .

## Motivating and enhancing self-confidence of isolated people

Active involvement with CR inculcates their self-confidence and develops other aspects of the personality of community people. In many live CR programs, curious youth of small villages get public speaking, anchoring, and program designing opportunities and face a variety of questions from the unknown public. Such active participation develops self-potential, communication skills, and psychological understanding of others' views among youth. These experiences help them boldly face interviews in metropolitan cities. Active participation in CR activities helps youth practice the balanced expression of emotions, ups and downs of pitch, selection of appropriate words, and development of social and emotional intelligence(UNICEF, 2011).

## Spreading social awareness

DivyavaniNeeladhani Community Radio is run by Divyajyoti Vidya Kendra, which is a social organization. This organization is committed to social welfare and social upliftment of living standards. It started on 23-09-2009. Divyavani Community Radio is supported by the state and central government. The Agriculture Department of Karnataka promotes many campaigns such as improved agriculture, food, saving water, animal husbandry, value-addition, organic manure, beekeeping etc., through community radio among the community. Divyavani broadcasts programs related to agriculture, education, culture, health, youth and women (Compendium, 2012).

## Developing health awareness and healthy mindset among women

The CMS Community Radio, Lucknow program is a sturdy example, showing psychology's pivotal role in the development of a local community health program named

SANJIVANI. The SANJIVANI program was designed to study the health issues of village women in areas near the Lucknow district of Uttar Pradesh, India. In the first step, the team went to area-specific villages and gathered information on issues related to women's health. In the first phase, women were not very forthcoming. In the Second step to develop psychological bonds they were asked to listen to the mind's eye stories based on morals to come out from guilt, shame, not expressing their problems openly and emotional suffering, etc. A variety of health issues were covered in ten episodes of SANJIVANI with the help of mind's eye stories. The local public started responding within a few episodes and village women benefited from the SANJIVANI program (Ghosh 2013). Another program, JAMANA BADAL GAYA was developed in magazine format to develop awareness against social maladaptive practices (Ghosh, 2014). Varieties of social issues were emphasized with emotional and psychological touch during the ten episodes of this program. This program also received popularity among the local public. Nirmala (2012) also found in her research that community media has created effective awareness among women. Deccan Radio is Hyderabad's premier community radio broadcasting on 107.8 MHz. Abid Ali Education Trust runs Deccan Community Radio. Its broadcast started on 23-12-2009. It receives financial support from REACH, a non-profit organization based in Chennai. Reach is working against serious and infectious diseases like T.B. The Deccan has 8 hours of broadcast daily through a 50-watt transmitter. Deccan Radio broadcasts programs related to education, career, talks, society, health and children (Compendium, 2012).The main challenge is that the signal is not reaching the target audience due to the buildings and the building being located in the city.

### Psychological role of C.R. During Pandemic

It will be difficult to communicate with heterogeneous communities simultaneously in emergencies or during natural calamities. In such situations, CR plays a vital role to manage such disasters and prepare people for prevention at the rural level (Sen, 2020). Despite the financial constraints of developing countries, CR encouraged the dissemination of COVID information and reliable health information to community audiences. Effective role CR was also observed in other countries like Bangladesh NGOs Network radio broadcasted various COVID awareness programs on social distancing, hand washing, mask-wearing, domestic violence, and identification of fake news (BNNRC 2020a, 2020b, 2021 ).In all waves of covid people across the world suffered from fake news.

During the epidemic, the general public also suffered a lot from the infodemic. An infodemic is a situation when people suffer from an existential crisis due to the outflow of false information. There was an unprecedented rise in the creation and circulation of false and fake news in various places in India and as well as other areas of the world. CR played a pivotal role in managing Covid-19 during the lockdown (Laskar & Bhattacharyya, 2021). CR became more effective in diffusing fake news, promoting mental health programs with two-way communications, and using folk songs and dialects(James & Darby, 2011; Dutta & Ray, 2012).

Panwar (2021) had observed that fake news influences illiterate people and unfortunately, they did not have access to cross-check such information. The psychological impact of CR is well accepted at the worldwide level. Meadows and Foxwell (2011) conducted a two-year study and reported that Australian CR and Indigenous televisions empowered community audiences' emotional and social well-being via broadcasting mental health campaigns.

### Challenges of Indian Community Radio

There is a need for a particular mindset and strong movement in India that can drive rapid momentum for community radio broadcasting. Even after many efforts and meaningful initiatives, community radio in different regions has different problems. People from various sectors are directly connected with CR, and they face various issues while dealing with CR stations (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2021).In addition to the representatives of the community radio working team, many research scholars, NGOs, social workers, non-government organizations related to education, social workers, and people associated with the policy-making movements are connected with community radio (Alam & Singh, 2022).

Other challenges cannot be ignored in the case of community radio functioning like coverage area, the quality of transmission, the funding position for running the CR, the frequency allocation, the content of different programs broadcast and many more problems that have yet to be solved. These issues need to be resolved seriously to improve the effectiveness of CR. Issues related to funding, participants and workers, and convincing the public are gross-level behavioral barriers. CR workers don't have much exposure to technical training. The most challenging job is to motivate a stereotyped mindset of the local public. Lack of technical training and knowledge degrades broadcast quality programs. Developing new and original creative content for society is a very time-consuming process. Active involvement and dragging the attention of local community participation without providing them instant monetary gain is challenging work for CR workers. Although these challenges are slowing down the growth of behavioral changes in local communities in India, it cannot be denied that CR has given a psychological boost and support to community people.

### REFERENCES

1. Alam, K., & Singh, S. (2022). Community Radio's Contribution to Community Development in India. Journal of advances and scholarly Research in Allied Education. 19(3) 95-101. www.ignited.in.

2. BNNRC. (2020a). COVID-19: Coronavirus prevention education through community radio. BNNRC. https://bnnrc.net/coronavirusprevention-education-through-communityradio/

3. BNNRC. (2020b, March 18). COVID-19: Community radio broadcasting corona virus prevention education in Bangladesh. BNNRC. https://bnnrc.net/covid-19-community-radiobroadcasting-coronavirus-prevention-educationin-bangladesh/

4. BNNRC. (2021, January 25). COVID-19: Education through community radio in Bangladesh. BNNRC. https://bnnrc.net/campaign-preventing-covid-19/

5. Compendium (2012). Deccan radio@107.8MHz. In Ministry of Information and broadcasting of India. (pp.3-4). New Delhi: Commonam wealth Educational Media Center for Asia.

6. Compendium (2012). Divya Vani Neladhani @90.8Hz. In Ministry of Information and broadcasting of India (pp.54-56). New Delhi: Commonam wealth Educational Media Center for Asia.

7. Compendium (2023). Tool of Community Empowerment. In Ministry of Information and broadcasting Government of India. New Delhi: Commonam wealth Educational Media Center for Asia.

8. Dutta, A., & Mishra, S. (2015). Innovative practices in Indian CRS. In A, Dutta., & S, Mishra(Ed.), *Innovation in Communtiy Radio with special reference to India* (pp.2, 7). New Delhi: Commonam Wealth Educational Media Center for Asia.

9. Dutta, A., Ray, A. (2012). Effectiveness Of Community Media In Creating Health Awareness: A Case Study On A Health Communication Campaign Of Tuberculosis Through Community Radio In India. Conference: PCST. DOI:10.13140/2.1.3335.1688

10. Ghosh S. (2013). SANJIVANI Progamm broadcast on CMS Community Radio . Script writer Srivastava S. https://www.facebook.com/100001833118800/posts/24679192328391862/?app=fbl

11. Ghosh, S. (2014). JAMANA BADAL GAYA Progamm broadcast on CMS Community Radio . Script writer Srivastava S. https://www.facebook.com/100001833118800/posts/24679192328391862/?app=fbl

12. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1941889

13. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/search/2516b0e7-7769-4a13-99b3-9511600833c5

14. James, R., & Darby, J. (2011). Health promoting community radio in rural Bali: An impact evaluation. Rural and remote health, 11: 1555. http://www.rrh.org.au

15. Laskar, K.A., & Bhattacharyya, B. (2021). Community radio stations' production responses to COVID-19 Pandemic in India. Media Asia 48(4)243-257.

16. Meadows, M., & Foxwell, K. (2011). Community broadcasting and mental health: The role of local radio and television in enhancing emotional and social well-being. The Radio Journal International Studies in Broadcast and Audio Media. 9 (2)89-106.

17. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (2021, Aug 06).Union Health Ministry organizes an Interactive Workshop with Community Radio Stations and Private Radio Stations from Southern States. https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1743383

18. Nirmala, Y. (2015). The role of community radio in empowering women in India, Media Asia, 42 (12) 41-46. DOI: 10.1080/01296612.2015.1072335

19. Panwar, B.S. (2021, September 23). Role of community radios in India. The pioneer. https://www.dailypioneer.com/2021/columnists/role-of-community-radios-in-india.html

20. Panwar, B.S. (2021, September 23). Role of community radios in India. The pioneer. https://www.dailypioneer.com/2021/columnists/role-of-community-radios-in-india.html

21. Rajana, V., Prasad, K. K. L., & Madhavi, B. D. (2020). Is community radio an effective tool for health education? Perceptions of stakeholders of a community radio project in north coastal Andhra Pradesh. International Journal Of Community Medicine And Public Health, 7(4) 1522–1527. https://doi.org/10.18203/2394-6040.ijcmph20201467

22. Sen, A. (2020). Community radio in times of disaster: Contemplations for South Asia. In K. K. Malik., & V. Pavarala (Eds.), *Community radio in South Asia: Reclaiming the airwaves* (pp. 165–183). Routledge.

23. Sharma, K. (2007). Bharat me radio prasaran. In K. Sharma(Ed.), *Radio Prasaran*. New Delhi: Pratibha Pratishthan.

24. Shreemali, I.P. (2013). Community radio in India. In I.P. Shreemali (Ed.), *Community Rdio* (pp. 19-23). Jaipur: Rajasthan Hindi Granth Academy.

25. Society for media and social development (2008). Concept note on community radio(Ch1). In society for media and social development (SMSD) Community radio handbook (pp 2-4). Media Information and communication center of India (MICCI), New Delhi.

26. UNICEF (2011). Introduction: The issues and prospects of community radio movement in India. In CEMCA (Ed.). *Abiding Voices: Sustainability of community radio in India* (pp.7). New Delhi: Commonam wealth Educational Media Center for Asia.