MASTER OF ARTS

MASS COMMUNICATION AND JOURNALISM

CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARING (CODL)

MMC 403:COMMUNITY MEDIA

BLOCK I

Vision

To grow to be a leading centre for human resource development through distance, open and universal learning system.

Mission

To provide quality higher education at door step through barrier-less, flexible and open learning mode in conformity with national priority and societal need.

Objective

- **To offer degree, diploma, certificate level programme of study through distance learning in various emerging subjects across the disciplines.**

- **To offer job oriented and vocational programmes in flexible terms in the line of the national and regional level demand of manpower.**

- **To offer various programmes under lifelong learning contributing to the local and regional level requirements and as per the need of the society at large.**

- **To undertake various research and academic activities for furtherance of distance education in the region.**

- **To contribute to conserve and promote cultural heritage, literature, traditional knowledge and environment conducting short programmes, workshops, seminars and research in interdisciplinary field.**

MMC 403: COMMUNITY MEDIA

CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

TEZPUR UNIVERSITY (A CENTRAL UNIVRESITY)

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MMC-403: COMMUNITY MEDIA

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BLOCK I

MODULE I: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY MEDIA

UNIT 1: DEFINING "COMMUNITY'

UNIT 2: PUBLIC SPHERE AND MEDIA

UNIT 3: DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP

UNIT 4: DEFINING COMMUNITY MEDIA

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

Community Media as an alternative to mainstream media play significant role in the process of bottom-up development. Community media is basically for making an alternative public sphere giving voice to the unheard voices. This course aims to elaborate on the different aspects of community media.

The Module I Understanding Community Media explains the basic concept of community , its meanings and characteristics, different types of community, etc. Unit 2 under this module discusses community media as an alternative space of sharing public opinions which includes topics such as concept of public sphere, refeudalization of the public sphere , role of community media in creating an alternative public sphere, etc. The Unit 3 explains the interrelationship between community media and encouraging democratic citizenship.

The Module II, includes topics based on historical background of community media both from international and Indian perspectives under the Unit 5 and 6. The Unit 7 compares between the mass media and community media based on the aspects such as ownership , management, and control , reach, access and participation , content and content creation process , revenue model, etc. The Unit 8 under Module II explains community media from operational aspect including setting up of community media, community radio programming, etc. Under **Module III**, Unit 9 discusses participatory video explaining the characteristics of participatory video, setting up participatory video, video process, etc. The Unit 10 and 11 deal with community newspaper and magazine and puppetry respectively. The **Module IV** includes theatre as a significant medium of community media for social change. The Units 13 and 14 under this module are based on case studies of community media including community radio case studies and community newspapers and puppetry case studies, etc. Through this course , learners will have an understanding how community media contribute in the development process especially at the grassroot level.

MODULE I: UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY MEDIA

UNIT 1: DEFINING COMMUNITY

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Objectives

1.3 Meaning of Community

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1.5 McMillan and Chavis Elements of Community

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1.6 Types of Communities

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

A sub-system of society, community is the very essence of how people live and socialise with each other. If society is the way people do things, community is who people do those things with. This unit will mainly focus on the concept of community and its different types. From this unit you will learn the definitions of the concept of community as well as you will

understand the different characteristics of it. This unit also focuses on explaining the typology of communities developed by Paul James which are based on grounded community relations, lifestyle community relations, projected community relations, cosmological community relations, etc.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

A thorough study of this unit will enable you -

- To explain meaning of community

- To describe the distinct characteristics of community

- To write about the different types of community based on location, identity, organisation, etc.

- To describe typology of communities

1.3 MEANING OF COMMUNITY

The concept of community is a highly debated and contested one with diverse opinions and perspectives across multiple disciplines. Etymologically, the English word *community* is derived from the Old French word *comunete* which in turn is derived from the two Latin words *communitas* and *communis* meaning 'shared in common'. This concept can be simply understood as a network of people who are organised with some common agenda, cause, or interest sharing ideas, information, and other resources and establishing collaboration among the members of the community. Brinkerhoff and Azfar (2006) define community as- "a group that shares a sufficient commonality of interests such that its members are motivated to engage in collective action"[1].

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[1] Dr. Ankuran Dutta. What is a "Community" in Community Media? Retrieved from https://www.slideshare.net/ankurandutta/who-is-community-in-community-media

In his book *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft* (1887), German Sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies identified two types of human associations i.e. *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society). He defined community (*Gemeinschaft*) as- "a group of people sharing certain common bonds around traditions, beliefs or objectives that foster a sense of belonging or togetherness"2.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) have defined community as- "a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together"[3].

According to Brint (2001), communities are – "aggregates of people who share common activities and/or beliefs and who are bound together principally by relations of affect, loyalty, common values, and/or personal concern (i.e. interest in the personalities and life events of one another)" (Douglas, 2010).

Scott (2001) has defined community as social institution having a stable structure and agreed set of conventions, regulations and procedures that provide meaning and order to members (Douglas, 2010).

In his book *Urban Sustainability in Theory and Practice: Circles of sustainability* (2015), Paul James broadly defines community as-"a group or network of persons who are connected (objectively) to each other by relatively durable social relations that extend beyond immediate

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2 Ferdinand Tonnies Theory: Overview & Explanation. Retrieved from https://study.com/academy/lesson/ferdinand-tonnies-theory-lesson-quiz.html

[3] Dr. Stephen Wright. Psychological Sense of Community: Theory of McMillan & Chavis (1986). Retrieved from http://www.wright-house.com/psychology/sense-of-community.html

genealogical ties and who mutually define that relationship (subjectively) as important to their social identity and social practice".

If we explain the concept of community by dividing the term into two words i.e. *common* and *unity*, the term common refers to people or the masses, while unity refers to the state of uniformity or being in harmony either with each other or towards a common goal, purpose or cause. Therefore, *community* is simply a group of people who share some form of uniformity that may be based on geography, culture, economy, politics, identity (real or virtual) and so on.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. Based on your understanding of community, explain how community differs from society.

   _____
   _____
   _____

1.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY

Following are some of the characteristics of a community-

- A community is essentially composed of a group of people bound together by a sense of community sentiment or consciousness.

- Communities operate within certain boundaries that are pre-determined by members either directly or indirectly. However, these boundaries are neither natural nor singular; all communities are crossed by multiple overlapping social relations (James, 2015).

- Members of a community share certain common values, norms, interests, and ideologies with each other.

- According to Tonnies conception of *Gemeinschaft*, community members are often tied to one another through personal social ties.

Consequently, the interactions between community members are personal in nature and are driven by sentiments, emotions, and a sense of moral obligation towards other members.

- Communities are not always committed, positive or proactive. Although not all community interactions are friendly, strong communities can exist even if the relations between community members are not amicable (Douglas, 2010).

- Communities establish patterns of behaviour and traditions that may be implied or written down as rules (Douglas, 2010).

- Communities are as varied as their members. Often people belong to more than one community.

- Different communities fulfil different needs such as family, education, love, friendship, spirituality, health, employment, recreation, entertainment and so on.

- Members of a community often communicate their thoughts, ideas, opinions, criticism, experiences, knowledge and feelings with each other in order to achieve their common goals.

- Community members also communicate with non-members outside their community so as to respond to external events which can directly or indirectly impact the community.

- Communities exercise ownership and control over their members through different pre-determined mechanisms.

- In the era of globalisation and the internet, communities are not limited by the constraints of geography, space or time. In fact many contemporary communities are based on virtual contact, rather than actual physical interactions and meet-ups (Douglas, 2010).

1.5 MCMILLAN AND CHAVIS ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY

McMillan and Chavis (1986) have put forward four elements that characterise community and are also quintessential for developing a sense of community among members-

- Membership

- Influence

- Integration and fulfilment of needs

- Shared emotional connection

1.5.1 MEMBERSHIP

A community requires a well-defined boundary- physical, psychological or virtual- to determine who is a member of the community and who is not. Sometimes community membership is also determined by the use of symbols such as player uniforms in sports teams, national flags etc.

1.5.2 INFLUENCE

Community members change, adapt and grow in order to conform to the community norms, beliefs, and values. This occurs mainly because of the influence exerted by the community as a whole over its individual members.

1.5.3 INTEGRATION AND FULFILMENT OF NEEDS

Members of a community share common values which they pursue through the involvement of the community as a whole. For instance- a group of school parents may share the value of improving the quality of education of their children. A sports team may share the values of fair play and good physical health.

Community members exchange resources, monetary and otherwise, among themselves to meet the fulfilment of their diverse needs. By forming

connections amongst themselves, members may meet their needs for friendship, love, wealth, knowledge, status and so on.

1.5.4 SHARED EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

McMillan and Chavis deem a shared emotional connection as the definitive element of a community. Community members share an emotional bond and connection among themselves, which although not easily definable to outsiders is recognisable to members who share it.

1.6 TYPES OF COMMUNITIES

The typology of communities is as diverse as the interpretations of the term *community* itself. Hillery (1955) organised communities on the basis of geography, lifestyle, level of self-sufficiency or separateness, types of social interaction and kinship (Douglas, 2010). Taking inspiration from Hillery's typology of communities, Worsley (1987) identified three types of communities on the basis of geography or locality, collective identity and a sense of community spirit (Douglas, 2010).

1.6.1 LOCATION-BASED COMMUNITIES

Location-based community refers to a group of people who are bound together by a common geographical identity. It can be a country, city, town, neighbourhood, locality, suburb, village, public space, workplace, educational institute, coffeehouse, gathering place or any other geographical space that a group of people visit often, share, or have in common. The key word here is *geography*. Location-based communities have a clearly demarcated physical boundary and their members live or function in close physical proximity to each other.

In the context of location-based communities, Sutton and Kolaja (1972) have defined community as-

a number of families residing in a relatively small area within which they have developed a more or less complete socio-cultural definitions imbued with collective identifications and by means of which they resolve problems arising from the sharing of an area[4].

According to Hawley (1972), "Community is a structure of relationships through which a localized population provides its daily requirements"[5].

Allan Johnson (1986) define community as-

a collection of people who share a common territory and meet their basic physical and social needs through daily interaction with one another[6].

Sylvia Dale (1990) states-

Community is a body of people living in the same locality… Alternatively, a sense of identity and belonging shared among people living in the same locality… Also the set of social relations found in a particular bounded area[7].

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[4] Bell, David Massie (1983). The social effects of the closure of village schools in Northumberland. Durham Thesis, Durham University. Retrieved from http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/7227/1/7227_4409.pdf?UkUDh:CyT

[5] Bridger, Jeffrey C.; Luloff, A.E., Krannich, Richard S. (2002, November 8). *Community Change and Community Theory* (Chapter 2). p.p. 9-21. Persistence and Change in Rural Communities: A 50-year Follow-up to Six Classic Studies (Book). CABI Publishing. Retrieved from https://books.google.co.in/books?id=sZ2KMp2z4vIC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

[6] Diaz. P. (2000, April 2). Definitions of Community. Retrieved from http://uregina.ca/~sauchyn/socialcohesion/definitions%20of%20community.htm

[7] Diaz. P. (2000, April 2). Definitions of Community. Retrieved from http://uregina.ca/~sauchyn/socialcohesion/definitions%20of%20community.htm

According to Ogburn and Ninkoff, community is the "total organisation of social life within a limited area"[8].

As characteristic of communities, members of a location-based community share a sense of community consciousness and sentiment among them. They also share a common way of life. Their values, attitudes, beliefs, experiences and perspectives are more or less similar to one another.

1.6.2 IDENTITY-BASED COMMUNITIES

An identity-based community is governed by a sense of community where the members share some sort of collective identity based on certain common ideas, attitudes, beliefs, values, struggles, experiences and perspectives. The identifiable characteristics may include class, race, sex, ethnicity, religion, language, sexual identity, nationality, sexual orientation and so on. Examples of identity-based communities are disabled people, women of colour, transgender people etc.

1.6.3 ORGANISATIONALLY-BASED COMMUNITIES

A third type of community is one that is organisationally-based. As the name suggests, organisationally-based communities are centred around informal (family, kinship, friends), formal (economic organisations, policy-makers, educational institutions, professional associations) and network-based (social media) groups, organisations, associations and guilds at the local, regional, national or global scale.

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[8] Mondal, Puja. Community: Essay on Community. Retrieved from http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/essay/community-essay-on-community-737-words-sociology/6236

1.7 PAUL JAMES TYPOLOGY OF COMMUNITIES BASED ON COMMUNITY RELATIONS

In his book *Urban Sustainability in Theory and Practice: Circles of sustainability* (2015), Paul James has described four types of communities based on the kind of community relations between members-

- Grounded community relations

- Lifestyle community relations

- Projected community relations

- Cosmological community relations

1.7.1 GROUNDED COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Grounded community relations characterise those communities which involve an enduring attachment to a particular place/places and particular people (Tollefson & Perez-Milans, 2018). In such communities members come together in particular tangible localised settings and engage in face-to-face communication (James, 2015). In grounded communities, land is fundamental to the identity of the community members. Examples of such communities include tribal and customary communities.

Sometimes grounded communities can extend over spatial distances such as the urban-rural diaspora. A simple example of this can be seen during festive occasions or social ceremonies like wedding, death, marriage, birth, holidays and so on when people often return 'home' from their place of residence or work.

1.7.2 LIFESTYLE COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Life-style based communities are based on adherence to particular ways of life, practices, interests, values and attitudes. Because such communities refrain from emphasising on a fixed geography or place, they can be de-territorialised and globalised (James, 2015). Although face-to-face

interaction between members is important, communication can also be established through technologically and virtually mediated mediums governed by pre-determined conventions, norms and bonds. Thus, in comparison to grounded communities, lifestyle-based communities are more mobile and flexible. On the one hand, this makes such communities more adaptable to changes, but on the other, it may lead to the generation of culturally thinner communities (James, 2015).

1.7.3 PROJECTED COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Communities based on projected relations the emphasis is on the establishment of a social space that facilitates the engagement of community members in an open-ended process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of their identities, ethics and way of life (James, 2015). The projected view of community self-consciously treats community as a created entity; community is deemed as a means by which people create and recreate their lives with others (James, 2015).

A nation is one of the largest forms of a projected community (Tollefson & Perez-Milans, 2018).

1.7.4 COSMOLOGICAL COMMUNITY RELATIONS

A fourth type of community relations and typology of community developed by James (2015) is cosmological community relations. Such communities bind their members together by means of a universalising connection such as that to a higher power like god, spirit or nature. The guiding force directing such a community is the belief that community relations exist beyond the community itself. Such types of community relations can be either localised in nature or may stretch across a globalising space.

At the local level, the members of such communities are guided by certain morally charged ways of life with the purpose of establishing and reinforcing trust and mutual obligation between members (James, 2015). There are clearly demarcated normative boundaries guiding the conduct of members in

terms of what is right or wrong, what kind of behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate. Thus, the community ultimately plays the role of a gatekeeper or regulator binding members into a particular way of life. This can be clearly seen in the organisation of religious communities.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. How has technology, particularly the internet, challenged and transformed the conventional notion of community?

_____

_____

_____

1.8 SUMMING UP

Community is the building block through which people make sense of the world in which they live, participate and share experiences. It provides people with a sense of purpose, identity and belonging. Over the years the word *community* has been ascribed different meanings. However, despite the different interpretations of the term, the basic idea remains the same i.e. a community is composed of a group of people who come together and share certain common values, perspectives, experiences and a way of life in general that holds value to their lives.

1.9 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the concept of community.

2. Discuss some distinct characteristics of a community.

3. Elaborate the four elements that characterise a community as put forward by McMillan and Chavis.

4. Explain the different types of communities with suitable examples.

5. Discuss Paul James typology of communities based on community relations. Cite examples to support your answer.

6. Highlight some challenges faced by contemporary communities. Suggest some ways to overcome these challenges.

1.10 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

Douglas, H. (2010). Types of Community. In H. Anheier, & S. Toepler (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Civil Society* (pp. 539-544). Springer. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/291185841_Types_of_Community

James, P. (2015). *Urban Sustainability in Theory and Practice: Circles of sustainability* (1st ed.). Routledge. Retrieved from Google Books.

Tollefson, J. W., & Perez-Milans, M. (Eds.). (2018). *The Oxford Handbook of Language Policy And Planning* (1st ed.). Oxford University Press. Retrieved from Google Books.

UNIT 2: PUBLIC SPHERE AND MEDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Objectives

2.3 The Public Sphere

2.4 Refeudalisation of the Public Sphere

2.5 Role of Media in creating an Alternative Public Sphere

2.6 Summing Up

2.7 Questions

2.8 References and Recommended Readings

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall delve into understanding the concept of 'public sphere' by tracing its history and evolution. This unit is an attempt to critically examine the role of media in the creation of a public sphere in present times, particularly within the context of new media forums replacing the traditional concept of the public sphere and developing into a virtual sphere.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are to:

- Define the concept of public sphere and trace its origins
- Describe the significance of the public sphere and its relevance in present times
- Explain how the media functions as a forum of public sphere
- Describe the workings of the virtual public sphere

2.3 THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The word "public sphere" is a translation of the German term öffentlichkeit. In simple terms, the **public sphere** is understood to be the social arena in which various opinions are expressed and collective solutions arrived upon, through discussion of problems of general concern. It is the common space where citizens come together, exchange opinions regarding public affairs, discuss, deliberate, and eventually form public opinion.

In ancient Greece, public sphere comprised of city-states, where citizens directly participated in political decisions in meetings held at the agora, a particular location, where citizens exchanged thoughts and discussed opinions. In European monarchies of later centuries, the royal court was the public sphere, and the power to determine what was public lied with the king alone. Later in the 17th and early 18th centuries, coffeehouses in England, salons in France, and table societies in Germany became places where aristocrats and members of the middle class met to discuss art and politics and these spaces came to be understood as the public sphere. In certain communities in Africa, tribe gatherings were referred to as the public sphere. These gatherings represented the public life of the tribal community. Even the Church used to provide a space for members of oppressed or marginalized groups to gather and articulate their objectives, and these were also known as the public sphere.

Thus, originally the public sphere referred to a specific meeting place for discussion. Over time, with the development of media and communication technology, the character of the public sphere changed from a location to a communication network. Today, the public sphere is defined in relation to the mass media, as it is the mass media that facilitate the circulation of public opinions.

The public sphere is an indispensable element of socio-political organization as it enables people to come together as citizens and form collective and autonomous opinions that are powerful enough to challenge the political

institutions of society that apparently hold administrative power. Organised expression of public opinion can further smoothen the relationship between the state and civil society and can act as the harbinger of democracy. Unless the society structure offers space for its citizens to hold dialogues and debate over diverse ideas and conflicting interests, the state will drifts away from its original intent.

The public sphere is a key characteristic of democratic system which makes the government to maintain a sense of accountability towards citizens, for whom political decisions are taken. In large-scale societies, mass media and, in recent times, online network media support and sustain communication in the public sphere.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. Define 'public sphere'.
   _____
   _____

2. What is agora?
   _____
   _____

2.4 REFEUDALISATION OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE

The contemporary understanding of the term 'public sphere' is mainly based on the work of German sociologist Jürgen Habermas, who provided a comprehensive analysis of the nature of the public sphere and its historic transformations in his book "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere – An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society". According to him, the public sphere is "a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed" (Habermas, 1974).

In his work, Habermas gives a historical-sociological account of the emergence, brief flourishing, and demise of a "bourgeois" public sphere of

the 18ᵗʰ century. This public sphere had emerged driven by a need for open spaces where news and matters of common concern could be freely exchanged and discussed as a domain separate from ruling authorities or the feudal reign. Feudalism is understood to be the social power vested in the hands of a small number of individuals and Habermas saw the eighteenth-century bourgeois public sphere as a positive contrast to this situation.

The term 'public sphere' found new meaning in the 1990s with the spread of new communication technologies. Mass media and now the rising social media play significant role in this realm, which also performs an intermediary role by facilitating communicative links between citizens and centres of power in a society. The internet provides unmatched opportunities for exchanging information and for debate and discussion among a large number of people of different backgrounds. Voices of minorities to be heard are considered to be essential for a well-functioning public sphere.

Habermas argues that the bourgeois public sphere had declined owing to various factors and resulted in the demoted status of the citizens as mere spectator. However, he points out that information and communication technologies (ICTs) provide numerous opportunities for the revival of the public sphere. But, this revival is also accompanied by the 'refeudalization' of the public sphere where Habermas perceives the rise of advertising, marketing and 'public relations' as elements manipulating the public and discouraging critical thought. He identifies a gradual deformation of the public sphere through the advance of social welfare, the growth of culture industries, and the evolution of large private interests. For example, publication houses devoted to profit turned the press into an agent of manipulation and became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere. By "refeudalization" thus, Habermas means the shift of power whereby the illusions of the public sphere are maintained only to give sanction to the decisions of leaders.

The ways in which the understanding of the public sphere is changing also indicate a general symptom of social change. Habermas had referred to the condition of the public sphere as a 'political indicator'. Issues of contemporary democracies and the transformation of modern social structures are best reflected through the public sphere of the media (Habermas, 2004). Therefore, the refeudalization of the public sphere is significant for the understanding of the development of the society as a whole.

If viewed as a form arrived at by social change, refeudalization is much more than a comparison of the public sphere in contrast to its traditional roots. In this context, the approach of social transformation takes a linear form where social relations are over time monetized or bureaucratized and transformed into goods or objects of administration. It almost replaces traditional social relations with the modern concepts that ultimately lead to a social crisis. On the other hand, when viewed from an analytical perspective, refeudalization of the public sphere is understood to be the outcome of an inconsistent course of modernization involving the re-establishment of social structures.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. What is the name of the book written by Jurgen Habermas?
   _____
   _____

2. What is refeudalization of the public sphere?
   _____
   _____

2.5 ROLE OF MEDIA IN CREATING AN ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC SPHERE

Media plays an important role in the process of bringing about social change by monitoring and moderating the public sphere. Jurgen Habermas in his book "The structural transformation of the Public Sphere" argues that the media have contributed in the creation of an environment suitable for democratic discussion and agreements amongst citizens, thus bringing about a sense of political freedom.

However, he also points out that often media plays the role of providing a pseudo-public sphere which distracts the common people from genuine political action and entangles them in a sphere of public relations and passive spectatorship rather than genuine public debate. In contrast he offers a model of ideal public communication which is far from institutional control and can generate voices which are democratic in the true sense of the term.

Habermas particularly highlights the role that the media can play in creating an important element for the survival of the public sphere. But over time media's role has changed from being the fourth estate that protects the interest of the people as citizens to that of a means which treat the consumers using media content for profit-making. The trend of shifting from government control to private, and in rare cases to the community ownership and control of media has transformed in major ways.

In the late 20th and early 21st century, internet and especially the social media have started playing a similar role enabling individuals to discuss and express their thoughts in common public platforms regarding events which have worldwide public interest.

The concept 'public sphere' in itself and its formation process has gone through various changes since the time when it was introduced by Jurgen Habermas. Appearance of new media and the development in the communication technology has immensely transformed the conceptual term

of public sphere and public discourse. Popular social media forums like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube etc, are new tools of communication being used the audiences. Its virtual nature also creates a wider network of participants from across the world, bridging spatial gaps.

The new public sphere is gradually enabling the world to become a global society. The global civil society is the reflects the values and interests of society and the public sphere acts as the thread that holds the government and its citizens together, largely influencing the polity of the society. The emergence of globalization has also led to the emergence of a global civil society and various forms of global governance. Following suit, the public sphere has also shifted from the national to the global and is increasingly constructed around global communication networks.

Since the advent of the internet, public sphere and public opinion have assumed a new dimension of a "networked public sphere", wherein public opinion is shaped through exchanges in the online platforms. Digital or online space is currently the new public space.

Social media gives users the freedom to communicate with each-other easily, overcoming barriers of time and distance. Content that is published in the social media is accessible to anyone in the world at any given point of time. It has made it easier than ever for public opinion to form.

The gradually increasing number of the social media users around the world also indicates the decline of newspaper circulation or traditional media audience in general. In this new era of information and communication, virtual spheres are drawing more and more people because of its various advantages over traditional media. This alternative public sphere or the virtual public sphere is mainly characterised by greater access to information and communication transcending geographical, linguistic and cultural boundaries. However, the internet has also gradually transitioned more into an online profit making space and less of a deliberative space, which directly or indirectly influences the orientation of digital political discussion. Being

a medium with a capitalist context, the internet becomes vulnerable to the profit-making intentions of the market, which do not necessarily prioritize civic participation or democratization.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. How has the internet changed the concept of the public sphere?
   _____
   _____

2. How is the virtual public sphere different from the traditional public sphere?

   _____

   _____

2.6 SUMMING UP

- The **public sphere** is understood to be the social arena in which various opinions are expressed and collective solutions arrived upon, through discussion of problems of general concern.

- Originally the public sphere referred to a specific meeting place for discussion. Over time, the character of the public sphere changed from a location to a communication network.

- The public sphere is a key characteristic of democratic system which makes the government maintain a sense of accountability towards citizens, for whom political decisions are taken.

- The term 'public sphere' found new meaning in the 1990s with the spread of new communication technologies. Mass media and now the rising social media play significant role in this realm, which also performs an intermediary role by facilitating communicative links between citizens and centres of power in a society.

- The bourgeois public sphere had declined owing to various factors and resulted in the demoted status of the citizens as mere spectator. However, information and communication technologies (ICTs) provide numerous opportunities for the revival of the public sphere.

- The 'refeudalization' of the public sphere is perceived as the rise of advertising, marketing and 'public relations' as elements manipulating the public and discouraging critical thought.

- Media plays an important role in the process of bringing about social change by monitoring and moderating the public sphere. It can play both positive and negative roles in the process.

- The emergence of globalization has also led to the emergence of a global civil society and various forms of global governance and the public sphere has also shifted from the national to the global and is increasingly constructed around global communication networks.

- In the late 20th and early 21st century, internet and especially the social media have enabled individuals to discuss and express their thoughts in common public platforms regarding events which have worldwide public interest.

- Since the advent of the internet, public sphere and public opinion have assumed a new dimension of a "networked public sphere", wherein public opinion is shaped through exchanges in the online platforms. Digital or online space is currently the new public space.

2.8 QUESTIONS

1. Trace the history of the evolution of the public sphere.

2. Explain the concept of public sphere within the context of contemporary media.

3. What do you understand by 'refeudalization of the public sphere'?

2.9 RECOMMENDED READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 3: DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Objectives

3.3 Assess and participation

3.3.1 Participation

3.4 Participatory Communication

    3.4.1   Phases of participatory communication

    3.4.2 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

    3.4.3 Rapid Rural Appraisal

3.5 Active citizenship

    3.5.1 Levels of Active Citizenship

    3.5.2 Roles of active citizens

3.6 Civil Society

    3.6.1 Concept of civil society

    3.6.2 Characteristics of civil society

    3.6.3 Functions of civil society

3.7 Communication rights and media democratization

    3.7.1 Communication right

    3.7.2 Media democratization

3.8 Media Plurality

    3.8.1 Internal and external plurality

3.9 Summing Up

3.10 Questions

3.11 References and Recommended Readings

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Development of any country is related to the open channels of communication that exists between its stakeholders- the government, community, active citizens, the civil society, and the institutions and organisations that sustain the society. An active citizenry supported by civil society helps in the maintenance of democracy by keeping tyranny at bay. It also brings development programmes within the reach of communities by involving them in their own development. Communities participate in these programmes, give their own inputs to the experts, and in turn, enhance their own skills.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the unit are:

a) To explain the importance of democratic participation in development.
b) To describe the concepts such as active citizenship, civil society, etc., which are important for the upholding of a democratic state.
c) To write the significance of media plurality.
d) To explain what participatory communication is and how communities can be involved in their own development.

3.3 ASSESS AND PARTICIPATION

The decades following the fall of colonial rule across the globe has illustrated the importance of communication for development of underprivileged nations and people. With this perspective, two approaches towards development emerged- one that focused on the use of mass media and the

other which favoured grassroots communication. The earlier models of development primarily focused on economic development, believing that once nations acquire wealth, its people's well-being and standards of living will also improve. The results of efforts towards economic development proved otherwise. Development was realized to be not just restricted to economic freedom but also included social justice, equal distribution of wealth, access to resources, education, etc.

3.3.1 Participation

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed a shift in the implementation of developmental programmes. Participation and involvement of a community in its development became the central theme of scholarly deliberation and governmental efforts. Participation was not limited to 'consultation' anymore. In development communication, participation was seen as a community's involvement, where people from the same community would identify their own problems, give inputs based on traditional knowledge, take decisions and implement them. To ensure participation, researchers and professionals should consider the people they are working for as partners. Diverse view points also has to be accepted. In using participatory communication, therefore, it is important also to recognize what is socially and culturally acceptable to the people of the community.

The development professional or facilitators should learn first to establish a dialogue with the community and build a consensus around an action that has to be undertaken. They should also be able to make information accessible to all. It is worth noting that participation takes time to develop. It has to be learned by everyone. The ideas and efforts of all the stakeholders should be directed towards achieving the common goals. Flexibility in thought and execution should be given space to foster. Using communication for participation means sharing both traditional and modern knowledge in the identification and solving of the problem. Disregarding a community's age-old practices may lead to resistance to participation. Ten steps have been

identified to plan and implement participatory development communication. They are:

a) Establishing a relationship with a local community and understanding the local setting.

b) Involving the community in the identification of a problem, its potential solutions and the decision to carry out a concrete initiative.

c) Identifying the different community groups and other stakeholders concerned with the identified problem and initiative.

d) Identifying communication needs, objectives and activities.

e) Identifying appropriate communication tools.

f) Preparing and pre-testing communication content and materials.

g) Facilitating partnerships.

h) Producing an implementation plan.

i) Monitoring and evaluating the communication strategy and documenting the development or research process.

j) Planning the sharing and utilization of results.

3.4 PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION

The significance of participation in development processes and projects had existed since a long time, in recent times, it has become an even bigger concern. Participation is a principle wherein support comes from different stakeholders like governments, civil society, citizens and the like. Participatory communication is based on dialogue, allowing the sharing of information and opinions among the stakeholders and thus, facilitates empowerment. It is associated with community-driven development, where the community is involved in its own development. The people from the same community are involved at every stage of the decision-making process. To be truly participatory, effective communication should occur among all the parties involved. The participatory paradigm signifies the areas in which countries and communities set their own goals, priorities and standards which are unique to their own contexts.

Active participation of citizens at the grassroot level is important for participatory approach. Seeking a community's input and giving them freedom allows specific programmes to be developed for them. People and communities involved take responsibility of their own problems. This paradigm is thus, pluralistic and does not have the authoritarian and universal biases of earlier development models.

The idea of self-development was popularized in the 1970s. In this approach, the emphasis is laid on bottom-up communication from local communities to experts and other sources and horizonal communication flows between people. Communication is initiated in response to needs articulated by the users.

3.4.1 Phases in participatory communication

The phases in participatory communication include the following:

a. *Participatory Communication Assessment-* at this stage, issues are researched and analysed through two-way communication. Open communication amongst various stakeholders is important for the success of this stage.

b. *Participatory Communication Strategy Design-* this begins with defining the objective of the project.

c. *Implementation of Communication Activities-* this is the third stage when an action plan is developed to guide the implementation and management of all important activities.

d. *Monitoring and evaluation-* evaluation of the programme helps in identification of the loopholes and the key points that led to the success of the programme.

3.4.2 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

The lack of interest in local people and cultures in the earlier models and theories made it difficult to learn how these people negotiated change. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodology has since been used to work with populations that lack formal education or skills. This approach

is driven by the belief that all stakeholders have the right to be included in the projects that have been set up for their benefit. The basic idea of PRA is that the target community should themselves identify their problems and issues and participate in the decision making process. This approach invites participation of the community people in the development process so that they can identify their needs and can adopt flexible time and methods to fulfil collective needs. Social consciousness is the key to this approach as the members of a particular community empower themselves in understanding their socio-political conditions and work collaboratively for promoting their standard of living. In other words, the community members take all the management responsibilities, analyse their own local conditions, prioritise their issues, plan actions and ultimately this entire PRA leads to empowerment of the community.

Key features of PRA are:

- Community takes the lead in planning development action.
- Community owns and keeps the results of initiatives.
- Outcomes of the PRA are presented by the community.
- Local stakeholders are active participants.

3.4.3 Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA)

Unlike PRA, the Rapid Rural Appraisal approach uses external agency to identify community problems and decisions are taken by others for the community. The entire process of identifying the problem, taking action plans, monitoring and evaluating are done by development facilitators. The people who are professionally working at community level for development adopt different methods for assessing needs of the community. For instance, conducting interview, focus group discussion , survey, etc. the facilitators of the development process collect data for identifying problems as well prioritising issues of a particular community.

3.5 ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Active citizenship refers to involvement and participation of informed citizens in the political and civic activities of a society. In short, it means taking an active role in the development of the community one is related to by making positive contributions towards it. The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) Report on Social Capital (2003: 136) has defined Active Citizenship as: *"the active exercise of social rights and shared responsibilities associated with belonging to a community or society; the concept is broader than just a formal or legal definition and encompasses social, economic and cultural rights and obligations."*

Active citizenship refers to the capacity of citizens in a community, working either directly or through their elected representatives to exercise social, political and economic rights for the achievement of shared goals. It is about decision-making and participation of the community in their development process. This process can happen at the local, national and at international levels. The idea behind the concept of active citizenship is that by working together, the members of a community can improve the lives of themselves and the ones around them. It is also related to other important concepts like social capital and community development and seeks to reach the results of development to even the most marginalized sections of the society. There are various roles that are played by active citizens, like *civil participation* where people come together to pursue individual goals, for example, sports clubs, associations, etc. Active citizens are also engaged in activities of *civic engagement*, where public participation is more formal such as members of advisory groups, board members, etc.

3.5.1 Levels of Active Citizenship

Citizens can be active in their community in various ways. An active citizen is an individual who may challenge the existing rules and structures by

standing up for others. This they do by staying within the limits of democratic processes. Some people may be involved in causes that affect their lives directly at any of the following levels.

a. **Local level-** This is the basic level of activity that individuals may be involved in, i.e., at the level of the community they share space with. They develop their skills and knowledge over time so that they can improve the quality of life of their community.

b. **Regional and national level-** This involves activities like voting in democratic elections, campaigning and also by becoming a member of a political party.

c. **International level-** Globally active citizens are involved in activities related to international fair trade, sustainability of environment, eradicate poverty, etc.

3.6 CIVIL SOCIETY

The terms 'civil society' and 'democracy' are as old as the social sciences, but in the recent years, the terminology has undergone a radical change. The rise in popularity of civil society can be attributed to the struggle by resistance groups in Latin America, Africa and other countries. The decades following 1980s and 1990s witnessed the advent of popular activism, pursued by labour unions, student groups, women's organisations, etc., which led to the upturning of tyranny of dictatorship in many parts of the world. These developments led to the belief that an informed and active civil society can bring in the required change and also help in the consolidation of democracy. The modern usage of the term civil society can be traced to the 18th century Scottish and Continental Enlightenment and in the works of philosophers like Thomas Paine, Hegel, etc.

3.6.1 Concept of Civil Society

The concept of civil society embraces within its fold the entire range of values and institutions, such as political, social and civil rights, law and

public sphere. It is accessible to all as it seeks to organize a community, a society independent of the state.

3.6.2 Characteristics of Civil Society

It is the public sphere of the society where the experiences of individuals, groups and communities are discussed and solutions are sought. It is a place where the people and not the state, shape the opinion and perceptions of the public. The state and the civil society, however, are not opposed to each other. Civil society cannot function without the state because the state provides the framework within which the civil society works. The civil society, on the other hand, should keep the channels of communication open with the state. Democracy unites the civil society with the state. In a democracy, both the state and the civil society are required for the effective functioning of the society. Democracy (a democratic state) cannot deliver its functions effectively if it is restrictive and imposing. Similarly, a democratic civil society cannot exist if individuals are not allowed to act in the public sphere. By their involvement in civil society, citizens learn about the fundamental democratic values of participation and shared action. Movements by a civil society can influence government policy as well as social attitudes.

3.6.3 Functions of a Civil Society

Following are the functions of a civil society:

1. **Limit state power-** The civil society can check political and legal abuses by those in power by exposing them to public discussion.
2. **Empower citizens-** It empowers people by increasing efficacy in governance and leadership and promoting an appreciation of the rights and duties of citizens in a democracy.
3. **Promote development-** It inculcates and brings the marginalized, like women and minorities, within the purview of development, which is otherwise denied to them.

4. **Provide arena for representation-** It gives space to individuals and organisations to articulate their interests and represent them. It generates opportunities for equal representation for all.

5. Generate both public and political support for economic and political reforms.

6. **Educating the public-** Civil society sustains effective democracy by educating the public.

3.7 COMMUNICATION RIGHTS AND MEDIA DEMOCRATISATION

3.7.1 Communication Rights

Communication is the most fundamental human right. Every individual has the freedom of speech and expression. It was enunciated as a right for the first time in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948): *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.*

This was re-asserted and reframed in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (United Nations, 1966a), which states:

a. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without any interference.

b. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

This right extends to people with communication disabilities. The states shall take the required measures to reach information and ideas on an equal basis

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for people with disabilities, through the communication channel of their choice.

3.7.2 Media Democratization

Media and communication channels have been viewed as the result and reinforcers of growth and development. Media democratization aims to empower citizens by promoting the ideals of democracy through the dissemination of information through media which remains and also remain democratic in its own operation. It allows citizens to participate in the media discourse, allowing the media to extend its reach in the public sphere, where information is gathered and shared by people. This relationship between the public sphere and the media includes amongst all, the social media and traditional or the mainstream media. Media democracy calls for an equal distribution of cultural, social, economic and political capital, which leads to a more informed public, as against corporate control of communication channels which limits the diversity of news and opinion and also the entertainment that people receive.

Media democracy advocates creating a mass dissemination system of information that favours diversity of opinions and ownership.

3.8 MEDIA PLURALITY

Media plurality refers to the state which supports diversity of voices, opinions and the different types of media and media support. Media pluralism is analysed from two perspectives- internal and external.

3.8.1 Internal and External Pluralism

Internal pluralism refers to the representation of different cultural, political and ideological opinions in the media. It mainly focuses on media content. It plays an important role in public information broadcasting which is dominated by one or two key media players. Governments can stimulate internal pluralism by means of financial grants, press funds, etc.

External pluralism is concerned with media ownership. This is also referred to as 'plurality' of suppliers. Competition between media companies is considered essential to ensure a free choice of media content from the wide variety of available options. This diversity is accompanied by polarized pluralism in a media system.

Media pluralism is important for any democracy as it allows the public access to a wide range of information and the free flow of ideas. It plays a leading role in ensuring a transparent media system. It embraces principles such as net neutrality so that citizens can enjoy free access to a diversity of content. Even with the advancement in communication technology, there exists limitations on media plurality by the fact that women still remain underrepresented in the media- in terms of decision-making and also in media content.

SELF ASSESSMENT

1. What is meant by active citizenship. Explain with the help of examples._____
   _____

2. Discuss the importance of a civil society in a democracy.
   _____

3. Discuss the relevance of participatory communication to community development. _____
   _____

3.8 SUMMING UP

Participation is central to development programmes and requires the involvement of stakeholders in the development process. Other concepts related to development include active citizenship and civil society. An active citizenry ensures that information related to various schemes and projects are

made available to the end-people. An aware civil society takes steps to enable democratic processes to foster, as evidenced in the citizen movements in various countries, in the past few decades. Open channels of communication dissemination and access is significant in this regard. Diversity in media options and content brings all the relevant and divergent viewpoints regarding a specific issue, which helps people to come to the right decision after considering all the available options. This participation between the community, channels of communication, developments practitioners and researchers thus, strengthens and sustains democracy

3.9 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the importance of participation in a community's development.
2. What is meant by civil society? Discuss the role of civil society in the maintenance of democracy.
3. Explain the concept of participatory communication with the help of an example.

3.11 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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UNIT 4: DEFINING COMMUNITY MEDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the present era of transnational media flow and increasing privatization of mass media, community media seek to democratize communication and its different structures, practices and forms (Howley, 2005). By providing communities or groups a platform to highlight and discuss their issues and perspectives in their own voice, community media seek to counter the power imbalances and structural inequalities characterising the contemporary media systems (Shrivastava, 2013).

4.2 OBJECTIVES

A thorough study of this unit will enable you

- To explain the meaning of community media

- To describe the distinct characteristics which differentiate community media from commercial media as well as public-owned media

- To state the objectives and principles that guide the creation and operation of community media organisations

- To write the different forms of community media

- To explain four theoretical approaches to community media

4.3 MEANING OF COMMUNITY MEDIA

Community Media refers to any form of participatory, independent and not-for-profit media that is owned, operated and managed by the community itself. Kevin Howley (2005) has defined community media as-

> *... grassroots or locally oriented media access initiatives predicated on a profound sense of dissatisfaction with mainstream media form and content, dedicated to the principles of free expression and participatory democracy, and committed to enhancing community relations and promoting solidarity.*

As per the International Programme for the Development of Communication-

> *Community-based media ensure media pluralism, diversity of content, and the representation of a society's different groups and interests… encourage open dialogue and transparency of administration at the local level and offer a voice to the voiceless.[9]*

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[9] Refugees Reporting (2017). *The importance of community media in breaking barriers.* Retrieved from https://www.refugeesreporting.eu/the-importance-of-community-media-in-breaking-barriers/

4.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY MEDIA

Following are some characteristics of community media-

- Community media represent those groups which are often under-represented or marginalised by mainstream commercial media. They facilitate the integration as well as participation of such groups in society by offering them a platform to communicate their views.

- The content of community media is focused on issues of local interest relevant to the lives of the particular communities they serve. Unlike mainstream media which is profit-oriented, community media is inclined towards the fulfilment of social objectives.

- In contrast to mainstream commercial media, community media is independent from advertisers, sponsors, donors, governments and other organisations and institutions. Instead, they rely on donations, grant funding, underwriting, in-kind contributions and other forms of non-commercial support (Shrivastava, 2013).

- Unlike corporate or public sector media, the organisational structure of community media is far less hierarchal (Shrivastava, 2013). The content of community media is developed, produced and presented by volunteer community members generally in a language that is common to and well understood by members of the particular community.

- Community media challenges the notion of a passive audience instead enabling community members to become content generators or 'media makers' (Shrivastava, 2013).

- Being not-for-profit, the revenue generated from the operation of community media is reinvested either in the particular media itself or the community to which it caters to.

4.5 OBJECTIVES OF COMMUNITY MEDIA

Following are some objectives of community media-

- Community Media seeks to enable marginalised and under-represented groups/communities to create "their own means of cultural expression, news, information and dialogue" by putting the tools of communication into their hands (Bellardi, 2009).

- Guided by the notion of empowerment, community media seeks to improve the socio-economic conditions of the communities they serve.

- By providing an alternative to mainstream commercial media, community media strives to involve communities "in the democratic development of their community and country" (Bellardi, 2009).

4.6 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY MEDIA

In this unit, we will discuss four theoretical approaches to community media as put forward by Carpentier, Lie and Servaes (2002).

4.6.1 APPROACH ONE- SERVING A COMMUNITY

Community media are essentially community-oriented. The community referred to here is the 'community of interest' which extends beyond any geographical or spatial boundaries. The relationship between the community and community media is characterised by two-way communication. Carpentier, Lie and Servaes (2002) have referred to this form of communication as the *Production and Reception Approach of Access and Participation*. Volunteer community members directly participate in the production of the content of the community media that is relevant to the community. This content is then read /watched/heard by other members of the community.

This approach to community media brings the relationship between the community and the broadcaster to the foreground. Breaking free from the traditional medium-audience and state-citizen dichotomies articulating the audience as an aggregate of individuals sharing certain social, economic and demographic characteristics. The audience of community media is seen as a group of people who are part of a complex set of social structures, but nonetheless hold some identifying group relations (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2002).

Simply put, community media should enable and facilitate access as well as participation by community members. The focus should be on those groups that are often misrepresented, under-represented, disadvantaged, repressed or stigmatised by mainstream media. By giving such groups a platform for their voices to be valued and heard, community media should strengthen their internal identity, manifest this identity to the external world, and eventually trigger social change and development of the community (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2002).

4.6.2 APPROACH TWO- ALTERNATIVE TO MAINSTREAM MEDIA

The second approach identifies community media as an alternative or supplement to mainstream commercial media. According to Carpentier, Lie and Servaes (2002), mainstream media are large-scaled commercial or state-owned organisations catering to large, homogenous audience segments which are vertically structured and staffed by professionals; such media are the carriers of dominant discourses and representations. In contrast, community media are small-scaled horizontally structured organisations which are-

- Independent from the market and the state;

- Oriented towards disadvantaged societal groups or communities;

- Carriers of non-dominant, often counter-hegemonic, representations and discourses respecting the diversity of the audience and focusing on their self-representation.

However, the very features which differentiate community media from mainstream media also put it in a disadvantageous position in the media spectrum. Their size, independent nature and organisational structure may lead to organisational and financial instability. Because they cater to marginal groups, they reach a limited audience. This may result in marginalisation or even the downfall of community media.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss how the very distinctness of community media from mainstream commercial media can lead to its marginalisation or downfall.

_____

_____

4.6.3 APPROACH THREE- COMMUNITY MEDIA AS PART OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The third approach deems community media to be a part of civil society. Jan Servaes in his book *Communication for Development: One World, Multiple Cultures (1999)* considers community media to be the 'third voice' between private commercial media and state media.

Thompson (1995) has formulated a contemporary Western society-inspired model to understand civil society that is generally applicable to most countries and continents given the pre-dominance of the neo-liberal market economy across the world. His model places civil society in between the public and private domains. The public domain is constituted by organisations related to or owned by the state, whereas private-owned organisations as well as family and personal relations are deemed by Thompson to constitute the private domain. Civil society, on the other hand,

refers to the intermediate organisations separate from those operating in the public and private domains.

In the context of the media landscape, often there is an overlap between the public and private domains. Media deregulation resulting from neo-liberalism often results in public-sector media organisations to adopt market-driven and efficiency-oriented approaches (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2002). An increased emphasis on audience maximisation further pushes the community to the background, causing such media organisations to focus all their efforts at the societal level. Herein lies the significance of community media. Carpentier, Lie and Servaes (2002) state that community media is essential for the long-term viability of democracy. By facilitating the participation of marginalised citizens and groups in media content creation, they lead to the democratisation of media. Such micro-participation of citizens in the public sphere paves the way for facilitating and strengthening the different forms of citizen participation at the macro level.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. Citing examples, discuss the role played by community media in strengthening democracy through citizen participation in the public sphere.

   _____

   _____

4.6.4 APPROACH FOUR- COMMUNITY MEDIA AS RHIZOME

In botany, rhizome is a type of plant root situated either at the surface of the soil or underground that grows horizontally extending sideways from the main plant root[10]. Rhizomes contain nodes from which new shoots and roots grow up out of the ground; when separated, each piece of a rhizome is

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[10] Retrieved from https://study.com/academy/lesson/rhizomes-definition-examples-quiz.html

capable of producing a new plant[11]. Examples of rhizomes include ginger, bamboo, lotus, turmeric, ferns, irises, peppermint, aloe etc.

As a philosophical concept, rhizome was proposed by the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. In the context of community media, the fourth approach deems the role played by such media as similar to that of a rhizome. Community media do not operate completely outside the realm of the state or the market, but rather play the catalysing role of a crossroad facilitating the meeting and collaboration of people, groups and communities from diverse movements and struggles (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2002). While facilitating collaboration and partnership between different groups, community media can simultaneously question as well as destabilise the rigidities and certainties of public and commercial media organisations (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2002).

One potential threat to the fourth approach to community media as rhizome may arise from the fluid and contingent nature of such media. The elusive nature of community media may prevent the creation of a common ground which in turn may threaten the very structure and unity of the media itself thereby preventing the emergence of a well-defined community media-movement (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes, 2002).

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. Discuss the catalysing role played by community media as a crossroad for collaboration between groups and communities from diverse movements and struggles. Give examples to support your answer.

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   _____

   _____

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[11] Retrieved from https://biologydictionary.net/rhizome/

4.7 DIFFERENT FORMS OF COMMUNITY MEDIA

The forms of community media varies from country to country. It can take the form of public-access television, community radio, participatory video projects, community newspapers and magazines, online websites, blogging, grassroots comics, theatre, puppetry, dance and so on.

Public-access television is a free television channel in which the programming content is created by members of the general public. Such channels are narrowcast via specialty channels in cable television. Often public-access television is grouped with public, educational and governmental television channels (PEG). This form of community media originated in the United States. Today public-access television operates in many countries across the world like United States, United Kingdom, South Africa, Canada, Fiji, New Zealand, Austria and so on.

UNESCO has deemed *radio* to be the most widespread form of community media in the developing world. This is mainly because of the cost-efficient nature of radio production. Radio sets also happen to be cheaper than television sets. Moreover, radio, unlike television, can cater to both literate and non- literate audience alike. Today community radios operate in countries such as Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Philippines, Nepal, New Zealand, South Africa, Solomon Islands, South Korea, Sweden, Syria, Thailand, United Kingdom and United States.

Participatory video projects involve a series of video production and video screening activities wherein a group/community participate in creating, editing and screening of videos in order to communicate their problems, needs, issues and perspectives to policy makers in particular and the wider public/community in general.

Community newspapers and magazines refer to a range of community-oriented publications which demonstrate a high level of local engagement.

Such media are often free-of-cost and generally published on a weekly or monthly basis. They tend to focus on small towns, suburbs and neighbourhoods. The *Fitzrovia News* is an example of a community newspaper that is produced and distributed free-of-cost by volunteers who live and work in the Fitzrovia district in London, United Kingdom. *Jagran CitiPlus*, an initiative of *Dainik Jagran*, is an example of a community newspaper in India.

Community blogs are operated by members of the general public, who may or may not be professionally trained journalists, to highlight issues of interest to their community/group in an online forum. Many such blogs often take up the role of watchdogs to hold commercial and public-owned organisations and media outlets accountable for their actions or inactions.

Unlike mainstream comics, *grassroots comics* are created by the common masses to invite local debates among people from different socio-economic stratum of society[12]. Distributed in a limited geographical area, such comics are often posted in easy-to-see locations of the demarcated area such as bus stops, schools, village meeting places, shops, electricity poles, offices, notice boards, trees and so on.

4.8 SUMMING UP

Community media offers an alternative to mainstream privately- owned and public-sector mass media. Its primary purpose is the representation of those individuals, groups and communities which are under-represented and neglected by mainstream media on the one hand, while being marginalised or repressed in society on the other. It gives such groups and individuals the opportunity and platform to communicate their perspectives, problems and issues in their own words. It also plays the road of a crossroad where people and groups from diverse walks of life who are engaged in different types of mass movements and activism can collaborate and unite. Unlike mainstream

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[12] Retrieved from https://www.worldcomicsindia.com/grassroots_comics.php

media, community media is able to maintain editorial independence due to its non-reliance on advertising. This peculiar feature of community media ensures plurality and multiplicity of content. It must be noted that the forms of community media are not restricted to the examples discussed in this unit. Based on the need, geographical area, and level of access and participation, many other forms of traditional and new media are used for mobilising communities and groups across the world.

4.9 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning of community media.

2. Discuss the distinct characteristics which differentiate community media from mainstream media.

3. What are some objectives and principles that guide the creation and operation of community media organisations?

4. Discuss the different forms of community media using examples.

5. Critically analyse the four theoretical approaches to community media i.e.

   - Their role in serving the community;

   - Their existence as an alternative to mainstream media;

   - Their position as a part of civil society;

   - Their role as rhizome in society.

4.10 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/cee9/7bd057e0c4d2948c6c0fc0725b738ee
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MODULE II: EVOLUTION OF COMMUNITY MEDIA

UNIT 5: HISTORY OF COMMUNITY MEDIA- INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Objective

5.3 History of Community Media- The Beginning in the 1940s

      5.3.1 The Miners' Radio in Bolivia

      5.3.2 Radio Sutatenza in Colombia

5.4 Rise of Community Media during the 1970s and 80s

      5.4.1 Challenge for Change Project

      5.4.2 Public-Access Television in the United States

5.5 Current Status of Community Media

5.6 Summing Up

5.7 Questions

5.8 Recommended Readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION

From the previous units you have understood that community media functions as an alternative media for the people whose voices are unheard in the process of mainstreaming in media. In other words, community media emerged with the purpose of democratising the media by challenging the domination of national media and private commercial media as well as the political and economic structures and policies favouring some interests over others (Rennie, 2006). The birth of community media coincided with the development of social movements seeking to foster political change and expand the democratic participation of citizens in the public sphere (Brevini, 2015).

5.2 OBJECTIVE

A thorough study of this unit will enable you

- To state the growth and evolution of community media across the world
- To write about the some global pioneering community media movements and events

5.3 HISTORY OF COMMUNITY MEDIA- THE BEGINNING IN THE 1940s

The birth of community media can be traced back to the 1940s in Latin America. The primary motivations behind these pioneering experiences were the social, political and economic injustices prevalent among the local population in this part of the world (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). This unit will discuss the community radio movements that took shape in Bolivia and Colombia both of which paved the way for the rise and spread of the community media movement across the world.

5.3.1 THE MINERS' RADIO IN BOLIVIA

In early 20th century Bolivia was one of the most economically backward countries in the world. Its economy was primarily dependent on agriculture and mining. The latter produced 25% of the country's GDP and employed 3.2% of the population. During World War II, Bolivia produced 50% of the world's tin production. Ironically the enormous mining wealth of Bolivia was also one of the reasons behind the country's backwardness and poverty.

During that time three families i.e. the Patinos, the Aramayos and the Hochschilds controlled 80% of the Bolivian mining industry. Popularly known as *la rosca* (tin barons), these extravagantly rich Bolivian families along with the *gamonales* (agricultural landowners), controlled every aspect of the country's political, social and economic affairs. They owned and

published all the major newspapers. They owned all the major banks in the country. They bought presidents, public leaders and politicians. They even installed governments and overthrew them at will.

While the la rosca became increasingly wealthy and powerful, the mining proletariat continued to live and work in inhumane, exploitative and unsafe conditions. Since the mines were located in remote areas, the workers were completely reliant on the mining companies for housing. They were forced to live at very high altitudes in primitive mining camps without the bare minimum necessities of life. They had to purchase food and other essential items from the *pulperias* (company shops) often at higher prices. They were paid measly wages for hours of back breaking work. The mines were a death trap. They were extremely humid, unbearably hot, and were often flooded to the waist. It was typical for miners to die from silicosis by the age of 40. The lack of safety precautions and the resulting accidents in the mines further reduced the life expectancy of the miners. It was in this backdrop that the first community radio service in Bolivia called *Voz del Minero* (Voice of the Miner) was set up by the trade union of the Siglo XX mine in the Department of Potosi. Over the years, 23 community radio stations were set up in various mining areas of Bolivia. Together these radio stations came to be known as the Miners' Radios.

The Miners' Radios helped unite miners across Bolivia thriving on their common interests and struggles. Their efforts to counter the negative propaganda of the government against the miners' interests were commendable. Often these radio stations had to bear the brunt of successive governments in the country as well as that of military forces. Their equipments were confiscated, their station premises were destroyed, and many stations were forced to shut down. After decades of struggle, the efforts of the miners' finally paid off when they successfully organised a nation-wide strike in 1981 that ultimately brought dictatorship to an end in Bolivia.

Besides generating awareness about and fighting for miners' rights, the Miners' Radios were also involved in educational and cultural activities. The

stations conducted and broadcast festivals of miners' poetry; discussions about the aesthetic value of songs and other popular art forms; discussions on educational issues and so on (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). While the programming policy and management of the stations was vested in the hands of the trade unions, the establishing and operating costs were borne by the miners themselves. The Miners' Radios flourished between the 1960s and early 1980s. However, as the price of tin began to fall, around 20,000 miners in Bolivia were thrown out of the mining industry following the passing of the 1985 neo-liberal government decree. Most of the stations were taken over by peasant groups. Today only a handful of such community radio stations remain in existence.

5.3.2 RADIO SUTATENZA IN COLOMBIA

The foundation of community media in Colombia was laid down by Jose Joaquin Salcedo Guarin, a Catholic priest in Sutatenza, an Andean village. Salcedo started a community radio called Radio Sutatenza in 1947 using a simple home-made transmitter having a range of two to three km. By 1978, Radio Sutatenza grew to become the biggest and the most powerful Latin American radio broadcasting network for rural education in Colombia (Fraser & Estrada, 2001).

During that time, illiteracy was at an all-time high among the rural communities in Colombia, particularly among the peasants. The social and economic conditions of the communities were no better. Father Salcedo felt that the best way to bring the rural communities out of their misery and under development while simultaneously educating them would be through the means of radio. The medium could easily penetrate into the most isolated, remote and under-developed mountainous regions of Colombia. Radio sets were cheaper to make, buy and distribute. A single radio set could be used by multiple families simultaneously. The listeners of radio did not necessarily have to be literate, but just had to be able to understand the local language of the masses.

Initially the programmes broadcast in the station consisted of the farmers and peasants performing local music. Soon the focus shifted to educational programmes covering a wide range of topics such as mathematics, sanitation and health, family and personal relationships, farm production, sports and leisure, literacy, writing, housing improvements, family planning and so on (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). These educational programmes were developed by the community members themselves with the help of Father Salcedo and the Accion Cultural Popular (ACPO), a Catholic organisation. Thus, came into existence the informal Radio Schools of Sutatenza.

Every evening small groups of villagers assembled together to listen to the radio broadcasts. These groups of listeners were assigned monitors, individuals with more experience and knowledge than the rest of the group. To complement the radio broadcasts, the ACPO produced many textbooks and set up a Peasant's Library consisting of a 100 books on diverse topics. A weekly magazine was also published. Technical courses and training of peasant leaders were also undertaken.

The Roman Catholic Church was an ardent supporter of the Radio Schools of Sutatenza. A large bulk of the operation's funding was provided by the Church. During his papal visit to Colombia in 1968, Pope Paul VI blessed the operation. ACPO too brought in investments from many international agencies to the operation.

Soon Radio Sutatenza began broadcasting 19 hours of educational programmes every day and covered 687 towns and the four main Colombian cities at the time. It became a model for rural education initiatives through community media in many other places in Latin America like Chile, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela and Nicaragua. Unfortunately Radio Sutatenza became the victim of its own success. As its popularity soared, the station began introducing family planning programmes. The purpose behind these programmes was to educate the largely illiterate population, particularly those in the rural and mountainous regions, about the importance of responsible parenthood, responsible maternity and responsible procreation.

In an orthodox country dominated by strict traditional religious ideals, the broadcasting of such programmes infuriated the Church hierarchy in Colombia. The Church held the belief that the sole purpose of sexual intercourse was procreation. It looked at the progressive ideals promoted by Radio Sutatenza as a direct challenge to its authority and an undermining of the Church values. So the Church withdrew its support from the station. It successfully convinced the other Catholic groups in Europe which had previously funded the station's operations to withdraw their support as well as funding.

Following the withdrawal of support and funding from the Church and other Catholic groups, the station somehow managed to operate for a couple of years drawing on the international funding brought in by the ACPO. Soon the station began to struggle and accumulated a massive financial debt forcing it to sell its equipment and infrastructure to a commercial network in 1985. After 40 dedicated years of serving the peasant and farming community of Colombia, the station finally shut down permanently in 1987. The remaining assets of the station which comprised of a publishing house, a musical records pressing plant, a 14-storey office block in the capital, as well as several peasant training centres were sold off to meet its debts (Fraser & Estrada, 2001).

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. Find out similar community media initiatives that were undertaken in the 1940s across the world.

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   _____

   _____

5.4 RISE OF COMMUNITY MEDIA DURING THE 1970s AND 80s

Although the Miners' Radios in Bolivia and the informal Radio Schools of Sutatenza set the trend and the backdrop for the development of community media, they were not a media 'for the people, of the people, and by the

people' in the true sense (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). The Miners' Radios of Bolivia developed during the on-going global ideological clash between Capitalism and Marxism. The primary purpose behind the Miners' Radios was to unite mine workers across Bolivia to fight for better wages and safe working conditions. Therefore, it was more of a trade union radio, rather than a community radio. Radio Sutatenza, on the other hand, although inspired by the philosophy of catering to the peasant community, was never actually owned or even directly managed by the peasants themselves. They merely assisted in the conceptualisation of some programmes broadcast by the station. They gave their feedback about integrating their needs, interests and desires into the programming. But all of this is not sufficient to qualify Radio Sutatenza as a true community media.

The actual development of community media in its present sense i.e. as a critique of and an alternative to mainstream commercial media, both privately-owned as well as publicly-owned- happened in Europe from the 1960s onwards (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). This unit will discuss two pioneering community media initiatives related to documentary video and public-access television that took shape in Canada and the United States respectively.

5.4.1 *CHALLENGE FOR CHANGE* PROJECT

One of the earliest and best known initiatives for democratising television production was undertaken by the National Film Board (NFB) of Canada in 1967. NFB's signature project called *Challenge for Change*, led by NFB film maker Colin Low, focusing on the residents of Fogo Island in News found and pioneered the use of documentary video to initiate positive social-economic change. The residents of Fogo Island at the time were on the verge of relocating themselves away from the island with government aid. With the decline of the fishing industry, the primary industry of the island, unemployment was at an all-time high. The residents of the island were also

divided and constantly clashing amongst themselves based on religious and ancestral differences.

The *Challenge for Change* project brought the residents of Fogo Island, who were also the subjects of the television documentary, into a collaborative relationship with the film makers by involving them in the production and editorial process. Residents were encouraged to contribute ideas for the stories highlighted in the documentary. They were invited to screen as well as give their feedback on rushes. Sometimes scenes were re-shot as per the desire of the participants. The Fogo island project eventually evolved into 27 short films focusing on specific issues relevant to the island's residents, key individual residents, and important events that had an impact on the lives of the island's community.

The *Challenge for Change* project influenced a generation of independent film makers and television producers to use television as a participatory media to enhance community communication. In fact the project can be considered as the precursor to the community television movement. Over the years, the project has been successfully replicated internationally- in many third world countries across the world as well as in developed nations like the United States.

5.4.2 PUBLIC-ACCESS TELEVISION IN THE UNITED STATES

Following his successful stint as the director of the *Challenge for Change* project, George C. Stoney returned to the United States in 1970. With the help of his colleague Red Burns, a documentary film maker from Canada, Stoney co-founded the Alternate Media Centre (AMC) in New York to train ordinary citizens in video production in the new medium of public-access television. AMC sought to address local issues and concerns through the perspectives of local populations. For his immense contributions in participatory, community-oriented television, Stoney is often considered to be the father of public-access television in the United States.

Dissatisfied with public television broadcasting in the late 1960s, media access advocates sought to utilise the democratising potential of portable video recording equipment and the cable network to make television production available to common citizens (Encylopedia.com, 2019). This issue was taken up by the newly formed AMC which successfully replicated the *Challenge for Change* model of participatory media production in the United States. It equipped individual citizens and local non-profit groups and organisations with the necessary infrastructure, equipment and training so as to enable them to produce their own video tapes. It also facilitated their active participation in the production of cable television programmes by, for and about their local communities (Encylopedia.com, 2019). The AMC also provided logistical support as well as the necessary technical resources required for the production and distribution of such community-oriented programmes from the local to the national levels. The AMC successfully organised a nation-wide participatory community communications programmes by training facilitators and sending them across the country to help in the organisation of community media-access centres.

The AMC pioneered the development of many organisations such as the U.S.-based Alliance for Community Media and international groups like Open Channel which promoted community television through local outreach programmes, regulatory reform measures, and media literacy efforts (Encylopedia.com, 2019).

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. Using examples discuss how the *Challenge for Change* Project has been successfully replicated in the Third World.
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2. Find out similar community media initiatives that were undertaken in the 1970s and 80s across the world.
   _____
   _____

5.5 CURRENT STATUS OF COMMUNITY MEDIA

Radio was among the first mediums of mass communication utilised for participatory, community communication. Gradually with the advent of television the mass media for participatory communication extended to include cable television, public-access television, documentaries, short films, feature films and so on. Unit 10 will elaborate on how print media i.e. newspapers and magazines have developed over the years as forms of community media. Another form of print media that has recently developed as a form of community media is grassroots comics. With the advent of new technology i.e. the internet, mobile phones and information and communication technologies (ICTs), information exchange now takes place at a global level across geography and space. These new technologies have brought about a communication revolution, particularly in the under-developed and developed parts of the world where they are the primary drivers of social change. It has broadened the scope and avenues for community building and interaction at the grassroots level through collaborative work, activism, participation in public affairs, socio-economic empowerment, expression of individual and group identity and so on.

5.6 SUMMING UP

Community media celebrates diversity amidst the elitism of public service broadcasting and the homogeneity of commercial media. The use of media to meet the needs of the community has been an age old practice. Today we have come a long way from our days of using hand gestures, verbal words, sounds, smoke signals, dance, paintings, theatre and other traditional forms of communication. In order to make community media more efficient, the need of the hour is a perfect and balanced blend of traditional and modern technology-based mass media.

5.7 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss some factors which motivated the development of community media.

2. Give an overview of the development of community media, focusing on the birth of community radio in Latin America in the 1940s.

3. Trace the development of community media during the 1970s and 80s.

4. Discuss the current status of community media in the world.

5.8 RECOMMENDED READINGS

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UNIT 6: COMMUNITY MEDIA IN INDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Objectives

6.3 Beginning of the Community Radio Movement during the 1990s

6.4 Rise of Community Radio post 2000

6.5 Community Media Pioneers- *Voices*, *Drishti Media* & *Myrada*

6.6 Community Media in North East India

6.7 Summing Up

6.8 Questions

6.9 References and Recommended Readings

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The global Community Radio Movement began in the 1940s in Latin America with the setting up of the Miners' Radios in Bolivia and the informal Radio Schools of Sutatenza in Colombia. In the years that followed, many countries across the world were engulfed in the Community Radio Movement. India was a late bloomer to this pioneering and transformative media movement. In fact, India was one of the last countries in South Asia to open up licenses for community radio (Thomas, 2011).

6.2 OBJECTIVES

This unit will enable you -

- To explain the development of the Community Radio Movement in India during the 1990s and post 2000

- To discuss the three community media pioneers who played a significant role in the development of community radio as a tool for the representation and empowerment of poor, marginalised, rural communities i.e. *Voices*, *Drishti Media* and *Myrada*

- To describe the state of community media in North East India

6.3 BEGINNING OF THE COMMUNITY RADIO MOVEMENT DURING THE 1990s

In India, the campaign to legitimise community radio began in the mid-1990s after the Supreme Court's landmark judgement on airwaves given out by Justice P. B. Sawant and Justice S. Mohan on 9th February 1995. In the case of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting vs. the Cricket Association of Bengal regarding the right of the latter to give telecasting rights to an agency of its choice, the Supreme Court ruled that airwaves constitute public property and must be utilised for advancing public good[13]. Following this historic judgement, the community radio movement gained momentum in India. However, campaigners for community radio had to struggle for another decade to acquire the right to set up non-profit community radio stations that were owned and operated by local people, particularly rural communities.

From September 11-14, 1996 representatives from All India Radio (AIR), non-governmental organisations involved in development activities, universities, journalists and members of the broadcasting establishment met in the four day *Consultation on Community Radio and Media Policy* held at Bangalore for discussing the establishment of a democratic, dynamic and people-oriented system of public service broadcasting in India[14]. The Consultation proposed institutionalising and expanding the concept of community radio as a third tier of broadcasting by involving people at all

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[13] The Community Radio Movement in India- A Chronology of Events. Retrieved from http://www.sancomonline.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/The-CR-Movement-in-India.pdf

[14] Bangalore Declaration on Radio, 1996. Retrieved from http://www.cmarch.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Bangalore-Declaration-on-Radio_1996.pdf

levels throughout the country. The result of the Consultation was the formulation of the *Bangalore Declaration on Radio*.

The *Bangalore Declaration* was followed by the *Pastapur Initiative on Community Radio Broadcasting*. A group of media practitioners, media researchers, trainers and educators, non-governmental organisations involved in developmental activities, journalists, representatives from All India Radio (AIR), and faculty and students of mass communication and law met at Hyderabad and Pastapur, Andhra Pradesh from July 17-20, 2000 to discuss and evolve a policy for community radio in India[15]. The UNESCO-sponsored Consultation urged the Government of India to create a three-tier structure of broadcasting by adding non-profit, people-owned and managed community radio to the already existing network of state-owned public radio and private-owned commercial radio.

The *Bangalore Declaration* and the *Pastapur Initiative on Community Radio Broadcasting* played a significant role in spearheading and developing the community radio movement in India.

6.4 RISE OF COMMUNITY RADIO POST 2000

Following the activism surrounding the community radio movement in the country, the Government of India issued the first set of community radio guidelines in December 2002. Drafted by Dr. Hari Om Srivastava, these guidelines allowed the setting up of community radio stations by well-established educational institutions including IITs/IIMs (MIB, 2006). On 1st February, 2004 Anna FM, located at the Educational Multimedia Research Centre (EMMRC) in the Chennai campus of Anna University was launched. Anna FM made history by becoming the first ever campus community radio station of India. Meanwhile advocates and practitioners of community radio

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[15] CR Forum India. The Pastapur Initiative on Community Radio Broadcasting. Retrieved from http://www.cmarch.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/The-Pastapur-Initiative-on-Community-Broadcasting.pdf

across India continued to pressure the government to expand the mandate of community radio to include communities residing in remote, hill and rural areas of the country.

It was only on 16th November 2006 that the government finally formulated and implemented a wider Community Radio Policy by bringing non-profit organisations like civil society and voluntary organisations, State Agriculture Universities (SAUs), ICAR institutions, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Registered Societies and Autonomous Bodies and Public Trusts registered under Societies Act or any other such act relevant for the purpose under its ambit to allow greater participation by the civil society on issues relating to development and social change (MIB, 2006). Two years later on 15 October, 2008 India's first community-based radio station licensed to an NGO was launched in Machnoor village at the Medak district of Andhra Pradesh. It is also the first all-woman community radio station in India. Called Sangham, the station is an initiative of UNESCO and the Deccan Development Society (DDS), an Andhra Pradesh-based grassroots organisation working with women's groups across several villages in the state. The station is owned, operated and managed by the Dalit peasant women from Machnoor village. The station addresses issues on food sovereignty and women; sees sovereignty and women; women and land ownership; ecological enterprises for rural women; women and ecological agriculture; women and biodiversity; healthcare and plant medicines; violence against women; retrieving local culture, language and traditions in food and farming; herbal care for animal diseases; legal education for women; making children's education relevant to rural milieu and so on[16].

On 23rd January 2017, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) amended the existing Community Radio Guidelines enabling community radio stations to broadcast news and current affairs exclusively sourced from All India Radio (AIR) in their original form or after being translated to the

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[16] Retrieved from https://digitalknowledgecentre.in/listings/sangham-radio/

local language or dialect. Before this amendment, community radio stations in the country were not permitted to broadcast news or current affairs. In addition to this, limited advertising and announcements related to local businesses and services, events and employment-related information have also been allowed. However, advertising has been limited to maximum seven minutes per hour of broadcast.

In August 2019, the MIB announced the allocation of two additional frequencies i.e. 89.6 MHz and 90.0 MHz for community radio stations[17]. The Ministry also stated that a Community Radio Cell would be set up to redress grievances and collate actionable suggestions put forward by stakeholders.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar recently announced in September 2019 that as many as 118 new community radio stations are in the process of being set up in various parts of the country i.e. 16 from Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts, 6 from most LWE affected districts, 25 from coastal districts, 17 from aspirational districts, 3 from North East and 2 from Jammu and Kashmir[18]. These stations are expected to become operational within the next six months. At present there are more than 260 operational community radio stations across India[19].

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[17] BusinessLine Bureau. (2019, August 29). *BusinessLine Web Site*. Retrieved from https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/info-tech/2-more-frequencies-for-community-radios/article29291434.ece

[18] Press Trust of India (PTI). (2019, September 14). 118 new community radio stations to be set up: Union Minister Prakash Javadekar. *India Today Web Site.* Retrieved from https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/new-community-radio-stations-prakash-javadekar-1598948-2019-09-14

[19] ANI. (2019, September 13). 118 new Community Radio Stations to be set-up across country: Prakash Javdekar. *ANI Web Site*. Retrieved from https://www.aninews.in/news/national/general-news/118-new-community-radio-stations-to-be-set-up-across-country-prakash-javdekar20190913200134/

6.5 COMMUNITY MEDIA PIONEERS- *VOICES*, *DRISHTI MEDIA & MYRADA*

As already discussed in Section 1.3 and 1.4 of the present unit, despite being an efficient medium for voice-based community media having the potential to empower rural communities plagued by high levels of illiteracy and poverty, until 16th November 2006, independent organisations (with the exception of educational institutions) and communities were restricted from setting up their own community radio stations. Making the best of a bad situation, organisations like *Voices*, a Bangalore-based development communication group working for and with marginalised groups across India, and *Drishti Media* adopted the concept of narrowcasting[20]. It should be noted that Voices had convened the 1996 *Consultation on Community Radio and Media Policy* which resulted in the formulation of the *Bangalore Declaration on Radio*. The two pioneering organisations collaborated with two NGOs- *Myrada* (Mysore Resettlement and Development Agency) in Bangalore and the *Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan* in Gujarat- to train rural community reporters in the production of audio programmes. The audio production was done in a small studio where eminent village personalities and local politicians were interviewed; folk songs were recorded with local artists; and school children often recited poems and speeches by eminent personalities. The programmes were played out over loud-speakers in

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[20] Narrowcasting refers to the dissemination of information via any mass media (radio, television, newspaper, magazine, internet etc.) to a niche audience, instead of the broader public in general.

common community areas; at Panchayat meetings; and within listener groups comprising of women working in self-help groups. (Seth, 2013)

Another pioneering initiative undertaken by Myrada and Voices was *Namma Dhwani* (meaning 'Our Voices). Namma Dhwani was India's first cable-based community radio station. The station was set up at Budikote village in the Kolar district of Karnataka in 2003 in partnership with women's self-help groups of Budikote village. UNESCO had provided funding for the equipment besides providing support for capacity building. The target audience of the station was illiterate women of the community. The programme production for the station was done at Budikote village itself with the involvement of women. Given the repressive broadcasting policies of the government at the time, this was a daring step. Even though Namma Dhwani could not set up its own radio station, it purchased air time at cheap rates at cable TV which was run by local operators. Of course the channel did not have any video, instead a blank blue screen with only audio. Given the high penetration of television in the community, Namma Dhwani was a fantastic outreach channel (Seth, 2013).

These experimental community radio sets-ups were extremely successful. They were instrumental in paving the way for the November 2006 Community Radio Guidelines issued and implemented by the Government of India.

6.6 COMMUNITY MEDIA IN NORTH EAST INDIA

Although the rest of the country has made tremendous strides in the community media sector in general, in the North East part of India, community media is still at its nascent stage. Given the diversity and plurality of the society in the North East composed of hundreds of social, ethnic and linguistic groups, mainstream media has so far been unsuccessful in reflecting the interests, issues, experiences and perspectives of the region's population. In such a scenario, community media tailored for the region has the potential to reflect the diversity of its people.

The first initiative to set up a community radio station in the North East was undertaken by the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), the only State Open University in the region. The University started the first community radio station in the region on 28th January, 2009. Called *Jnan Taranga*, the station was started on an experimental basis from the Assam Administrative Staff College located in Guwahati city. The station was officially launched on 20th November 2010. A year later on 1st March, 2011 the second community radio station of the region called *Radio Luit* was formally launched by Gauhati University.

Brahmaputra Community Radio Station (BCRS), popularly known as *Radio Brahmaputra* is the first non-commercial grassroots community radio station of the North East. Located at Borsaikia Gaon, Hilodhari, Dibrugarh, Assam the station is an initiative of the Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research (C-NES). It was started with the initial support of UNICEF. Remarkable none of the stations' team led by coordinator Bhaskar Bhuyan had any previous journalism and reporting training; the team developed as reporters through training after the idea of the station took shape[21]. The station's programming caters to five communities residing in and around the area in as many local languages i.e. Shadri, Bhojpuri, Mishing, Assamese and Bodo. Today the station broadcasts on 90.4 FM from Dibrugarh for eight hours in a day. Infact its footprints have reached three other districts across and along the Brahmaputra River.

At present except for Assam, no other state in the North East has a functional community radio station[22].

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[21] Radio Bharmaputra. *Centre for North East Studies and Policy Research Web Site*. Retrieved from https://www.c-nes.org/programmes/radio-brahmaputra/

[22] Dutta, Dr. Ankuran; Ray, Dr. Anamika. Community Radio in North East India. Retrieved from http://edaa.in/download/article/Community%20Radio%20in%20North%20East.pdf

6.7 SUMMING UP

The movement for community radio has been a decades' long struggle spearheaded by media professionals, academicians, activists, civil society and non-governmental organisations, educational institutions, government agencies, private individuals and so on. Community media has since then come a long way in India. In the North East region of India, however, the community media movement is yet to fully jump start. Community media are the embodiment of a true decentralised democracy that was envisaged by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. In the context of the North East in particular, community media has the potential to act as a catalysing force to empower the region's population on the one hand, while simultaneously bringing the region itself out of the brink of under-development.

6.8 QUESTIONS

1. Give a historical overview of the Community Radio Movement in India during the 1990s, focusing on some pioneering events and initiatives that took place during that time.

2. Discuss the policy initiatives undertaken by the Government of India in the post 2000 period with regard to community radio broadcasting.

3. Explain the role played by three community media pioneers i.e. *Voices*, *Drishti Media* and *Myrada* that were instrumental in laying the foundation of community-based radio stations in India.

4. In your opinion, how far have the two community radio stations currently operational in the North East i.e. *Jnan Taranga* and *Radio Brahmaputra* been successful in their endeavour to represent the diversity and plurality of the region on the one hand, while simultaneously empowering its population on the other?

6.9 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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UNIT 7: COMMUNITY MEDIA vs MASS MEDIA

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

An active media is the most important requirement of any democracy. A democracy survives and thrives because of the existence of both consenting and dissenting voices, which do not allow misuse of power, keep a check on the powerful or the ones in control of resources, thus ensuring that equal opportunities are available to all. Media plays an important role in all this, as it carries information about various schemes and initiatives implemented/started for the development of the country. If the media is compromised and lies in the hands of a few, it leads to a pin-hole view of important issues. The people are not apprised of their rights. Media companies/organisations can be either owned by the govt., individual or group, it should allow plurality of voices to exist so that the audience is exposed to different perspectives.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

A thorough study of this unit will enable you

- To describe the different types of media ownership and its influence on the information available to the audience.
- To explain the significance of media plurality.
- To explain how media generate revenue for themselves.

7.3 MEDIA OWNERSHIP

Media ownership pattern is important in a society characterized by free speech. Who owns the media decides to a large extent the content that will be available to the audience. Whether the media is owned by the State or is privately owned- both will have leanings towards the benefits of its patrons and are often owned for vested interests. Sometimes media ownership is seen as a reflection of the political conditions, for example in Scandinavia where public funding of media ensures media pluralism.

Economy also plays an important role in the owning of a media. Often, people with resources own or buy media outlets to further their business interests. These individuals or groups may have access to resources of different kinds.

Media channels (TV, radio, print, etc.) are owned by government, individuals and/or groups, who have access to resources to create and disseminate media content. This content can be in the form of both entertainment and information.

7.3.1 Types of Media Ownership

There are types of media ownership which fall under the following categories:

a. **Government ownership-** in this type of ownership, the govt takes charge of funding a media organisation, or it may have greater control over the shares of the organisation. The content of the media is influenced by the govt. and it is the govt. that decides what is to be published and what is not.

b. **Private ownership-** private ownership can be related to an individual or group, or can be in the form of cross media, chain or even corporate ownership.

7.3.2 Types of private media ownership

1. **Chain ownership-** this happens when the same media company owns numerous outlets in a single medium, such as a chain of newspapers, a series of radio stations, a string of television stations or several book publishing companies. Chain ownership applies mostly to newspapers.

2. **Cross media ownership-** this is when the same company owns several other entitles along with newspaper, magazines, musical labels, publishers, etc.

3. **Conglomerate ownership-** it means the ownership of several business, one of which is a media business, for example, when a publishing company owns a newspaper along with other segments such as chemical, fertiliser, cement, rubber or plastics factories, etc., or a major corporation has controlling shares in a number of media related business, the pattern is conglomerate. In a conglomerate, there will be interlocking of directorships, which means the same persons will be director of a media company as well as of manufacturing industries or financial corporations.

Vertical integration- this indicates that a media company monopolises the production of the ingredients that go into the making of media products, e.g., a newspaper publisher may own several hundred areas of forests, where the major components of a newspaper, namely wood for newsprints cultivated.

7. 4 CONTROL OF MEDIA

Media is a powerful tool to send messages and information to specific people and groups. The company or organization that controls most of the media sources also control, directly or indirectly, what is the people know, think, perceive and opine about a particular topic. People may think that they are not affected by what they receive through the media, but in reality, if a message is repeated often times, it does gradually influence our thinking and our opinion about the world we live in. Who owns the media has a huge bearing on the type of information that is disseminated. This may lead to a skewered picture sometimes owing to the filtering of information based on the vested interests of the owners of the media company. The various types of media control are discussed below:

a. Government control

Government controls the media through the laws that have been established to regulate their activities. The officials of the government can remove

anybody that does not perform in accordance with the wishes of the government of the day.

b. Advertisers' Control

Advertisers also control the media directly or indirectly. Few advertisers and/or sponsors are given preference over others in order to keep getting advertisements for them. Newspaper and other media organisations need advertisers' patronage to ensure their survival.

c. Private media proprietors' control

The proprietors exert control over their editors and other staff. The proprietors expect those working in their media organizations to understand and protect their interests. The members of staff are expected to make sure that they do not write stories that will be unfavourable to proprietors and their business interests.

7.5 REACH, ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

7.5.1 Reach

Reach is a concept mostly associated with advertising but can be applied also to the media in general. It refers to the number of people who will be exposed to a particular ad or show, at least once, in any medium, during a given period of time. In simple terms, reach is the number of different individuals that are exposed to a specific media content. Media organizations use reach to set their objective for the total number of people who will be exposed to their content. Measuring reach can be tricky because the same person may be exposed to the same media content many times, instead of reaching a wider population. Reach is one of the most important terms in media planning and has three characteristics:

   a. Firstly, reach is a percentage which represents the size of the target audience.

b. Second, it measures the growth of audience over a period of time because reach is measured for a certain duration, as it is assumed that the number of audience members exposed to the media vehicles in a media plan increases over time. For example, reach may grow from 20 (20%) in the first week to 60 (60%) in the fourth week. This pattern of increase in the size of the audience varies depending on the types of media chosen in the media plan.

c. Thirdly, reach doesn't re-count people who are exposed multiple times to the same media content, viz. advertisements, etc.

7.5.1.1 Reach Considerations

As a major component of media objectives, the planned level of reach affects not only media mix decisions but also what media vehicles are used in each media category. High levels of reach will require a different set of media vehicles than low levels of reach. That is, high levels of reach can be better served with a mix that includes multiple media vehicles with different audiences so that cross-media duplication of audience is minimal. For example, if there are three magazines that each reach a portion of the target audience but that have few readers who read more than one magazine, advertising in these three magazines would reach the widest target audience possible because of the low overlap of the readers of the these magazines.

There are many ways to maximize the level of reach of audience. One way is by analyzing the audience composition by using audience research methods such as syndicated research, etc.

7.5.1.2 Frequency Considerations

In contrast to high levels of reach, high levels of frequency can be effectively achieved through advertising in a smaller number of media vehicles to elevate audience duplications within these media vehicles. A commercial that runs three times during a 30-minute television program will result in higher message repetition than the same commercial that runs once in three different programs.

Broadcast media are often used when high levels of frequency are desired in a relatively short period of time. Broadcast media usually enjoy a "vertical" audience, who tune in to a channel for more than one program over hours. Another phenomenon in broadcast media is audience turnover, which refers to the percentage of audience members who tune out during a program. Programs with low audience turnover are more effective for high levels of frequency.

7.6 ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

7.6.1 Access

'Access' finds many usages within the media discourse. One of them is closely related to digital divide. The new media has become an important platform for information, entertainment and discussion related to various issues. In this situation, having access to media technology, in any form (computer, mobile, etc.).

The principal issues concerning discourse on digital divide is centered around the following three elements:

a. access to online computers;
b. increase in information, communication and knowledge as a result of access to online computers;
c. absence of the above two may create or sustain a society which is characterised by things people have or do not have.

The focus in discussions on digital divide is on access to media technologies and more specifically, to Information and Communication Technologies or ICTs, which allows people to access content of the media. This access is of two types: *physical access* and *system access.* Physical access refers to having access to a computer, a person being able to sit in front of a computer connected to the internet and using it. System access refers to internet connection. System access is further categorized into social and cognitive access, where social access refers to access to the content of specific groups at the societal level and cognitive access describe the psychological

processes by which people process the information they obtain through the internet.

This discourse on access though, dates back to the 1970s in the struggle between the NIEO and NWICO, which led to the formation of the MacBride Commission. The Commission's report *Many Voices, One World,* describes approaches to breaking down barriers to communication imbalance. In terms of production of media content, access plays an important role in acquiring resources, producing and distributing of content. In this light, a concept closely related to community media is the *access media*, which refers to acquiring of inexpensive access to resources of production, such as equipment, etc, with the help of which people will be able to create their own content. These access media may include participatory and interactive components.

7.6.2 Participation

In a democracy, participation relates to control of resources, processes and outcome by media professionals, which often restricts participation only to interaction and access. In this minimalist view, participation is confined mainly to processes of representation through elections that give the expression of a homogenous popular will. In terms of media, participation sustains its definition as contributing to the public sphere, but in reality serves the interests of the mainstream media. In the maximalist approach, participation and representation are a more balanced combination in a democracy, where attempts are made to maximize participation.

There are two types of participation- *partial* and *full*. In partial participation, two or more parties are involved in in the decision-making process, but the power of final decision rests with one party only. In full participation, each individual involved in the decision-making process has the same power to determine the outcome.

In media studies, participation is related to many approaches, viz, Marxist approach, cultural studies, etc. Its role is also emphasized in debates and discussions in the UNESCO. Third area where participation features widely

in media is in the theory of public sphere. Participation is an important component in the public sphere where the participants enter into interpersonal relationships about the community and by the community.

7.7 CONTENT AND CONTENT CREATION PROCESS

Creators of media content choose what is called a **media dispersion approach** when they use multiple media categories, such as a combination of television, radio, newspapers and the Internet for the dissemination of their work. Creating content that entertains, informs and also hooks the audience but, is no easy feat. It is easy to assume that content writers easily make creative content that lures audience. But there are many steps involved in the creation of any form of media content, which are discussed below.

7.7.1 Steps in content creation process

a. Research- research is the most basic but also the most important step before beginning writing for any media. Research should begin with an outline of the campaign that the content supports and its expected outcome. It helps in streamlining the main objectives of the content, the medium or media to be used, the audience for whom the content is meant and also how to create content that will hook the audience. Research is important as it helps in brainstorming ideas.

b. Ideation- once research is over, the content writer now sits for ideation for generating creative and imaginative ideas that can hook the audience. From research notes information about the audience motivation, their wants and needs, topics interesting to them have already been gathered. During the ideation stage all this information is referred to, which helps the writer to decide which information is to be discarded and which one is to be used.

c. Placement- after ideation, the content is created and disseminated through appropriate channels. This list of media should be drawn up.

d. Creation- create content that will be creative, entertaining and informative at the same time.

e. Publication- once the draft content has been refined, it has to be published on media accessible to audience.

7.8. REVENUE MODEL

Most media outlets and organisations are commercial whose main objective is monetary profits. The media organisations/companies follow different revenue models, depending on the ownership pattern, or other important considerations.

Listed below are the four most common revenue models, adopted by most media companies:

a. **Advertising-** advertising has been the most common source of revenue since a long time, in both the traditional media and the new media. Advertisers promote their products on television shows, newspapers, magazines, websites in order to attract audience. They pay to such media who place their ads between their shows/content in lieu of a charge. Ads are used by media so that they can cover their cost of production. By placing their ads in magazines, newspapers, television, they also expect maximum exposure to their product which will lead to better sales and also ensure their presence in the market. In case of print media like newspapers, etc, the advertisements placed in them subsidise the cost of the newspaper for the readers as most revenue for print media is generated through advertisements.

b. **Subscription-** subscriptions are a good source of revenue for media types that are updated continuously- newspapers, magazines, video streaming websites and apps, etc- or services that have ongoing value. Subscriptions have become popular with media companies because they generate steady revenue over a long period of time. The

audience can also customise their subscriptions according to their needs instead of paying a hefty amount at the beginning, after which the service may fall into disuse.

c. **Pay-per-click-** this form of revenue is specific to the internet, where advertisements are placed in websites. Revenue is generated every time the ad is clicked.

d. **Merchandise-** this is a type of secondary income and is popular with media who have a large fan following who would purchase the items. For example, Harry Potter bags, wands as keychains, or Marvel T-shirts, bags etc. Many a times merchandising brings in more income than the media it is related to.

7.9. SUMMING UP

Media pluralism is an important aspect of democratic processes. It ensures that communication channels are open between the public and the govt. Free and unbiased information ensures that the citizens and communities, remain informed and involved in developmental projects and schemes undertaken by the govt. Govt., on the other hand will also understand the needs of the people and will be able to formulate policies accordingly. Media companies conduct research on the reach, frequency and access to their content by the audience from time to time, either by themselves or through a research agency.

Apart from ownership pattern, it is also important to know how media generates revenue for its operation. The most common of revenue sources is advertisements and sponsorships. Subscriptions are another source of revenue for magazines, newspapers, etc, both for traditional and new media formats.

7. 10 QUESTIONS

1. What are the different types of media ownership?

2. Discuss the importance of participation and access with respect to community media.

3. Explain the different steps involved in the creation of media content.

7.11 REFERENECES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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UNIT 8: COMMUNITY RADIO

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Community radio is a third tier of radio broadcasting between state-owned radio and private-owned commercial radio. Unlike the other two types of radio broadcasting, community radio is guided by the principle of democratisation i.e. ownership of the station by the community or group that it serves as well as their participation in the management, operation and programme production of the station.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

A thorough study of this unit will enable you

- To write the meaning of community radio

- To explain the characteristics of community radio

- To describe the principles that guide the operation of community radio

- To explain the different activities involved in the setting up of a community radio station

- To state the programming policy for community radio

8.3 UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY RADIO

Community radio is known by different names in different parts of the world. They are termed *popular radio, miners' radio, educational radio* or *peasants' radio* in Latin America. In Africa, they are called *local rural radio*. *Associative radio, free radio*, *neighbourhood radio* or even *community radio* are some of the terminology used in Europe. The terms *radio for development* and *community radio* are relevant in Asia. In Oceania, the popular terms include *aboriginal radio, public radio* or *community radio*. (Servaes, 1999)

AMARC-Europe (1994) defines community radio as a non-profit radio station "that responds to community concerns because it belongs to and is part of the community" (Servaes, 1999).

According to UNESCO, a community radio station is one that is operated in the community, for the community, about the community, and by the community. It further states that the "community can be territorial or geographical- a township, village, district, or island. It can also be a group of people with common interests, who are not necessarily living in one defined territory".

Lewis (1984) defines community radio as-

> *an autonomous, non-profit in goal, listener supported and controlled, and deliberately offering a content to what was generally available to listeners, which adopting a management structure and broadcasting style that challenged the traditions of professional broadcasting.*

Crisell (1994) has stated that community radio bridges the gap between broadcasters and audiences by providing access to production and presentation, and thus bringing de-professionalisation in radio.

Lotfi Maherzi (1997) defines community radio as-

> *a participatory model for media management and production… The purpose of the stations is to facilitate the free flow of information by encouraging freedom of speech and by enhancing dialogue within the communities concerned in order to promote better participation by their populations.*

Carlos A. Arnaldo states that-

> *Community radio is a social process in which members of the community associate together to design programmes and produce and air them, thus taking on the primary role of actors in their own*

destiny… In every sense, this is participatory communication… It is above all a process, not a technology, not merely a means, because the people are part of that means, and so is the message and audience. (Fraser & Estrada, 2001)

8.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY RADIO

The World Association of Community Broadcasters (AMARC) has given the following distinctive features of community radio-

- Community radios are democratically controlled by the population they serve;

- They respond to the needs of the community they serve;

- They have a modest budget, surviving on the voluntary work of their personnel, charitable contributions from sponsors as well as listeners, and the occasional revenue generated from advertising (Maherzi, 1997).

- They are based on a non-commercial relationship with their audience; they are driven by social objectives, rather than private, profit motive (ITU, 2003);

- They are committed to human rights, social justice, the environment and sustainable approaches to development (ITU, 2003)

- They contribute to the development of the community in such a way so as to bring about social change and development;

- Rather than treating people like passive consumers, community media empowers them; they promote the self-expression of the community members through their participation in the station (ITU, 2003);

- They inform and motivate discussion among community members, and provide entertainment that regenerates the collective soul of the community;

- They offer concrete means for public participation and for defending cultural diversity

- Community media nurtures local knowledge rather than replacing it with standard solutions (ITU, 2003);

In the *Community Radio Handbook* (2001), UNESCO has stated the following characteristics of a community radio station-

- Community radios work in the cultural context of the communities they serve;

- They deal with local issues in the local language or dialect;

- Unlike commercial and public-service broadcasting which treat listeners as objects to be captured for advertising, community radio aspires to treat its listeners as subjects and participants;

- Instead of being an isolated story or event, news on a community radio station is part of an on-going and future process that supports change and development in the community;

- Entertainment is provided in the form of a collective cultural expression;

- Education is more about the sharing of experiences and learning from others in the community;

- Community radio includes minority and marginalised groups on equal terms, rather than giving them an occasional voice;

- It promotes and protects the interests, culture and linguistic diversity of minorities in the community;

- Community radio stations sometimes organise fund-raising events and activities among their audience;

- The equipment required for community radio is robust and easy to maintain, and can function without support from broadcasting engineers beyond some initial training.

8.5 PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY RADIO OPERATIONS

The operation of community radio is guided by the following principles-

- Independence

- Community Ownership

- Self-management

- Access and Participation

- Community-oriented

- Development-oriented

- Promotes diversity

8.5.1 INDEPENDENCE

Community radio is editorially independent of government forces, religious and commercial organisations, and political parties in terms of its programming and policies (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). However, community radio stations have the right to obtain private and public funding, included limited advertising.

8.5.2 COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

Community radios are owned by the communities they serve through a foundation, trust, cooperative or other similar non-profit organisations and institutions. Sometimes an external body which is the formal owner of the station may lend the station and its facilities to a community to be used independently and exclusively (Fraser & Estrada, 2001).

8.5.3 SELF-MANAGEMENT

Irrespective of the nature of ownership of community radio, the station's policies, management and programming are the responsibility of the community. Decisions about the station's daily operation and administration are generally taken by a Station Manager chosen by the members of the community, while general policy making is entrusted to a committee comprising of representatives from the community. (Fraser & Estrada, 2001)

8.5.4 ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

In the context of community radio, access refers to the availability of broadcasting services to all citizens, while participation refers to the active involvement of the public in the planning, operation and management of the station. Access and participation can take place in the following forms-

- The station's broadcasts reaches every community member;

- Not only does the community determine the station's policies and plans, but also determines its management principles, aims and objectives, and programming;

- The community can freely give their feedback and even criticism regarding the station;

- There is constant communication between the audience and the producers of the station;

- The community members have unrestricted opportunities in programme production. (Fraser & Estrada, 2001)

8.5.5 COMMUNITY-ORIENTED

The programming of community radio is primarily focused on local content relevant to the community it serves. Outside news, events and information that are of interest to the community and its members also constitute the programming of community radio.

8.5.6 DEVELOPMENT-ORIENTED

Only when there is a collective perception of the local reality and of the means by which a community can overcome its problems, can development and social change occur. Community radio provides the perfect platform for community members to come together and hold discussions among themselves to collectively determine their problems, the causes leading to those problems, and the possible solutions to the problems. Moreover, community radios should aim to reach policy makers and authorities as well as private and public organisations through their programming to enlighten them about the events occurring at the grassroots level thus, laying the foundation for development initiatives. This will simultaneously serve the purpose of making the government more conscious of and accountable for its responsibilities towards the public. Thus, community radio should connect people with people, people with peoples' organisations, and people with public authorities and functionaries. (Fraser & Estrada, 2001)

8.5.7 DIVERSITY

In community broadcasting, diversity refers to the involvement of all individuals, groups and sub-groups in a community so as to reflect and promote a diversity of voices and opinions. The concept of diversity also applies to the programming of community broadcasting. The style and format of the programmes broadcast in community radio should be based on the preferences, needs and desires expressed by the members of the community.

The programming format and style of community broadcasting is also determined by the livelihood and lifestyle of the community and the specific problems relevant to the members. For instance- community radio stations catering to rural communities often focus on themes like health and sanitation, fishing, farming, primary education, environment, agricultural credit, forestry, horticulture, small-scale enterprises and so on.

8.6 ACTIVITIES IN SETTING UP A COMMUNITY RADIO

The different steps involved in the setting up of a community radio station have been borrowed from the *Community Radio Handbook* published by UNESCO in 2001. Following are some of the practical steps discussed in the Handbook (Fraser & Estrada, 2001)-

- Legal context

- Preparatory work in the Community

- A Mission Statement

- Role of Religious Establishments

- Role of Local Educational Institutions

- Involvement of Politicians

- Choosing a Location in the Community

- Ownership and Management

- Programming

- Staff

- Sustainability

8.6.1 LEGAL CONTEXT

The first step in setting up a community radio station is to find out the national broadcasting guidelines for the licensing of independent radio station (Fraser & Estrada, 2001).

8.6.2 PREPARATORY WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

Social will, not technical equipment, is the real basis of community radio (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). Therefore, a consultation process involving the community should be the next step in the setting up of a community radio station. The consultation process should involve all stakeholders- both internal and external, to determine the following-

- The existing media situation in terms of access and participation of the community;

- The attitude of the community members towards the notion of setting up, operating and managing a community radio station;

- The desire of and enthusiasm for social change and development of community members;

- The ways in which a community radio can serve the interests of the community.

All sectors of the community, particularly marginalised groups, religious minorities, cultural and linguistic groups and so on are the key stakeholders. The consultation process should also include discussions with the formal and informal leaders of the community i.e. elected representatives, religious authorities and opinion leaders. Another key stakeholder group are the people and organisations which although external to the community have a bearing on the project such as public-operated or private-owned commercial radio stations that reach into the community; NGO's and other not-for-profit organisations working for the development of the community; and local

public functionaries involved in government services like health and sanitation, agriculture, education and so on. (Fraser & Estrada, 2001)

8.6.3 A MISSION STATEMENT

The next step is the formulation of a short and concise mission statement highlighting the aims and objectives of the planned station. A mission statement is the foundation on which everything else is built. It is akin to a map to provide the station with directives on how to achieve its objectives. It also acts as an instrument to measure the success of the station. The programming, operation and management of the community radio station should be based on the principles set down in the mission statement. (Fraser & Estrada, 2001)

It should be noted that mission statements are not set in stone. They can be modified and changed, but with the collective consultation of the community.

8.6.4 ROLE OF RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS

There are instances of religious institutions playing a significant role in jump-starting and even running community radio stations. However, not all religious institutions are co-operative. Some may have political affiliations and may try to rub off their politically biased ideologies on the station. In order to ensure that the community radio runs keeping in mind the best interests of the community, the position and role of religious institutions should be clearly pre-determined and demarcated before forging a partnership with them.

8.6.5 ROLE OF LOCAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Just like religious institutions, local educational institutions too play a significant role in community radio broadcasting. School teachers can become volunteer broadcasters for the station to encourage the enrolment of

children in schools; increase parental involvement in children's education; promote adult education and so on.

8.6.6 INVOLVEMENT OF POLITICIANS

The involvement of politicians in community broadcasting is a contested idea. There is the possibility of political involvement and interference in the way the station is run or the content of the station's programming. But politicians genuinely interested in the community's well-being and upliftment may bring the station the required publicity to communicate the voice of the community to policy makers.

8.6.7 CHOOSING A LOCATION IN THE COMMUNITY

Certain technical and social factors should be taken into consideration before setting up a community radio station. The technical factors include position of the transmitter and the antenna; availability of a power source; location of the studio; proximity of the antenna and transmitter to the studio and so on.

The social criteria for setting up a community radio station include the following-

- The studio should be in close proximity to the centre of the community's population so as to make it easily accessible;

- It should be located in a relatively noise-free area or at least in an area that is free from uncontrollable noise sources;

- The studio premises should be either free of rent or should be low rented;

8.6.8 OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

A community radio is in principle owned by the community. However, there has to be an association or organisation representing the interests of the community that can apply for and hold an operating license.

In terms of management, some representative management body or committee that represents the different sectors of the community needs to be formed. The body or committee should be collectively accountable to the community, while individual members should be accountable to the respective sectors they represent. The decision making process by the body should be undertaken in a democratic and transparent manner.

8.6.9 PROGRAMMING

The programming of community broadcasting should abide by the principle of maximum possible community access and participation. Community radio programming will be dealt with in detail in the next section.

8.6.10 STAFF

Community radio stations are almost entirely run by volunteers from the community as producers, technicians, reporters and so on.

8.6.11 SUSTAINABILITY

There are many sources of revenue that community radio can rely on to cover their operating costs (Fraser & Estrada, 2001)-

- National and international donors;

- Commercial advertising, if allowed under the community radio policy of the concerned government;

- Sponsorship, again if allowed by the national community radio legislation;

- Private donations;

- Membership fee paid by listeners.

Regarding advertising, being a not-for-profit mode of broadcasting, community radio should restrict its advertising to local providers of good and

services. Sponsorships too should be from community-based associations, development agencies and NGOs. The same goes for donations.

ASSESS YOUR PROGRESS

1. How can community radio prevent undue interference of external individuals and organisations with vested interests in its day-to-day operation and programming?
   _____
   _____

8.7 COMMUNITY RADIO PROGRAMMING

The programming policy for community radio varies across the world. Following are some types of content that are generally broadcast in a community radio station-

PARTICIPATORY PROGRAMMES

Besides providing entertainment and information to their audience, community radio stations also seek to facilitate social change and progress of the communities they serve. The unique feature of community radio is the involvement and participation of its audience in the planning, operation and evaluation of its programming. The programme content, formal and scheduling of community radios is determined on the basis of the interests, preferences, needs and listening habits of their audience. Besides encouraging community members to participate in the programme production, the station staff should also provide technical support and other facilities to volunteer producers, performers and presenters.

The audience of community radios should be encouraged to provide regular feedback, suggestions and even criticism regarding the station's programming.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Regular local news broadcasts pertaining to the community are the lifeblood of community radio as well as its primary strength that gives the station an advantage while competing against public and commercial broadcasting. Community radio stations can appoint volunteer reporters scattered across the community for gathering and reporting local news. However, the journalistic code of ethics that apply to commercial and government radio are also applicable in the case of community radio. Therefore, community reporters should be properly trained in the ethics of journalism. Being ordinary citizens, they are bound to make the occasional mistake. However, in such a scenario, the mistake should be immediately acknowledged and if possible corrected. For information , it may be noted here that the community radio policy in India does not allow news broadcasting.

COVERAGE OF RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL EVENTS

All religious and cultural events which take place in the community must be adequately covered by the station. This should be done for the purpose of promoting religious harmony in the community. This will also ensure greater emotional connect of the community with the radio station.

EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTS

Education in the broad sense of the word and for the purpose of improving the lives of people is one of the fundamental objectives of community radio (Fraser & Estrada, 2001). However, as a medium for education, radio alone cannot suffice and should be accompanied by other forms of mass media and communication such as printed materials, group discussions, inter-personal communication and so on. Radio can however play a very important role to bring awareness among the people on issues of health, livelihood management and so on. Community radio also plays key role in disaster preparedness among the people on occasions of natural calamity.

8.8 SUMMING UP

The poorest communities across the world lack the necessary resources to voice their needs, experiences and perspectives. Often their voices remain unheard, while the communities themselves get stuck in an endless loop of poverty, neglect and marginalisation. Community media are agencies of "social change, cultural development, and democratization" (Servaes, 1999). They provide these communities with the means and the platform for political engagement and cultural expression. They also lead to inter-connectivity between communities enabling them to share and unite under their common experiences and historical conditions. Therefore, community radio or community media for that matter should have access to resources and other necessary infrastructure required for their set up and operation. Simultaneously broadcasting regulations should be framed in such a manner so as to protect their independence from interference by governments, privately-owned commercial media enterprises, religious authorities, political actors and so on (ITU, 2003).

8.9 QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning of community radio.

2. Discuss the distinct characteristics of community radio.

3. What are some principles that guide the operation of community radio?

4. Discuss some of the activities involved in the setting up of a community radio station.

5. Give an overview of the programming policy of community radio.

8.10 REFERENCES AND RECOMMENDED READINGS

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