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# **KKHSOU WORKING PAPER**

**RADIO IN THE COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE,  
WITH REFERENCE TO THE “JNAN TARANGA”  
COMMUNITY RADIO SERVICE**

**Dr. Sangeeta Kakoty**

**KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

*Working Paper / 2020 / 08*

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Reference to the “Jnan Taranga”  
Community Radio Service**

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Community Radio Service

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## ***Preface***

The publication of a series of Working Papers at Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University is a reflection of the University's sincere efforts towards the promotion of a productive research environment among the faculty members and officers of this university. Through these Working Papers, KKHSOU seeks to broaden the horizon of liberal thoughts and ideas of the faculty members and officers to take up serious academic and intellectual discussions across diverse disciplines of contemporary relevance.

Ideally, Working Papers are papers that are in progress, or under submission, or being published elsewhere. However, one may present a Working Paper to selected readers for comments. The writer may have some hypotheses and research questions, may apply some methods, which would further give an idea about what to expect when the work gets finished. Besides, a Working Paper may provoke further discussions among the targeted readers and the writer may change his/her ideas based on comments or review.

With the philosophy of promoting free flow of ideas and thoughts, the University has done away with the process of Peer Review of the Working Papers. However, each of the papers was subjected to an internal review by the editorial board, and the Committee on Publication of Working Papers took every possible measure to make these papers error-free. These papers reflect many of the theoretical methods, intellectual traditions, cultural aspects as well as current socio-political and economic discourses within and across different disciplines.

We hope that this paper entitled "Radio in the Community Perspective, with Reference to the "Jnan Taranga" Community Radio Service" will help the general readers and aspiring researchers belonging to this region and beyond.

Dr. Rahul. S. Mazumdar, Chairperson  
Dr. Smritishikha Choudhury, Convenor (cum Editor)

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# **Radio in the Community Perspective, with Reference to the “Jnan Taranga” Community Radio Service**

Dr. Sangeeta Kakoty

## **Abstract**

In the advancement of Information and Communication Technology and in the presence of different communication media in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, radio plays a vital role in information dissemination. Since the advent of radio in 1890s, it is being used as the agent to communicate and mobilize the people of a society. Community Radio, the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation of radio in radio history, has become a good communicator between the community and society as it can reach out directly to a community. It is the only means of media that can focus on the community's problems most effectively. Community radio has the power to reshape the development of a community as it can put forward the views of the community directly. This paper focuses on the radio as a means of information dissemination in the community perspective. The issues starting from the declination of radio to its resurgence after the invention of community radio is also discussed here. Besides, how community issues are tackled by the community radio, and more specifically, how the community radio service of KKHSOU—“Jnan Taranga” is taking part in developing the community are discussed in this paper in sufficient details.

**Keyword** : Community Radio, Information Dissemination, Community Issues, Jnan Taranga CRS.

## **Introduction**

Communication Media is a significant force in the socialization and socio-cultural development of a country as it can ensure social, cultural and political

development of a society. Loretta F. Kasper in "Socialization and Culture" from the book "Interdisciplinary English" states that mass media is an important agent for socialization and for the development of the child. The Mass media is a significant force in modern culture (<https://www.123helpme.com/view.asp?id=150259> on 18 Dec 2019). Mass media connect people, can reach the mass audience and can reach the general public and so on. Various governmental policies, schemes and actions can be disseminated among the masses with the help of media, so that they can avail all those for their development. Wilson (1991) analyzed that the mass media of communication are so pervasive in their socio-cultural and political influences that there is hardly any field of human endeavor where they do not have a specific role to play. They act as the eyes and ears of the society as mobilizers, informers, educators, entertainers and channels for disseminating information, propagating culture and educating, entertaining, mobilizing, influencing, correlating the environment and promoting the general well-being of the society and their owners.

Among all means of communication media, Radio is one of the oldest and is still popular among all generations of the people. If we see from the economic point of view, the use of radio is very cost effective and hence anybody can effort it and can use them easily. Because of this, Radio covers a wide range of areas and is widespread from higher to lower category of people. We also can say that due to the cost effectiveness of radio, it is considered to be the best media to disseminate information. Radio has the power to connect with the masses. Though digital media is one of the fastest growing concepts of communication as it has transformed the whole concept of communication, radio still has the constant communication power among the people. Introduction of FM radio in 1995 has made the communication power of Radio stronger than before.

Then, the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage of the radio service, the Community radio, came into existence with a new concept to serve a particular geographical community and communities of interest. Community radio is the most effective means of communication compared to the previous generations of radio. Through

community radio, a community can directly raise their voice for their need and development. It enables the community members to speak on their own voice. As per the recent data of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, published at their official website on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019, the total number of Community Radio Services (CRS) in India reached to 237 (<https://www.mib.gov.in/broadcasting/community-radio-stations>). All CRSs are serving the communities from different corners of this country in different ways. “Jnan Taranga” is one of such CRSs and is the first community radio service in North East India that is being operated from Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University since 2010 with frequency at 90.4 MHz.

From the inception of Jnan Taranga CRS, this radio is serving the marginal sections of the local community by following the motto of the University “Education beyond Barrier”. This paper focuses on the significance of radio, from the community point of view.

### **Radio as a dissemination of Information**

Information is a vital necessity for human beings in their daily life. Right information at the right time and at the right places would help the society reach its goals. Issa (1997) stated in a research paper that information has to be widely disseminated regardless of whether one is an urban or rural inhabitant. Popoola (2009) opined information to be a critical economic reason when utilized to increase the state of knowledge of an individual in order to take decisions. Information is processed data that assist the individuals and managers in taking the right decisions to enhance and improve job productivity.

Since the beginning, radio is considered the most important media of information dissemination. It is ranked as the most popular means of information dissemination, regardless of its country of origin. It reaches a large audience irrespective of their location at the same time. It is used to promote and make people aware of the socio-political and economic issues, and at the same time, it enables people to be adequately informed. The main advantage of radio is that it is affordable, cheap to buy and easy to maintain. Another advantage



of using radio is that people can listen to Radio while doing their other works. That is why; radio became very popular among all. It is popular among farmers because of its portable and easily accessible nature. One research paper reported that radio is one of the media in disseminating agricultural innovations to the farmers in the rural areas (Kuku *et al.*, 2007). From the agricultural programmes, farmer can obtain many important information, which may improve the productivity of their farms and at the same time, they may raise their standard of living. Radio is one of the most appropriate broadcast medium of communication dissemination in the rural population, because it needs less intellectual effort than the print media. Radio can reach out to the remote areas, even when there are no extension agents.

Ezekiel & Peter (2014) in Nigeria conducted a study about the dissemination of information on agriculture among the farmers. This study showed that radio provided livestock as well as fisheries information to the farmers and besides being a prominent medium of communication among the farmers in Nigeria. Kuku *et al.* (2007) said that Radio could overcome long distance; it has immediate effect, does not require literacy and is familiar in most rural household. Ariyo *et. al* (2013) carried out a study on the role of mass media in the dissemination of agricultural technologies among the farmers in Kaduna North Local Government Area of Kaduna State revealed that Radio was found to be more accessible (46.3%) and the major source (60.19%) of agricultural technologies to the farmers. The study further revealed that 90.7% of the respondents affirmed that mass media is effective in the dissemination of agricultural technologies while only 9.3% saw mass media as not effective. Kakade (2013) opined that radio is considered an effective tool to disseminate agricultural information among the farmers and it is the most powerful mass media for broadcasting Information quickly. It is a powerful medium for communication, particularly in India where, in the absence of regular and stable electric supply in rural areas, people have to depend on radio to meet their needs of information. He also said that Radio is considered a credible source of information and is taken as authentic, trustworthy and prestigious medium

of communication. A trustworthy source of information stimulates the farmers to adopt the recommended package, which is suitable to local farming conditions.

Another advantage of radio among the rural communities is that it does not require textual literacy. It does not have language and dialect barriers. As a result, radio has become a medium of communication and dissemination of information in the rural areas.

Ezekiel & Peter (2014) on their paper stated that radio is very appealing because of some distinguishing features of interactivity, its capacity to provoke dialogues and to solicit the participation of local population with lower production costs and extreme versatility. Radio is considered an effective tool to disseminate various forms of information and it is the most powerful mass media for broadcasting information quickly. Among the various means of information access and dissemination, radio is very significant due to its portability and comes in different sizes. Till today, Radio is still very important in accessing information; and the advancement of information and communication technology has greatly improved access to information.

## **The Great days of Radio**

There was a day during 1950s, where radio was the dominant electronic entertainment media. The radio network was strong at that age. Due to the great demand for some programmes, they had to be aired nationwide. The classical music radio NPR was so famous and because of its great demands, they had to be shared to others. That period was called *the golden age of radio*. During that age, many new forms of entertainment programmes were broadcast. Programmes like detective series, musical concert, adventure, comedy series etc. were very popular among the young generation. The All India Radio nationwide aired such common national programmes of feature, drama, talk, music etc. One popular entertainment channel of AIR "Vividh Bharati" was started in the 1960s and is still being aired nationwide and the same is very much famous among all generation of people even today.

Radio was the first broadcasting media and very soon it became popular among all generations of people. It soon superseded the newspaper because of its broadcast of relevant news, power of information dissemination and the broadcast of a variety of programme. Families use to gather around the radio and listen to their favourite radio programmes. Culture wise, category wise and age wise, all news regarding politics, social issues and entertainment got tremendous popularity. Later on, some programmes became so popular that they got sponsorship in the form of selling the naming right. Sponsorship made the programmes demandable. Other way, as the demand increased, the programme got more sponsorship and generated more revenue. As a result, the production of good programmes also increased. Radio got so popular in that era that people started their days with radio and ended with radio. According to a 1947 C. E. Hooper survey, 82 out of 100 Americans were found to be radio listeners (<https://www.sparkmuseum.org › the-golden-age-of-radio>).

In India, radio broadcasting started in 1927 at Mumbai and Kolkata as All India Radio, which was later referred to as “Akashvani” from 1957. However, AIR gained its popularity nationwide after the 1950s. Then, commercial broadcasting was introduced. All these initiatives increased the popularity of radio and generated huge revenue. AIR started its broadcasting programmes in 8 Indian languages and in Assam it started its services from Shillong and Guwahati parallely from 1948 as All India Radio Shillong and All India Radio Guwahati, which were later named as Akashvani Guwahati and Shillong. Then, in the 60s, the Akashvani Dibrugarh center was established. By 1980s, radio had become a part of almost every household in India. People became too used radio since morning till time one went to bed at night. The drama series such as “Santa sisto, hristopusto and toletole mohadusto”, “birinapatorangothi”, “surangorxesot”, “moinasanbaad”, were broadcast through All India Radio Guwahati and Dibrugarh and they became too popular. We still remember those days how one used wait for those programmes to listen, how one imagined the characters of those drama. The programme called “Gitimallika” which was the programme of famous film songs is still continuing. The interest, curiosity

that imagination attached with the radio continued till the advent of the new media in the form of Television.

## **Decline of Radio with the increasing popularity of TV**

In the mid 1980s, as a new form of communication media, Television emerged. After its invention, Television lured away the radio listeners. Down the line remained the radio. The success of TV serials like “Ramayan”, “Mahabharat”, “Hum Log”, “Buniyaad” etc. were the main contributors that led to the downfall of radio. These serials attracted millions of audience across the country. Very soon, the Television proved to be the most effective platform to reach the general public. People were directly able to view those dramas, music programme and talk shows that they imagined before. As the demand for television increased, receiving sponsorship by radio gradually decreased. As the popularity of television increased, bulk of advertising revenues started shifting to television from radio. It then gradually replaced the radio. It was found that the usage of radio fast declined across U.S., Europe and China.

The declination of radio was also due to the taste of generation Z (people born after 1995). Traditional radio failed to engage the public of this generation. They did not get interest in the traditional forms of dissemination. This continued for long. The most significant decline came from the teen aged around 13 and more. Lack of good and interesting scripts, lack of innovative and creative scripts were also the reason of the downfall of radio. Radio mainly depended on scripts and delivery methods of characters of the script.

It has been seen that due to the growing demand for digital environment, the use of radio has declined very badly. Advancement in Information and communication technology has made information dissemination more easier and faster, and hence, the declination of radio. The communicating power of computer and later the invention of internet have made information sharing possible irrespective of their geographic location. People are now able to communicate whenever they feel. Because of this digital industry, radio faced

massive disruption. Due to the lack of revenue, the Government failed to reform its broadcasting policies. It posed a big challenge for the radio to survive.

## **Resurgence of Radio – Community Radio**

The re-entry of radio as private players in the 20<sup>th</sup> century can be seen as the resurgence of radio in India. The first private radio “Times FM” and “Radio Mid-day” started attracting the audience with their innovative programmes which were listener friendly and they were able to cater to the needs of the new generation. As a result, they became successful and generated huge revenue. By the later 2000, total 283 broadcasting channels were established with varieties of frequency. According to a survey conducted in February 2000, radio was still popular in India with over 58% of the rural and 48% of the urban population. With such a huge listener base, the analysts felt that radio was still one of the primary mass communication media in the country (Sharma, 2001).

Sponsorship ads started coming to radio again because of its low advertisement cost and wide reach of the audience quickly. Gopinath Menon, Executive Director of the advertising agency, TBWA Anthem, said, “Radio advertising is aptly suited for local promotions, and once audiences can be targeted, it has tremendous potential to eat into local mediums.” Reportedly, there are more than 150 million radio sets in India - three times more than the number of TV sets in the country (Sharma, 2001). Then, by seeing the popularity, AIR developed multilingual programme in more than 24 languages to attract nationwide audiences.

Resurgence of radio totally took place after the invention of Community radio in the later part of the 1990s. It started to serve typically a local audience, a geographical community and a community of interest. It can directly raise the voice of the community, may be individually or in groups. Communities can tell their stories, can share their experiences through this type of radio. The broadcast of contents is relevant to a local and specific audience and hence its popularity increased. Communities even use it as a vehicle to disseminate

their information locally. When the broadcasting power was opened for any voluntary section, NGOs, private agencies, educational institutes etc., it became successful in covering a wide audience.

Due to the poor signal of TV, high purchase cost, installation and monthly subscription of satellite television etc., high costs of internet, many people cannot afford the cost of owning a communication tool. On the other hand, radio is accessible easily, is cost effective and has many advantages. The popularity of radio increased in such a way that now some of the radio stations are providing streaming services of their radio programmes worldwide with the help of the Internet. Mobile phones are coming with radio features. People now can listen to radio in their mobile phones irrespective of the time and place. It became easier and affordable. Vehicle companies are even providing radio services by looking at their popularity. All these proved that the golden age of radio has come again. Joshi's comment on radio, "Radio won't die; even today, the reach of radio is more than that of television. In rural India, every individual has a transistor and you can listen to the radio even when you are tilling the soil. You can't do that with TV" (Joshi, 2001) is proved now.

Norman Brierley argued on July 25, 2019 at 5:13 am by opposing Mr. Owsinski's comment on declining radio globally said that in Africa, Radio is still the main way in communicating to the majority. Millions still do not have phones, smart phones, computers or even televisions and yet in the rural areas where the majority live, they have radio. He also said that he read an article on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019 by Nielsen that 'Radio reaches more Americans (92%) than any other platform.' According to a UNESCO survey, 'Radio is Africa's most influential information outlet.' (<https://www.africanews.com> › 2017/02/13)

## **Community Radio in the New Context**

Community radio, the 3<sup>rd</sup> tier of radio, came with a new concept to cater to the community with true information at the right time. As mentioned by UNESCO, community radio is operated in the community, for the community,

about the community and by the community (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org>). It has space for localization of contents, participation and involvement of community. The main aim behind this type of radio is to educate a community through entertainment by using their own idioms and language. Locally selected community people can be called easily to the studio to take part to share their views. Telephonic participation can also be done.

In the context of transforming information society to knowledge society, communication plays a vital role. Sur said that empowering the people at the grassroots and their capacity building are the major concerns for modern development. Community Radio can emerge as a major tool for doing both. Community radio can play a significant and effective role in the modern concepts of development like the Human Development Index and Human Security. Community Radio can come forward to give development a human face. It can also be a platform for bringing accountability of the development process, ultimately making the system more transparent and ensuring good governance (Sur, 1968).

Community radio stations offer variety of contents that generally are not offered by other commercial radio station. With a focus on community voice, Community radio stations broadcast entertainment programmes, music etc. for the community. Varieties of community related programmes for women about health and sanitation, education, food habits and family system make a significant change in the lives of women now. Empowering women is the primary goal of the new policy guideline of CRS.

### **How community issues to be tackled by Community Radio**

Community radio was established with the motto to educate a community, to develop a community from all aspects, social, cultural and political. Community radio brings a community together, so can tackle common people problems.

Community radio is the only accessible and readily affordable medium within the rural community and it can play a significant role in rural development

of women. A case study done by radio Benue in Nigeria show that rural women in South Africa play an important role in community development. That is why; this radio station provides space to those women to discuss the obstacles such as poverty, illiteracy, fear, poor access to public agencies and lack of knowledge about the right to information. Through radio, they have seen the path of accessing government schemes.

The following are some of the ways by which a Community Radio can tackle the community issues:

- By doing detailed and systematic survey of a community if have any issues
- By providing related information continuously
- By conducting talk show with eminent personalities of issues of that community
- By conducting interviews with community people as well as with resource persons
- By sharing information with community people
- By making aware of the resources they can avail
- By giving chance to local participants
- By preserving cultural heritage of a community
- By creating new career avenue for today's youths

Apart from these, many other ways may be counted, which may be different for different CRS and will vary as per the issues that arising within a community.

### **Community oriented programme in Jnan Taranga**

The main purpose of Jnan Taranga CRS is to disseminate information to the people of this region and to provide a platform for further interaction,



discussion on important issues and development of the society. With this aim, Jnan Taranga has launched a number of programmes with a clear-cut impact on different sections of the society. The programme like “Jubo Tirtha” reflects the focus on the youth. At the same time, the programmes like “Sahitya Sora”, “Sanskriti”, “Baranya”, “Puhoror Bat”, “Monor Khobor”, “Jnan Safura”, “Sishu Tirtha”, all reflect the focus given to that of the various sections of the society through the formulation of radio programmes. Reference could be made to that of Jnan Taranga monitoring report 2018 that provides for various indications regarding the priorities of the radio programmes catering to the interests of the various sections of the society.

**Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2018

**Monitoring Time:** 10:00 - 1:30

| Broadcasting Time   | Programme   | Duration              |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| <b>10:00-12:00</b><br>(came by 11:00)<br><br>Ended by 11:57 | Jubo Tirtha: Song, Chandrabindu, Blank Music, Botor'r Batora, Poems (3), Song, Blank Music, Khel'r Prithivi: "Some news on sports", Song, Adds, Quiz Question, Songs (4), Phone Calls (9), Ending Announcement. | 1 hour,<br>57 minutes |
| <b>11:57-12:03</b>  | Adds  | 6 minutes             |
| <b>12:00-12:30</b><br>Started by 12:03<br>Ended by 12:34    | Sahitya Sora: Starting Announcement,<br>Short Story: "Tai Jodi Tai Nohol'heten", Songs (2).   | 31 minutes            |
| <b>12:30-1:00</b><br>Started by 12:34<br>Ended by 1:02      | Sanskriti: Information on: "Saah Jonogusthi'r Luk'e Palon Kora Soroh Puja'r Xomporke Kisu Kotha." Songs (2).<br>Adds. Information on: "Dhaura Nrityo'r Xomporke."<br>Song. Ending Announcement.                 | 28 minutes            |
| <b>1:02-1:07</b>  | Adds  | 5 minutes             |
| <b>1:00-2:00</b><br>Started by 1:07                         | Gyan Xofura: Chanakya Niti Kotha, Song, Adds, Mohot Lukor Jibon Gatha "Ripen Hazarika", Song, Adds,"Pera Ghor't Keneke Prostut Koribo.", Song, Adds, Contd  | contd                 |

**Source:** *Jnan Taranga monitoring report 2018*

**Date: 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2018**

**Monitoring Time: 2:00 – 5:00**

| <b>Broadcasting Time</b> | <b>Programmes.</b>  | <b>Duration.</b> |
|--------------------------|---|------------------|
| 2:00-2:02                | Blank Music   |                  |
| 2:02-2:08                | Starting Announcement. Thought Of The Day, Bhupendra Sangeet.   | 6 minutes.       |
| 2:08-2:11                | Ads on University   | 3 minutes        |
| 2:12-2:16                | Borenyo: Tralakya Bhattacharya.   | 4 minutes.       |
| 2:17-2:22                | Xamprotiki  | 5 minutes.       |
| 2:22-2:24                | Words on Monor Khobor.  | 2 minutes.       |
| 2:24-2:31                | Lukogeet(2)   | 7 minutes.       |
| 2:32-2:36                | Bigyan Barta.   | 4 minutes.       |
| 2:37-3:19                | Xikhu Tirtha:<br>A Children's Programme by the students of Sharada Sangeet Bidyalaya and Words on Gopinath Bordoloi | 42 minutes.      |
| 3:20-3:45                | A Discussion Episode on the topic "Deuri Xokolor Khadyo Xombhar".   | 25 minutes.      |
| 3:45-3:46                | Words on Monor Khobor   | 1 minute         |
| 3:46-4:02                | Ramdhenu<br>Movie: Devi      Songs:2  | 16 minutes.      |
| 4:02-5:00                | Monor Khobor:<br>Kotha Batora't Xabodhonota.<br>Songs: 8      Phone Calls: 2  | 58 minutes.      |
| 5:00-5:02                | Jatiya Sangeet  | 2 minutes        |

**Source : Jnan Taranga monitoring report 2018**

For an Open University like KKHSOU, CRS are an important role player. Therefore, CR programmes should be more educative and informative. Jnan

Taranga CRS aims to connect more with the audience. Jnan Taranga now connects the audience globally due to its streaming facility with Internet. This is one of the beautiful steps taken by of Jnan Taranga CRS.

## **A Futuristic Observation**

It has been observed from the increased role of CRSs that there is a positive opportunity for the youth of this generation, especially for those who want to be a part of the radio jockeying industry countrywide. CRS has huge potential in community development in all sectors. The interest among the youth is increasing because of dissemination of local information, news, music etc. and due to the connecting power within a community.

*The adaption of digital technology in this digital age by all the CRSs may bring the world of community radio into a multimedia community center with global community audience online. It can cater to a large audience with large participatory communication.*

*CRSs should increase the community connections. It should be a sound booth for a community or for each individuals of that community.* Yalala (2015) said that in India, women comprise half of its total population. Women are vital human resources in improving the quality of life. The country's overall development depends greatly on the inclusion of women in its development process. They have been the transmitters of culture in all societies. So, community radio is being thought as the tool, which can promote the development of the country. Indirectly it will promote the welfare of women.

From futuristic prospective, the focus should definitely be on adopting a framework for quality assurance of the CR stations. At the same time, the need of the hour is also to develop sustainability model, so that a strong scientific and technical movement could be launched for the dissemination of information at the grass root level.

After studying and analyzing all about CRSs in India, we can surely predict a bright future for Community Radio. The Government and the concerned

authorities should take initiatives and all requisite steps in promoting CR services among the communities and they must provide utmost care in the progress of society through community radio.

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