

# The role of community radio in the empowerment and the growth of women

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**ABSTRACT:** Community radio is a powerful medium to reach the community people. As the radio is a medium which could be easily affordable when compared to other medium it can be reached more easily and it addresses the most basic development needs of the community. So these powerful medium should be used for the development and the empowerment of women. This study aims to find out the importance given by the community radio in Chennai for the development of women through self-employment. For this study the programmes of the community FM in Chennai are analysed. Also the research will find out which media is more useful for the women-whether the commercial radio or the community radio.

**Keywords – Community, Radio, Women, Empowerment, Media**

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the recent development most of the women are employed. But even today women workers still continue to be concentrated in low wage, unstable and insecure jobs in the unorganized sector and lower level of occupation in organized sector. This is larger in rural areas. And due to this those women are not getting time to spend in their family. This was a major obstacle in the development of women. So those women's are suggested to start of a business in which they have knowledge. So the women should be made aware of about self-employment to develop themselves. Among this, community radio plays a major role in the development of women through self-employment. (Caroline, 2000). Through community radio the messages will be delivered to the target and also due to its affordability it can be easily reachable. So the study on the community radio will be more useful in the development of women.

### *1.1 Community Radio and Women Employment-*

Radio is an important medium for disseminating information on key community issues. For instance, when people in the region lost their lands and started working on tea estates, their immediate information requirements were for tea cultivation methods. The radio station not only broadcast the essential information, but also gave insights on issues such as self-employment and health. The Internet is widely used by school children, self-employed people, farmers, and other members of the community. The radio-browsing program has successfully provided customized information to community members, especially to people who cannot access the Internet because of language barriers. On-air Internet browsing and comments by experts during the broadcast make the program a dependable and credible source of information. Inclusion/Participation The radio station encourages the participation of community members in various programs. An attempt is made to involve the community in the programs as much as possible by broadcasting information in local languages and on local topics related to indigenous knowledge, health, agriculture, and entertainment.

Community Radio is an effective tool of social change communication. The power of community radio lies in its participatory nature, as both its content and technology are user-oriented. It is an affordable means of communication, where the adolescents themselves raise issues and identify their own priorities. Besides it provides a platform for accessing information relevant to their needs and as an interactive forum for participation. Pitt (1995). Community radio is an interactive platform, one in which the adolescents are not just recipients of information but also generators of content which is determined by their self awareness, current needs and requirements.

### 1.2. Objective of the study-

- To find out the importance given by community radio, to develop women through self-employment.
- To analyze from which media the women get knowledge/resources/information for their development related to self-employment – mainstream media or community media.
- To suggest how community media could further help the women in developing themselves through self-employment.

## II. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey method and in depth interview in this research

- Survey : The questionnaire was distributed to the target audience of the community radio. This is mainly to find out which media is giving more importance for women in the development of women through self-employment.
- In-depth Interview : The interview with the officials of community radio was conducted. This was done to find out how could community media further help in the development of women

### 2.1 Survey method-

The questionnaire were prepared and distributed to the target group audience of the Anna Fm and MOP Fm. And collected their opinions and responses for the analysis. The type of sampling conducted in this research is random sampling. The survey research sample size is 100. It consists of women who are the target audience of the two community radio stations.

Community radio in Chennai

- 1) Anna Fm – 90.4 MHz
- 2) MOP Fm – 107.8 MHz

### 2.2 Anna Fm (90.4 MHz)-

Educational Multimedia Research Centre at the Anna University was the first campus radio station to go on air in India. Anna FM began its broadcasts in January 2004 and can be heard over a 5 km radius. The station is run entirely by students from the media stream and regularly features the voices of the urban and semi rural communities within the broadcast radius – college students, vendors, farmers, housewives and young workers. It also features distinguished guest speakers on a variety of topics such as health and civic responsibility, local musicians and several educational programs.

Currently they are involving the community in the program productions, and they also they are paid for their work. So the research will concentrate on those community peoples. The main target area for Anna fm is Kannigapuram and Kotturpuram. 50 samples for my research will involve those two area peoples.

### 2.3 MOP Fm (107.8 MHz)-

MOP FM was launched on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2005. It is set at 107.8 frequency and covers the city of Chennai. The programmes are broadcasted from 6.30 a.m to 7.30 a.m with a repeat broadcast from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. The programmes are in English, Tamil and Hindi and will be entirely based on public interest, the main objectives being community service, education, entertainment, information and development. They are currently involving community for the program Penne Nee Arivai. So the remaining 50 samples will be taken in the Nungambakam and Tenampet which are the target area of MOP fm. Percentage analysis is done; it is used to present the data effectively in a simple manner.

## III. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 3.1. Survey Analysis-

In the research survey, the focus is on the target group people of the campus community radios. The research focus will be on the two campus community radio stations Anna Fm and MOP Fm. Kannigapuram and Kotturpuram are the two main target group areas of Anna Fm. MOP Fm have its target audience in Nungambakam and Tenampet. So this survey research focuses on the four areas of Anna Fm and MOP Fm's target audience. This methodology is done mainly to find out which media is more useful for the women community in case of self-employment.

## 3.1.1. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS-

Table 3.1 Age group analysis

S. no	Age group	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Below 18	2	2	4	8
2.	18-30	6	15	21	42
3.	30-40	13	4	17	34
4.	Above 40	4	4	8	16
	Total	25	25	50	100

In the survey research 18-30 age group are in a large number of about 42% and there are only 8% women below the category of age group 18. And the women's who are in the range of 30-40 are in 34% percentage. Finally 16% of women are above the age group of 40. My research is to find out which medium is to find out the importance given by the community radio in the development of women through the self-employment and its main focus is on the target group people of Anna Fm and MOP Fm.

Table 3.2 Education level of the women

S. no	Education status	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Below 12	15	16	31	62
2.	Graduation	7	8	15	30
3.	Others (specify)	3	1	4	8
	Total	25	25	50	100

In the research sample about 62% of target group women's education level is below 12. And about 30% of women are in the graduation level. And the remaining are in a minimum level of 8%.

Table 3.3 Family income status of the target group people

S. no	Income	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Below 5000	15	16	31	62
2.	5000-20,000	7	8	15	30
3.	20,000 and above	3	1	4	8
4.	Others (specify)	-	-	-	-
	Total	25	25	50	100

Majority of the family income of the target group women is below 5000 which is in the maximum percentage level of 62 standard. The income level between 5000-20,000 is about 30% and the people who are in the salary level above 20,000 are 8%.

Table 3.4 Occupation of the respondents

S. no	Occupation	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Working	2	3	5	10
2.	Not working	23	22	45	90
	Total	25	25	50	100

In the research sample the women of about 10% population are only working and the remaining 90% of women are not working.

Table 3.5 Media they used to watch more

S. no	Media	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Television	17	20	37	74
2.	Radio	14	23	37	74
3.	Newspaper	6	3	9	18
4.	Others (specify)	-	1	1	2
	Total	37	47	84	

In the survey methodology it was found out that the majority of the women used to watch television as well as radio. They both are in a percentage of 74. And the remaining 18% used to read newspapers and only 2 percent of the population used to browse in the internet.

Table 3.6 Programmes they watch more

S. no	Programmes	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Music	12	17	29	58
2.	Serials	12	16	28	56
3.	News	10	13	23	46
4.	Informative prog	6	5	1	22
5.	Others (specify)	-	-	-	-
	Total	40	51	81	

The kind of programme they used to watch more is Music which is of 58% and the remaining 56% used to watch serials. And 46% of women used to watch News and only 22% of target group women belong to the community Fm used to watch informative programmes.

Table 3.7 Time spent in listening to radio

S. no	Duration	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Below 2 hours	7	4	11	22
2.	2-6 hours	11	15	26	52
3.	Above 6 hours	7	6	13	26
4.	Others (specify)	-	-	-	-
	Total	25	25	50	100

Majority of 52% women used to listen radio between 2 to 6 hours. And about 26% of women listen to radio more that 6 hours. 22% of women used to listen radio below 2 hours.

Table 3.8 Programmes listened to in Radio

S. no	Programmes	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Music	12	17	29	58
2.	Interviews	8	10	18	36
3.	News	8	3	11	22
4.	Informative prog	9	13	22	44
5.	Others (specify)	-	-	-	-
	Total	37	51	81	

In radio majority of the women used to listen music which is of 58%. 44% of the women population used to listen Informative programmes. 36% of women are used to listen to interviews. And 22% of target group women will be listening News.

Table 3.9 Commercial Radio channels

S. no	Radio channels	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Suryan Fm	8	11	19	38
2.	Radio Mirchi	11	19	30	60
3.	Big FM	7	13	20	40
4.	Radio one	6	10	16	32
5.	Hello Fm	4	2	6	12
6.	Others (specify)	-	-	-	-
	Total	36	55	91	

Majority of the people used to listen radio mirchi and that form percentage of 60. And listeners of suryan fm are about 38% and 40% of people used to listen Big Fm. And 32% of people used to listen Radio one. And 12% of women used to listen Hello Fm.

Table 3.10 Is the commercial radio channels useful in the development

S. no	Development	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Yes	9	4	13	26
2.	No	16	21	37	74
	Total	25	25	50	100

In the survey research target group people were asked whether the commercial Fm channels are useful for them in their development. 26% of target group women agreed that those channels are helpful to them and the remaining 74% explained that there is no way helpful to them.

Table 3.11 Self-employment programs in commercial radio channels

S. no	Self-employment	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Yes	6	2	8	16
2.	No	19	23	42	84
	Total	25	25	50	100

In the survey methodology the audience were asked about the self-employment programmes in commercial channels, majority of 84% haven't heard of any self-employment programmes in particular. Only 16% of people heard of some tips about self-employment programmes.

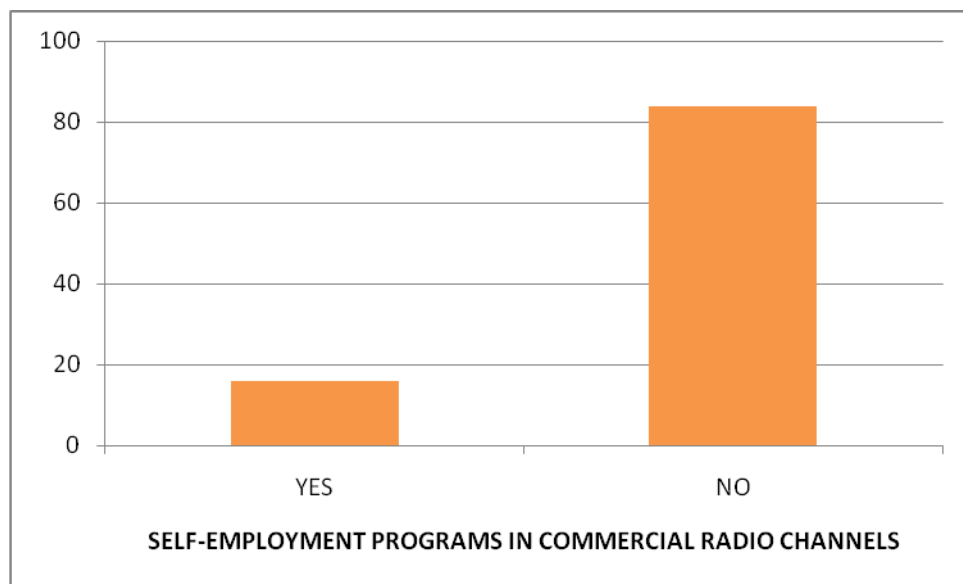


Figure 3.1 Self-employment programs in commercial radio channels

Table 3.12 Women's programmes in Anna FM

S. no	Women programme	No of women	Percentage
1.	Magalir neram	6	16
2.	Science for women	19	84
3.	Snegitheye	3	6
	Total	28	

In Anna Fm the women programmes are Magalir neram, Science for women, and snegitheye. And the questions were asked to find out which programme is very useful for the women. In that science for women programme which was named as Sakthi arivayadi was very popular among the women community. About 84% of women have come across sakthi arivayadi. 16% of the women knew about Magalir neram and only 6% of the women have heard snegitheye programme.

Table 3.13 Women's programmes in MOP FM

S. no	Women programme	No of women	Percentage
1.	Women of the week	1	2
2.	Science for women	23	46
3.	Others (specify)	-	-
	Total	24	

In the MOP Fm the women's programme are Women of the week and Science for women which was termed as Penne ne arivai. Among this, majority of the women new about Penne ne arivai and only 2% of the women new about women of the week.

Table 3.14 Usefulness of the programmes in community radio

S. no	Usefulness	Anna Fm	MOP Fm	No of women	Percentage
1.	Relaxation	1	4	5	8
2.	Knowledge	15	17	32	49
3.	Career development	12	7	19	29
4.	Self-employment	7	2	9	14
5.	Others (specify)	-	-	-	-
	Total	35	30	65	

In case of community radio programmes, the target audience where asked about the important factor in which way it was useful for them to develop. 49% of women where told that they gain knowledge with the help of these programmes. 29% of women have told that it was useful for them in their career development. 14% have told that they are given opportunities to know about self-employment with the help of self-help group. And only 8% of women considered those programmes are for relaxation.

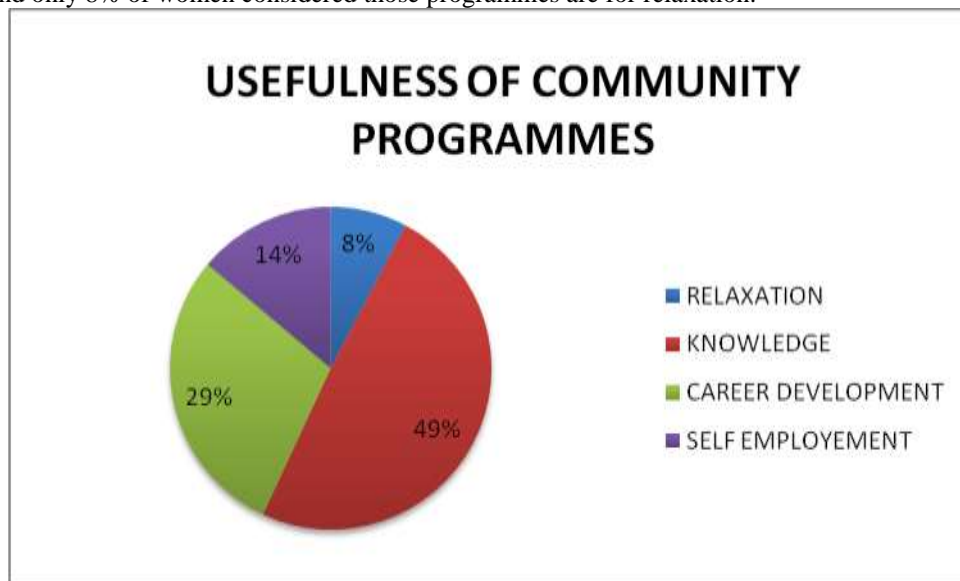


Figure 3.2 Usefulness of the programmes in community radio

3.1.2 Qualitative Analysis of the responses on usefulness of community radio-

1) Reasons for the usefulness of the community radio

- The community radio gives programmes which will be more useful for the community people.
- Only through this community radio, community people are getting opportunities to participate in the programmes and interact with the officials.
- Community radio produces programmes only for the use of the community people, so through this they are gaining knowledge.

2) Suggestion given by the community development of women through self-employment

- As there was no programmes in community radio about self-employment the target audience have suggested to increase more programmes on the self-employment
- Only through interactivity the programmes can more easily reach the target audience so the interactivity needs to be increased.
- The community radio should produce programmes about starting of a business, and also should give useful tips about self-employment
- There are many NGO's who are helping the people, so the community radio should involve such NGO's and make them interact with the community.

3.2 Interview Analysis-

This interview was done to find out which media is more useful for the women community to develop themselves. For that the interview analysis is done with the expertise in the community radio.

- Should encourage women about self-employment
- Training programmes need to be conducted to improve their skills to start of a business
- Marketing and Management skills need to be given

- Should make steps to collaborate women self-help group with the NGO's to help women in self-employment.
- Should improve their communication skills
- Financial problem must be supported and confidence should be built.

### 3.3 Findings of the study-

- 1) In both the community radio channels there are only few women programmes.
- 2) In both the community radio channels there is no self-employment programme.
- 3) When compared to Anna Fm, MOP Fm is not popular among women, the community participation is very low in MOP Fm.
- 4) While surveying with MOP Fm target audience, it was found that many of the women haven't heard of any programme in MOP Fm.
- 5) In Anna Fm the community participation is more and it gives opportunity for the community to produce programme, but still they haven't allocated any particular programme for self-employment.
- 6) In both the community channels, the Science for women is the only successful programme that reached community.
- 7) The target group audience feels that the community radio is more useful for them when compared to the commercial radio channels.
- 8) There is not much importance given by the community for the self-employment programmes.
- 9) The target audience feels that more self-employment programmes for women need to be produced.
- 10) The community FM needs to arrange for training courses on self-employment for women.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Community radio is an effective medium through which we can empower the community. But steps need to be taken to make the programmes more useful for the community. Regarding women, most of them waste their life in home; they need to be encouraged and should be given confident about themselves. Currently the communities are not very aware of the usefulness of the community radio. Awareness needs to be created about the effectiveness of the community radio. And the self-employment programmes need to be improved and steps need to be taken to see through whether the programme is reachable. And measures should be taken to improve those programmes. Community should be made aware of the use of self-employment.

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