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# Community Driven Development in Developing Countries

**The Need for Community Radio in  
Supporting Access, Voice and Accountability**

**Abhilaksh Likhi**

**OBSERVER RESEARCH FOUNDATION**

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### **About the Author**

Abhilaksh Likhi is a member of the Indian Administrative Service. He is a Fulbright scholar and holds a Masters in International Public Policy from SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC and a PhD in Development Communication from Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi. Currently he is a Senior Fellow at the South Asia Studies, SAIS, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC.

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# **Community Driven Development in Developing Countries**

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### **Abstract**

This paper highlights the increasing importance of Community Driven Development (CDD) in the delivery of public services to the poorest sections and enhancing access, voice and accountability in developing countries. Further, in the backdrop of the theory and practice of participatory communication, it examines the need for community radio as an enabler of a socially inclusive process in CDD projects launched by the World Bank. Taking a cue from public policy frameworks and civil society initiatives in community radio outside the fold of the World Bank, the paper outlines how dovetailing community radio to enhance the level of community participation could majorly impact the outcomes of an ongoing World Bank CDD project in the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh. The paper finally provides operational suggestions that could enable national governments, aid, and civil society organisations to strengthen community driven development through participatory community radio programming for effective poverty reduction targeting, capacity building and fostering of an information-rich community in developing countries.

## **Introduction**

Community participation in the delivery of 'public services'<sup>1</sup> to the poorest sections of the population in developing countries has often been regarded as an effective mechanism to enhance access, voice and accountability. In this context, Community Driven Development (CDD) is one amongst many development interventions that seek to leverage the role of varied community actors to reach out to the marginalized. CDD treats empowerment of the community as central to making decisions about planning, management and investment of resources that can meet their felt needs. As an operational strategy for national governments, international aid agencies and grassroots civil society organisations it also aims to enable the efficient and effective reach of resources (funds, functions and functionaries) to the communities.

The World Bank, as a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries 'currently supports approximately 400 CDD projects in 94 countries valued at almost \$30 Billion. Over the past ten years, CDD investments have represented between 5 to 10 percent of the overall World Bank lending portfolio'.<sup>2</sup> Typically, CDD projects are vehicles for several multi-sectoral small grants to local communities to support economic activities, community infrastructure and other community level initiatives. The project design herein has to ideally take into account the risks associated with technical parameters, capacity building and community participation. A CDD project cycle design typically includes benchmark stages such as 'identification, preparation, appraisal, negotiations, implementation/supervision and monitoring/evaluation'.<sup>3</sup>

## **Importance of IEC Strategies**

A critical element in the design and implementation of CDD projects is the flow of equitable information amongst all groups of the community to ensure access, voice and accountability. Well thought out Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategies are needed not just to enable CDD projects to simply reach out to the village community but also to mobilise and equip them with the 'knowledge, information and capacity'<sup>4</sup> to be active stakeholders in the development process. These strategies are a 'broader set of tactical approaches aimed at disseminating information and educating large audiences'.<sup>5</sup> Effective sensitisation through IEC strategies has to ultimately unleash and trigger behavioral changes amongst all groups of the community. These multi dimensional, two way and bottom up strategies, also known by the nomenclature, 'strategic communications', involve five pertinent steps—a strategic communication assessment/CDD operational communication analysis, communication action plan, implementation of communication activities and feedback/monitoring.<sup>6</sup>

While a variety of social media—print, television, Internet, mobile telephony etc (in addition to interpersonal communication)—can be creatively synergized to facilitate IEC strategies in CDD projects, radio broadcasts are known to be the cheapest and easiest medium to access, permitting real time communication with the community. In fact, the 1990s have witnessed the mushrooming of 'community radios' in the developing world. These are not-for-profit radio services designed to operate on a small scale by and for the community for socio-economic development and to enable civic inclusion, as well as providing a transparent space for debate about public issues.

## **Objectives of the Paper**

In the above context, this paper has the following objectives. First, in the backdrop of the theory and practice of participatory communication, it outlines the essence of community radio in creating participatory avenues for access to public services in developing countries. Second, it delineates the World Bank's forays in supporting community radio in CDD projects in developing countries as a means of participation and civic engagement for effective service delivery. Finally, it highlights public policy frameworks and civil society initiatives in community radio outside the fold of the World Bank and their relevance in assessing community participation as a major factor affecting the outcomes of an ongoing World Bank CDD project in the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh. The paper finally provides operational suggestions to strengthen the process of community driven development through participatory community radio programming for effective poverty reduction targeting, capacity building and fostering of an information-rich community.

## **Participatory Communication**

Central to the theory and practice of participatory communication is dialogue which allows the sharing of information, perceptions and opinions among the various stakeholders and thereby facilitates their empowerment, especially for those who are most vulnerable, marginalised and 'poor'.<sup>7</sup> This entails moving away from mere passive community participation in knowledge sharing to a level of participation wherein the vulnerable as stakeholders are capable and willing to take part in the process of sensitisation. Paulo Freire, amongst other social theorists, has expounded the concept of dialogue (interpersonal and small group communication) that would lead to expanded consciousness

as well as power and therefore liberation. This 'dialogic'<sup>8</sup> process enables participants to identify and explore issues that have meaning for them. Thus, empowerment herein is defined as a process by which individuals, organisations, and communities gain control and mastery over social and economic conditions, over democratic participation and over their lives. This would, in locally relevant cultural and country contexts, also include 'mechanisms that promote accountability on the part of public institutions (supply side in terms of horizontal accountability) as well as mechanisms that promote governments being accountable by civil society (demand side in term of social and vertical accountability) that are essential for achieving effective sustainable development outcomes'.<sup>9</sup>

Besides, the conceptual distinction between participation as a means versus participation as an end per se points towards another dilemma encountered in strengthening accountability. This is the dilemma 'of pursuing successful deliveries of specific sector initiatives such as information, health or agricultural services vis-à-vis the more process-oriented social mobilisation and advocacy for a cause.'<sup>10</sup> This is a very subtle distinction but an increasing number of civil society organisations, aid agencies, and national governments are now experiencing the need to move from a more narrowly defined focus on service delivery to a broader based advocacy agenda pursuing policy change, accountability and transparency to secure deeper social and structural change in their societies.

### **Community Radio**

In this backdrop, community radio as an enabler of a socially inclusive process has three distinct characteristics—one, it is run for social gain



and community benefit but not profit; two, it has to be owned by and accountable to the community that it seeks to serve; and three, it has to provide for participation by the community in programming and management. These features, thus, distinguish it from the public service radio broadcaster and the commercial FM radio. In terms of accessibility, radio sets are relatively cheap to produce and distribute and do not need electricity or special skills to operate (mobile telephony making it still easier to receive community broadcasts). They can also be shared by a group of listeners. Since a community can be many things—a small village, a sprawling city, believers of a particular interest or religion or a diaspora united by a common language—it is difficult to define the term community radio with any focus. However, a community could be a physical community or a community of interest depending upon the socio-historical conditions in any society at a given point of time. Needless to say it is important to distinguish 'community' radio from illegal, ethnically based radio stations that are used for propaganda, hate messages or are run clandestinely in a partisan, non-inclusive manner.

Community radio is now widely recognised, both by national governments and the international development community as the democratised 'third tier' after the state and commercial broadcasting. With widespread liberalisation of airwaves, falling costs of appropriate technology and a felt need for alternatives to government controlled media, community radio has burgeoned in countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, South and South East Asia. For instance, 'in 11 countries surveyed across Africa local commercial radio grew by an average of 360 percent between 2000 and 2006, whereas community radio grew by a striking 1,368 percent, on average over the same period.'<sup>11</sup> Community radio has particularly thrived in Latin America with

approximately '10,000 stations'<sup>12</sup> with countries such as Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Brazil taking the lead. In South Asia, while Bhutan and Pakistan currently prohibit nonprofit based radio stations, their proliferation in Sri Lanka, Nepal and India is a success story. In Southeast Asia, Thailand has taken the lead with '5000 stations',<sup>13</sup> which are mostly illegal, while regimes in Laos, Burma, Malaysia and Vietnam continue to suppress community media to varying degrees.

This varied evolution has been supplemented with community radio's development impact in raising awareness about and access to felt needs pertaining to civic engagement, social services (education and health), agricultural productivity, human rights, etc. This has been possible due to the dynamics of region specific programming in local dialects supplemented by its participatory nature—communities making their radio programmes and interacting on air through talk shows and round table discussions from accessible public locations. In conflict and disaster zones, international aid agencies have set up community radio stations where a community has no other access to information. For instance, 'InterNew's network of radios in Eastern Chad for Darfur refugees is a case in point'.<sup>14</sup>

### **Community Radio and World Bank Operations**

Realising the role of a free, independent and pluralistic media in effective delivery of public services in developing countries, the World Bank has continued to support independent media while pressing for better regulatory frameworks. Since the 1990s, it has broadened its human development focus to include community broadcasting including community radio. This expansion of focus had been supplemented by

the Bank's spreading transparent governance agenda that includes within its purview the need for decentralisation for enabling community access, voice, and accountability in service delivery. As a result, Bank investments, particularly in CDD projects, have aimed to include support to community radio in countries such as Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Mongolia, Nigeria, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste. The intent clearly has been to 'move beyond communicating particular messages by creating community institutions that provide sustained communication services at the local level'.<sup>15</sup>

But has the above mentioned sustenance been enabled through the community radio stations established and funded by the World Bank? The eight community radio stations and a supporting hub established under the Timor-Leste Community Empowerment and Local Governance Project (CEP) in late 2002 included supplying broadcasting equipment, basic training for volunteer reporters, managers and technicians and some small initial operating funds. While weak operational and maintenance capacity has been a challenge, the radio station has been sustained largely due to community ownership. In Kenya on the other hand, a community radio station was established in the Wajir District under the Arid Land Resource Management Project (ALRMP). This agricultural project supported community radio development 'because critical bottlenecks to effective natural resource management in Kenya's arid and semi arid lands are social and administrative rather than the absence of particular technologies in forestry or range management'.<sup>16</sup>

In Ghana, the Bank has supported technical collaboration with the Ghana Community Radio Network to stimulate the development of the community radio sector. A related aim has been to strengthen and embed

community empowerment and voice through grassroots programming in the Community Based Rural Development Project that would lead to generating opinion on improvements needed in local governance. In Sri Lanka the Community Development and Livelihood Improvement Project 'Gemi Diriya' has involved collaboration with local experts on community radio planning and showcasing its role as a tool of poverty reduction. Participatory research and awareness building herein were completed in the Uva and Southern Provinces of the country.

On the thematic area of disaster management, The Aceh Emergency Radio Network (AERnet) was established in Indonesia after the December 2004 Tsunami to respond to the community's information and communication needs. Five community-run radio stations were staffed by both local and internally displaced citizens working as volunteers to provide access to information on rehabilitation and reconstruction. AERnet reporters shared news with other independent public radio networks as well as distributing radio sets in temporary camps and broadcasting special programmes for the listeners. Later in 2006, AERnet established an additional 16 community radio stations to promote two way exchanges between victims, donors and the government.

In fact, the absence of community radio in Nigeria prompted the World Bank Institute (WBI) to convene a stakeholders meeting in July 2006 in collaboration with the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasting (AMARC) in the country under the largest CDD project, Fadama. The formulation of the Community Radio Policy has been supplemented with 'Phase III of the Fadama Project in supporting the participatory planning of six pilot community radio stations in collaboration with over 120 local civil society organizations'.<sup>17</sup>

Besides, the Bank has also taken up community radio assessments that are a vital means to supply basic knowledge to improve institutional mechanisms and practices for 'informed choices, local governance and empowerment of poor communities'.<sup>18</sup> Thus, in the early 2000's, time bound assessments in country contexts were carried out in Benin, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, The Kyrgyz Republic, Morocco and Ghana, among other countries. In addition, in 2007, 'a multi country study was also carried out to clarify good practices in the development, operation and maintenance of community radio stations particularly on the issues related to their effectiveness.'<sup>19</sup> These assessments and studies are extremely relevant in context of the Bank's additional push to 'country ownership of poverty reduction strategies'<sup>20</sup> including delivery of public services with broad based participation other than the donor community or the political elite and strong domestic accountability.

But questions have often been raised by observers that there have been conceptual communication related weaknesses in project designs, that they have been informed at times more by slogans and have not succeeded in building 'capacity of communities for collective action'<sup>21</sup> to enable poverty reduction and provide livelihood security. Such weaknesses include initiation of community radio stations without a rigorous baseline survey of communities to be served, more stress on public relation through large scale print and broadcast media and lack of effective community participation in radio programming. Therefore, more the dire need for identifying and documenting grassroots good practices wherein community radio has built a public private partnership synergy with regulatory, administrative and institutional arrangements for public service delivery. Use of such synergies in grassroots development programmes could be a measure to determine the

effectiveness of sensitisation outcomes particularly in the sectors of agriculture, rural employment, education, health and sanitation.

### **Other Community Radio Initiatives**

Outside the World Bank, aid organisations, national governments and civil society organisations have been attempting to foster community partnership and create supply as well as demand side mechanisms for transparent and accountable local governance in developing countries. Farm Radio International<sup>22</sup> is an NGO funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that has created an innovative model of radio broadcasting that enables farmers to be decisive agents in their own development. 'Farm Radio International partners with 360 radio stations in 39 African countries and reaches more than 200 million smallholders in more than 100 African languages'.<sup>23</sup> It offers a number of services but primarily develops participatory radio campaigns and theme-based radio programmes that continue for four to six months. Themes range from livestock husbandry to farmer innovation, soil conservation and issues specific to rural women such as maternal health/childcare.

The most innovative aspect of the campaigns is the broad base of farmer participation. Thorough evaluation of scripts by both men and women from the local community is an important pre-requisite. A regular broadcast schedule is supplemented by participatory features such as the voice response system and call in options. The information elicited by this bottom up process enables NGOs and extension staff to identify challenges, understand perspectives and gain knowledge associated with the community of the region. Besides this, women farmers are regularly included in the broadcasts. 'Such participatory campaigns take

approximately 12-18 months to design, distribute and evaluate. For theme packages, the costs range from US\$ 25,000- US\$ 50,000. For the whole process including training and assessment the costs can range from US\$80,000 to US\$ 200,000 depending on the country and other factors'.<sup>24</sup> Surveys (See Table 1) to measure the success of these radio campaigns have shown that the adoption rate for actively listening communities is quite high, and in that light these costs are relatively small leading thereby to an increase in the productivity.

**Table 1: Radio Access and Frequency of Listening (%)**

	Men	Women
Radios in household	84	68
Access to radio (both inside and outside of the home)	96	89
Frequency of listening (at least once/week)	95	86

**Source:** Farm Radio International Participatory Radio Campaign Evaluation Report 2011

Similarly, the liberalised 2006 Community Radio National Guidelines<sup>25</sup> of the Government of India provide licensing for civil society and voluntary organisations to assist marginalised communities in rural areas to manage, own and operate radio stations. The aim is to focus on locally relevant socio-economic development, events, businesses, services and employment opportunities. Fifty percent of the content is to be generated in local dialects with the participation of the local community for which the station has been set up. Thus, with a transmitter having an effective radiated power of 100 Watts, the community radio station is expected to cover a range of 10 kilometers (6 miles). Besides this, non-profit organisations are eligible to seek funding from multilateral aid agencies.

A grant of license to set up a community radio station (CRS) in India is processed approximately in 10 months in the Ministries of Information & Broadcasting and Telecommunications. Advertising or announcements are allowed for a maximum duration of 5 minutes per hour of broadcast in a day (minimum two hours of broadcasting). To seek advertisements from central and state government organisations the rate of airtime for an empanelled radio station with the DAVP (Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity) is Rs. 4/- (7 cents) per second. After meeting with the financial needs of the CRS, any surplus has to be ploughed back into the primary activities of the civil society organisation for which it had been established.

A few civil society projects that have been set up in consonance with the above guidelines, and are examples of public private partnerships deeply embedded and driven by marginalised communities in rural hinterlands, deserve a mention. In Bhudikote (Karnataka) the community radio station 'Namma Dhwani' (My Voice), established in 2008, has been partnered by MYRADA<sup>26</sup> (an NGO), Voices (a media group) and UNESCO. It is owned, managed and operated with the active participation of women's self-help groups in 152 villages to create empowerment about basic entitlements amongst the 12,872 rural households on livelihood security. The community here speaks a mix of Telugu and Kannada, a language that does not find place in the programmes of the national radio broadcaster AIR (All India Radio). A survey conducted by MYRADA has established an active listenership of 3224 families.<sup>27</sup>

An example of people's programming at Namma Dhawani, before the radio station began broadcasting, was the use of the local market held



every Tuesday near the radio station as a community platform for participation. At a particularly populated hour in the evening the radio station's local team of reporters used loudspeakers to announce messages of social and economic relevance on issues such as organic farming, rain water harvesting, HIV AIDS, drip irrigation etc. Information about goods being sold and crop prices were jostled between such social messages. Later, through participatory inputs from farmers, vendors and occasional tourists these messages were narrowcasted into programmes on audio tapes and are now digitally broadcast through the radio station for broader reach in the local community.

On the other hand, Radio Mattoli, established in 2009, is being run in the rural hinterland of Kerala by a non-governmental organisation called Wayanad Social Service Society and broadcasts from 6am to 10pm for 16 hours for less than 1 million inhabitants. *Jan Vani* (Voice of the People) is an example of a programme initiated by the station that enables the marginalised to seek active intervention by public authorities. The station has documented the case of marginalised community members in eight revenue villages of the region that were denied Rubber Board subsidies for re-plantation of rubber. After the matter was brought to and raised on *Jan Vani* in public interest, the Board responded by interacting and finally extending the scheme to the deprived.<sup>28</sup> Initial capital investment and recurring expenditure of the station is met in unison with funds made available from public sector organisations such as NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development), the Indian Coffee Board and the Kerala Council for Science and Technology.

Embedding accountability programming has been at the heart of

Kumaon Vani Community Radio station's effort to focus on farmer related issues in the State of Uttarakhand. Set up by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in 2010 in the Mukteshwar Region of the state, the station documents its forays in creating radio programmes to highlight information about rights and entitlements of farmers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Programme (MGNREGA). Farmers, especially women farmers in the villages of Sunkiya, Dadima, Supi and Kokilbana have held the village head men and local officials accountable for procurement of job cards and subsequent unskilled employment under the scheme.<sup>29</sup>

### **Challenges to Sustainability of Community Radio**

In India the National Community Radio Policy Guidelines 2006 are well into the eighth year of their initiation. The 12th Five Year Plan (2012-2017) envisions the process of inclusive growth to result in lower incidence of poverty, significant improvements in health care, universal access for children going to school and increased access to higher education including skilled development. To foster these objectives through participatory communication, the Community Radio Guidelines have enabled civil society organisations to set up community radio stations in urban areas and rural hinterlands. But the number of such community radio stations is just 141.<sup>30</sup> At least 4000 community radio stations were in fact anticipated to be set up during the National Consultation on Community Radio held in 2007.<sup>31</sup> This entails a dire need, in the current international context, to take an objective look at the threats to the sustainability of community radio in India.

First is the issue of sustenance in terms of technology. Weak

transmission coupled with use of low quality transmitters (that cost less), especially in rural areas, negatively impacts the ability of community run stations to successfully transmit programming to their targeted coverage areas. A lot of ground work, in terms of detailed surveys, thus needs to be done by community run stations to position their transmitters for successful and inclusive coverage of communities—women, children, minorities, scheduled castes and tribes etc.

Second is the critical issue of funding community radio stations. While there are numerous sources of initial capital funding and meeting operating costs such as through government departments, sponsorship, social marketing, donation, membership fee, listeners contribution, volunteer contribution and advertising, the adoption of a locally relevant model is crucial for its sustainability—a cooperative, local administration driven or trust model (Namma Dhawani follows the cooperative model while Radio Mattoli is an instance of a trust model). 'Keeping costs low is a common theme, but strategies for economising are very different for an isolated rural station with no paid staff and annual fixed costs of \$2000 or an urban station with an annual operating budget of \$150,000 or more'<sup>32</sup> (with more or less half the revenues coming ideally from advertising and sponsorships). Vasundhara Vahini Community Radio station in Baramati, Maharashtra, for instance, realising the inaccessibility to large advertisers has tapped into locally relevant 'micro advertisements'—about livestock, farm equipment, retailing etc that at the rate of Rs.1 per second generate revenues to the tune of Rs.90,000 (\$2000) a month.<sup>33</sup>

Third and most importantly, community radios have to converge with digital media and the Internet. New technology, on demand content and

citizen media are all developing and becoming increasingly affordable though effective penetration of broadband Internet in rural hinterlands of the country could be a limiting factor. This is an area wherein community radio stations in urban areas are able to synergise more backward and forward linkages. In India's neighborhood, the Kotemale Internet Community Radio Project is a pilot project radiating programming, with a one kilowatt transmitter, 15 hours on weekdays covering about 60 villages and three towns in the South Central region of Sri Lanka. More importantly, the community radio provides access to the Internet and helps raise awareness about the Internet among the community members while programming for health, education, agriculture and various life skills. The Mahaweli, Tambuli and Sagarmatha radio projects in Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Nepal respectively are other such similarly oriented projects.<sup>34</sup>

Needless to state that despite the penetration, for instance, of communication technologies such as mobile telephony in rural hinterlands of India and its immense use in increasing the listenership of community radio programming, capacity building hiccups still persist. In this context the example of Sangam Radio located in Machoor village of Medak District in Andhra Pradesh that covers a population of 150,000 in over 100 villages is extremely relevant. It uses women's self help group interactions to encourage and inculcate marginalised women to be able to achieve electronic literacy and thereby enhance their voice to use communication technologies as receivers, managers and owners of the community radio station.<sup>35</sup> Such interpersonal communication, particularly in content development, enables all sections of women—scheduled castes, tribes and minorities—to participate effectively.

## **Current World Bank CDD Projects Reviewed**

The World Bank has recently reviewed '17 CDD programmes'<sup>36</sup> in South and East Asia, Latin America and Central Asia that it funds. Among these CDD projects those that continue to run in 2013 and beyond include The National Solidarity Program II in Afganistan, The Andhra Pradesh District Poverty Initiative Program in India, The Poverty Alleviation Fund II in Nepal, The Kecamatan Development Program II, Urban Poverty Program II and PNPM Generasi in Indonesia, The KALAHI CIDSS Program in the Philippines and The Tanzanian Social Action Fund Project II in Tanzania.

Many of the programmes, the 2012 CDD review outlines, were initiated as a response to economic and financial crises or disaster and conflict. The limitations in the design issues of these CDD projects highlighted included a 'lack of clear articulation of a governance agenda/social transformation pathway and challenges in reaching marginalised groups.'<sup>37</sup> Investing in capacity building and training of the project staff and community groups for enhanced social formation capital as well as improved local governance have been pointed out 'as operational implications'<sup>38</sup> in these projects. What is most pertinent are the future research implications highlighted in the review. These being firstly, to compare why some programmes are able to reach excluded and marginalised groups better than other programmes and secondly, the process of decision making at the local level vis-à-vis the issue of elite capture, patronage and clientelism. Interestingly, in the above context, the 2012 Review neither provides a glimpse of nor evaluates the 'communication component' of the projects that are supposed to create widespread awareness among communities about various project

provisions as well as the communities' rights and entitlements. It is herein that building IEC synergies through community radio can make a difference to the grassroots process of sensitisation about project objectives and ensuring effective participatory implementation.

### **The Andhra Pradesh World Bank CDD Project**

In this backdrop, The Andhra Pradesh District Poverty Initiative Programme (AP-DPIP) with a total project period of 2000-2016 is being implemented in 'six poorest districts of the state namely Chittoor, Srikakulam, Adilabad, Vizianagaram, Mahabubnagar and Anantapur'.<sup>39</sup> The focus is on the poor and vulnerable households in the region dependent on risk prone rainfed agriculture as well as those who lack productive assets and skills or those who suffer from ill health, disability or illiteracy. A large part of the project funding is for institutional and human capacity building, educational support for girl child laborers and drop outs as well as project monitoring and evaluation. The project, as per the 2012 CDD Review, was successful 'in facilitating implementation of 36,477 income generating sub projects/village organisation level plans involving utilisation of about \$75 million of community investment funds'.<sup>40</sup> The project also enabled diversification of income generating activities. 'A large proportion of the members preferred to invest in household dairy (30%), agriculture (29%), non-farm trade (20%) and sheep rearing (10%)'.<sup>41</sup>

The above statistics definitely indicate the structural success of the AP-DPIP Project. But the 2012 CDD Review would have been richer if it had explored and examined the project's communication component, namely the use of IEC strategies, social media including interpersonal

communication (in tandem with civil society and institutions of local self government) in public assemblies or meetings inside or outside of the project domain; level of awareness of entitlements, project information and other local civic activities; change in attitudes and behavior both of the community and local bureaucracy etc.

In this context, since the project ends only in 2016, it would be extremely beneficial to dovetail, in its communication plans, the setting up of public-private partnership based community radio stations in the six poor districts under the innovative 2006 National Guidelines for Community Radio of the Government of India. These community run radio stations could develop a sustained linkage with the already operational women's self help groups (SHGs) as well as project facilitation teams. The aim would be to more aggressively mobilise the marginalised groups such as the Scheduled castes, Scheduled tribes, minorities, women and children to create a shelf of identified needs and durable assets to be built and sustained. One cannot, in addition, underestimate the importance of building the capacity of the local community in issues of procurement, contracting, reporting and/or business development as a means of empowerment and improving transparency and cost effectiveness. Even after the World Bank withdraws from the project, these community radio stations could be a continual community forum for ex post evaluation and interaction about the project objectives achieved.

### **Operational Suggestions**

The above, of course, would entail a few essential grassroots prerequisites. First, that a baseline media survey in the AP-DPIP Project area

by the civil society organisation partnered with should be a rigorous exercise to identify the 'media gap' that a community radio station's programming will have to address on poverty reduction and livelihood security issues. Second, while the licensing grant process stretches over a period of ten to eleven months, no time should be lost to build capacities and train local volunteers, facilitators and youth reporters in radio programming. Third, the *sine qua non* of a truly empowered and community owned radio station is its management structure and it ought to include the marginalised in its ambit to both administer the station as well as create and monitor the broadcast of programme content in the project area.

Broadcast programming in the AP-DPIP Project area could, for example, focus on linking the quality of elementary education to skill development in isolated habitations and educationally backward blocks of the districts. Despite improvements in access and retention, the learning outcomes in primary schools for a majority of rural children continues to be an area of serious concern. Such programming could include issues about Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) being incentivised in involvement of local communities in school management and decentralised recruitment of qualified teachers. It could broadcast information on skill inventory and skill maps to guide village communities, especially the youth, at the elementary, middle and secondary stage, on skill development possibilities in potential areas such as agro processing, manufacturing, construction and services (hospitality, tourism etc). This indeed is a dire need in view of the anticipated transition of approximately '600 million'<sup>42</sup> inhabitants from rural to urban areas in India by 2030.



Similarly, broadcast programming on sanitation and water borne disease issues needs to be formulated by the inhabitants to highlight that the PRIs need to sustain the gains of Open Defecation Free (ODF) status earned in various blocks of the districts and devise mechanisms so that slip backs do not occur. Radio programming has to address the acceptance of sanitation options amongst the rural community, keeping in mind the region's diverse geography—high or low water table, flood prone, rocky ground, desert and water scarce. In addition, it has to highlight that PRIs need to assess and enumerate the special requirements, in the above regard, of hitherto neglected groups in the rural areas, e.g. the elderly, differently abled, victims of sexual and substance abuse, those infected by HIV/AIDS, internally displaced and belonging to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) community.

### **Conclusion**

It has been rightly observed that 'development is more than a technical undertaking that can be handled by experts. It is a complex and often contentious process that works better when citizens participate in decisions that shape their lives and allows them to monitor the people whose task it is to govern their destinies'.<sup>43</sup> Traditional community driven development projects often focus more upon issues such of local infrastructure and skill training in the backdrop of decentralisation to institutions of local governance. With a stronger communication component dovetailing the use of varied social media, especially community radio, such project designs will have to build and expand synergies in future with community livelihood projects in developing countries (e.g. women's self help group federations and their bank

linkage). As the nomenclature suggests, the latter open greater avenues to create opportunities for sustainable livelihoods for the poorest. In addition, they also enable their access to markets, investment in durable communal assets and linkages through other myriad participatory mechanisms. Any efforts by the World Bank to either fund or scale up CDD projects with such linkages should entail diagnostic reviews to ensure embedded community participation through community radios.

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**Endnotes:**

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**20, Rouse Avenue, New Delhi-110 002**  
**Email: [orf@orfonline.org](mailto:orf@orfonline.org)**  
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