

## Community Radio Listening Habits of Women Living in the Resettlement Colonies of South Delhi District, Delhi

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### Abstract

The paper highlights relevance of radio in the marginalized communities with specific reference to women. With the advancement of 21st century, the position of women is also changing at a fast pace. The country's overall development rests greatly on the inclusion of women in its development programs. Community radio plays an important role in the lives of women as it creates awareness, provides information, improves their abilities and empowers them. The women in the target area lack knowledge about preserving the good environment for future generation and about their good health which are the essence of the day. Hence, a study was conducted with an objective to assess the listening habits of women, living in the resettlement colonies, about environment and health programs. The research findings show that women are listening to the radio, but for entertainment and not for information. However, women are willing to contribute and participate in the community radio stations.

**Keywords:** Community Radio; Listening Habits; Marginalized Communities; Radio Station; Resettlement Colonies; Empowerment.

### Introduction

UNESCO has outlined community radio as a broadcast station that "has operated in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community"

In developing countries, the radio is looked upon as a catalytic instrument for development. The Vidyalankar Committee set up by the Indian Planning Commission in 1963 envisioned an active role for radio when it observed "our development task is so great and our population, so large that only by the most efficient possible programs of public information can we hope to reach our people often enough and effectively enough to activate on the needed scale,

discussion processes and subsequent actions in the cities, towns and villages". According to a policy document of the Government of India, "radio should become an input in the nation building tasks and must strengthen the confidence of the people, promote the concept of self-reliance and encourage the forces of unity and national harmony." Radio is the main source of news and entertainment for most of India. All India Radio is the top tier in radio coverage, as the public service broadcaster. Community radio is often built around perceptions of participation and access, and so that the people can receive the message and participate in the creation of such messages. The concept of Community radio is the most noteworthy development in radio broadcasting all over the world. It is today known as the 'narrow casting' as against 'broadcasting'. The introduction of the community radio is a milestone not only in reaching out to the remote area, but also persuading the citizen to share in the vision and excitement of developing. From the time Radio was introduced in India, the main goal of AIR (All India Radio) was to, educate, inform and entertain the public. In 2006 when community radio policy guidelines were issued for launching of community radio stations in the country, the principal aim was the development of the community with the

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Received on 12.05.2017, Accepted on 19.05.2017

help of community radio, which can promote the development of the country, indirectly it will promote the welfare of women.

In India, this concept of community radio can be used within a well-defined, limited area to echo the problems, desires, needs, sorrows and celebrations of a society which the mainstream media are unable to cater to. Today a lot of importance has been given to broadcasting in the local or the grassroots levels in most countries. Though this local or community radio movement started in the 1960s and the 1970s in western countries, it reached the developing countries only in the 1980s and the 1990s. The Government of India decided to start local radio stations during the sixth five-year program on an experimental basis.

In a Community Radio each of the stations attends to a small area, reaching right into the heart of the community which uses the microphone to replicate and enrich its life in an artistic expression. The first experimentation in local/community radio was launched on October 30, 1984 in Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu. The key objective of this station was providing education, information and entertainment, and to encourage the people to participate in the national endeavor for the cohesive development of the country. It is a supportable, cost-effective medium and has the advantage of accessing both illiterate and literate

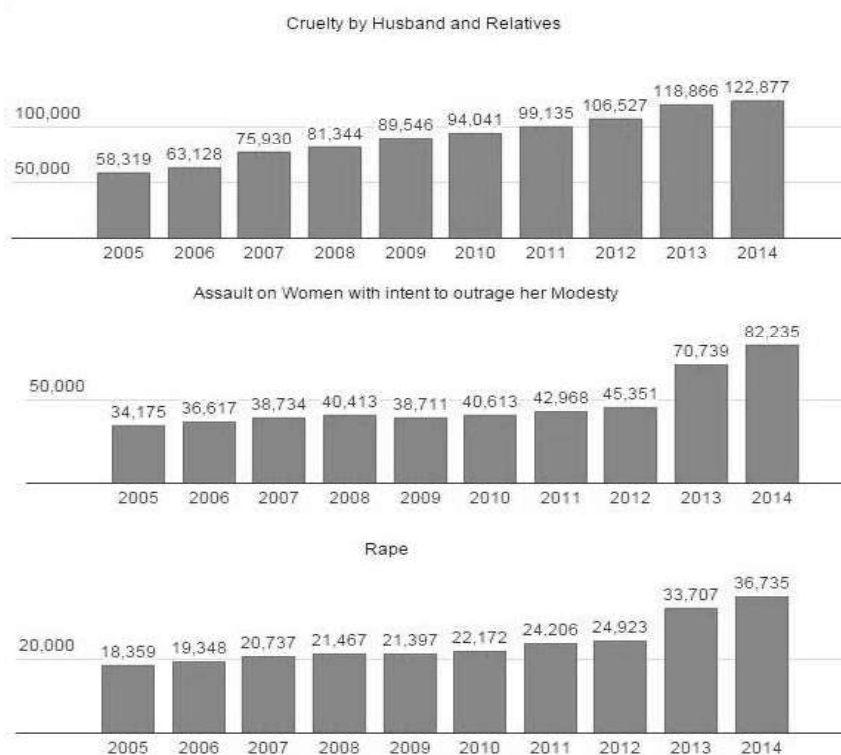
audiences.

In the perspective of India, as a local answer to training, employment, and challenging patriarchal structures, community radio has started to gain momentum for women's participation. With them playing key roles as community reporters, volunteers, and program producers, women in India may have found a new medium to voice their opinions. Community radio is the only medium to spotlight and educate the people as it serves people in three ways- It informs, guides, and entertains. Through the help of community radio, we can provide the information related to different areas of concern among the target population, making them aware about the rights, rules and laws initiated by the government for them.

#### *Women's Empowerment and Participatory Communication*

"Convinced that the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields." – Preamble to Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979.

### Major Crimes Against Women \* Figures represent cases reported.



(Source: National Crime Records Bureau; figures represent cases reported)

“Woman empowerment is a process that enables a powerless woman to develop autonomy, self-control and confidence and with a group of women and men, a sense of collective influence over oppressive social conditions,” noted Kumar and Varghese.

Empowering women, in fact, mean supporting them to confront family, caste, community, religion, traditional forces and prejudices working within society. This conflict ensures their full contribution in every phase of national and social development. Empowerment is a progression where women, collectively and individually, become conscious of how power relations drive their lives. With this consciousness, they achieve self-confidence and vigor to challenge gender inequalities at all levels

Mass media are the chief agents of creation, preservation and eradication of different kinds of images and stereotypes of women in the contemporary world. Visual media like TV is more accepted than the magazines and newspaper. The information people obtain through radio, newspapers and television shapes their opinions about the world. Women are portrayed in their traditional role in most of the media and their images are just decorative in the advertising media. Media representation of women is reactionary and unrealistic. Media also illustrate a distorted adaptation of Indian housewife. It is the mass media, which should begin the process of women empowerment in the modern world. The added decision-making positions women embrace in the media, the more they can influence the output. They will be able to break the old stereotypes about women.

*Participatory development communication* is the use of mass media and traditional, interpersonal means of communication that endows communities to envisage aspirations and determine solutions to their development issues and problems. It also proposes to return to the roots of its meaning, which, similarly to the term community, originate from the Latin word ‘communis’, i.e. common.

In the perspective of India, a community radio acts as a participatory tool, not just challenging the gender roles premeditated by the society, but facilitating assessment of resources, facilities available, opportunities and redistributing power to the marginalized. What becomes vital in this case is that such stories of success get transformed and transferred into bigger examples, spreading through different cultures and communities. Here with training, local producers can generate programs using local voices. The best benefit in them is that immediate local problems and concerns can be

undertaken in the least loss of time whenever the need is felt. The community can also enthusiastically contribute to the management of the station and have a say in the preparation and content of the programs.

#### *Role of Community Radio in Empowering Women*

Community radio is both for the community and by the community. The community here is understood to be the owner of the radio station that contributes in all the phases of the station, from the management of the establishment, financing to administration. Community radio is also characterized by the dynamic participation of the community in creating news, entertainment, information, and culturally-relevant material with a stress on local concerns and issues. The best benefit is that the immediate problems and local issues can be undertaken in a minimum loss of time. The community can also keenly contribute not only in the management of the station, but also have a say in the planning and content of the programs.

Studies and practices over the years have shown that community development and women’s empowerment go hand in hand thus, making women’s access to information critical for development. As the deprived gender, a woman in a community radio breaks the patriarchal shackles, stepping out of the mental walls. Without the constant encouragement and support from social perspective is made available, Community radio as a social emancipation tool remains far from reality. With constant community participation, the women impacts stories from the grassroots, promoting girl child education, better nutrition, government scheme’s implementation, environmental care, and prevention of gender based violence will have a larger influence. Some of the popular methods of women empowerment include education, entrepreneurial training programs, formation of Self Help Groups, etc.

#### **Materials and Methods**

The study adopted questionnaire based survey research method. The survey is the most appropriate method of gathering and measuring data relating to demographics, attitude, opinion and perception. A total of 100 self-administered structured questionnaire in Hindi were distributed to women in the age group 14 -40yrs.

The study was conducted on the influences of community radio (CR) programs on women’s

development with the following specific objectives:

- To study radio listening pattern of the respondents,
- To find the willingness or interest among the target audience and their willingness to participate in CR Programs,
- Gratification drawn from the programs,
- What are the benefits of CR?
- How can women get access to various resources and programs initiated by the government, while listening to the CR?
- How can the CR give women a voice that allows them participation and Redressal in the forums?

To fulfil the set objectives of this study, Radio JIMS Vasant Kunj 90.4 was taken up as a tool for the study. Radio JIMS 90.4 MHz was set up in the year 2005. The reach of the station is 5 kms radius. It broadcasts programs daily for five hours on community empowerment issues related to women, children and the youth. The thematic content of the station area - Women empowerment, health, spirituality, legal issues and career counselling. The Signature Programs of this CR are:

“Aatmchintan” is based on motivation & spirituality; “Mansha” aims at women empowerment; “Legal Mantra” on legal awareness; “Bat Pate Ki” is based on wellness and health and “Jeevan Disha” is for career counseling.

The listeners of this CR are, primarily, school dropouts, adolescents and women; who otherwise have little access to information from the nearby urban clusters in a 5km range. To fulfil the set objectives of this study, a detailed data collection in the coverage area of Radio JIMS Vasant Kunj was made. Slums of Massodpur, Mahipalpur, Dalit camps and Rangpuri Pahari was selected as the area of the study. The convenience sample size of the study was taken as 100 with random samples from the women population of the study area. Quantitative data were collected and analyzed and the results were interpreted through descriptive analysis. The statistical software SPSS (version 16.0) was used for analysis of the data and Microsoft excel have been used to generate graphs, Tables, etc.

## Results

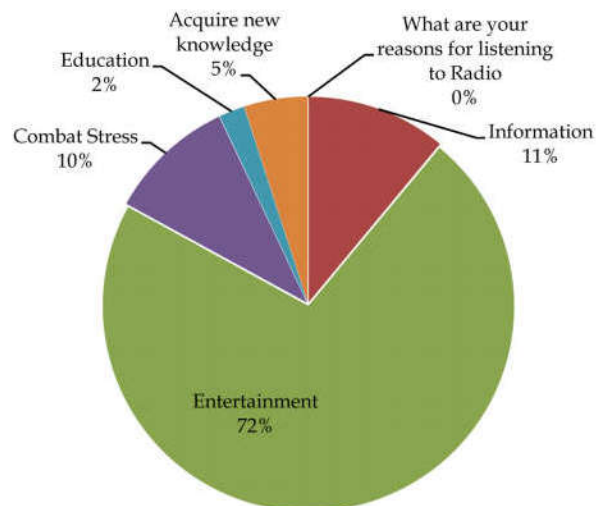
All 100 women / girls' subjects in the age range 14- 40 years enrolled in the survey

completed the study. The age groups defined here: 14- 18 years, 19- 29 years and 30- 40 years of age.

Nearly half of the respondents (41%) belonged to age group of 19 to 29 years and nearly one fourth of the respondents (23% and 22%) belonged to the age groups of 14 to 18 years and 30 to 40 years respectively. Nearly one-fourth of the respondents (24% to 26%) have completed high school and secondary level education. 12% of the respondents have completed elementary level education. Nearly one fourth of the respondents were illiterate/ did not receive any formal education. This shows that the higher studies levels of the study area are very low. Regarding the occupational status of the respondents, nearly half (40%) of the respondents were either housemaids or door step beauticians and less than one fourth of the respondents (18%) were students. Nearly 5% of the responders were homemakers.

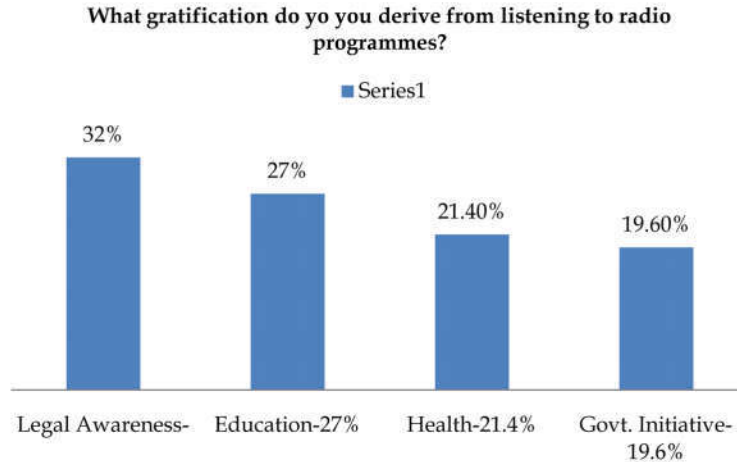
The study revealed that more than 71% of the women listened to the radio, whereas more than one fifth of the respondents (21%) did not listen to the radio, the development of television may be the cause and reduces the radio listening. Only 20% of the respondents were aware of the community radio. More than half of the (61%) of the respondents usually listened to the radio early in the morning while getting ready for the work, while nearly half of them (45%) listened to the radio in the leisure time in the comfort of their houses and 23% listened at the time of travelling or commuting.

Less than three fourth of the respondents (72%) listened to radio for pure entertainment while more than one tenth listened for information and to combat stress.

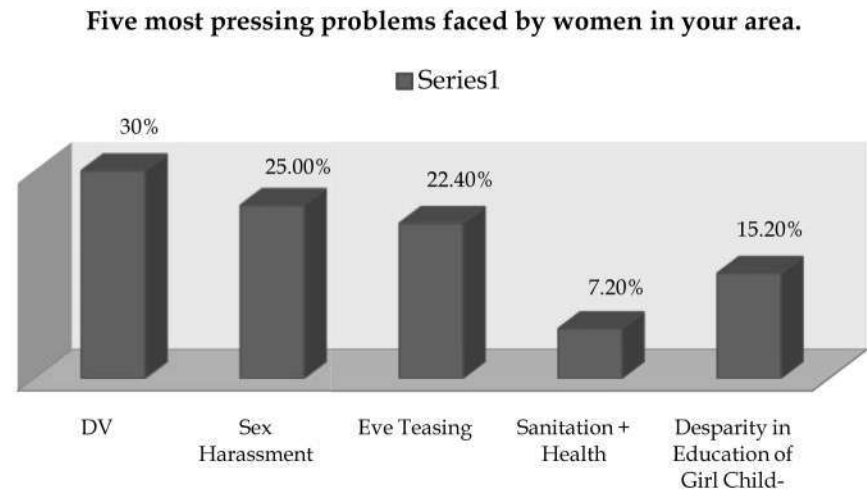


What are your Reasons for Listening to Radio ?

Graph 1: The reasons behind listening to community radio

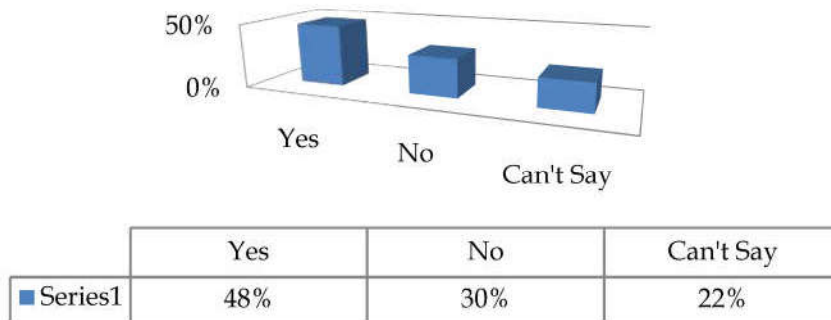


**Graph 2:** The answers to the question about the gratification drawn from listening of the radio programs, nearly one third of the respondents (32%) revealed that they acquired, whereas one fifth admitted to health awareness

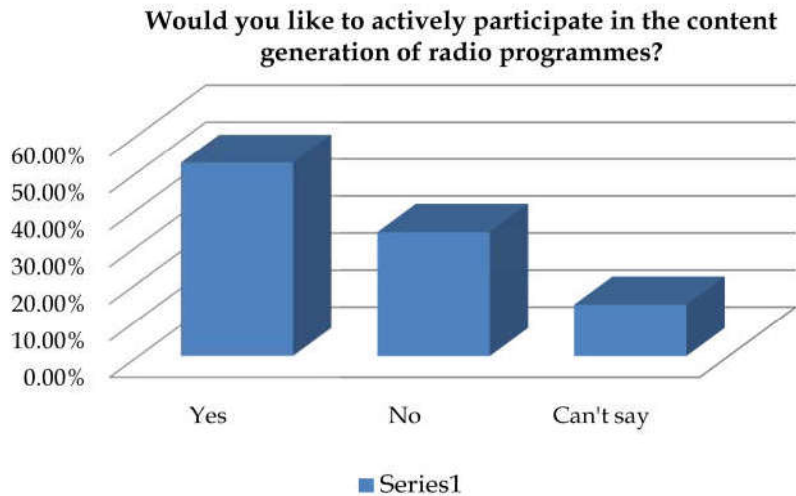
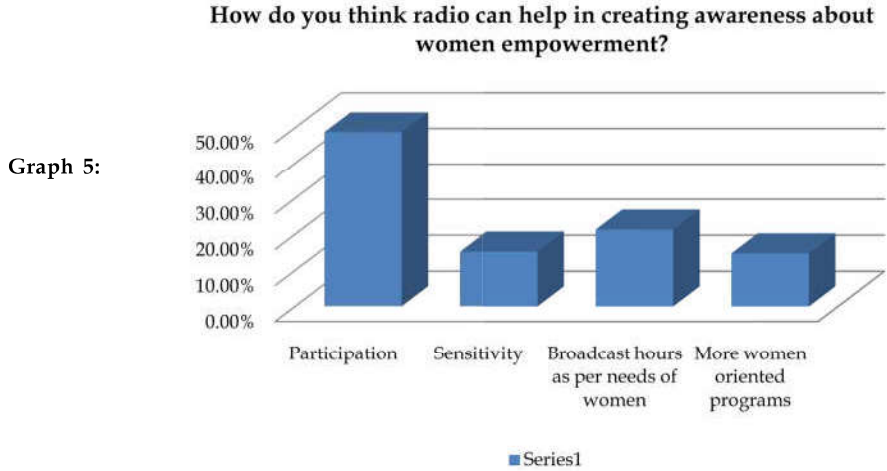


**Graph 3:** The five most pressing problems faced by the women in their areas 30% responded to domestic violence, whereas 25% to sexual harassment and 22% to eve teasing. 48% of the respondents agree that Radio shows do raise issues and concerns of women seriously.

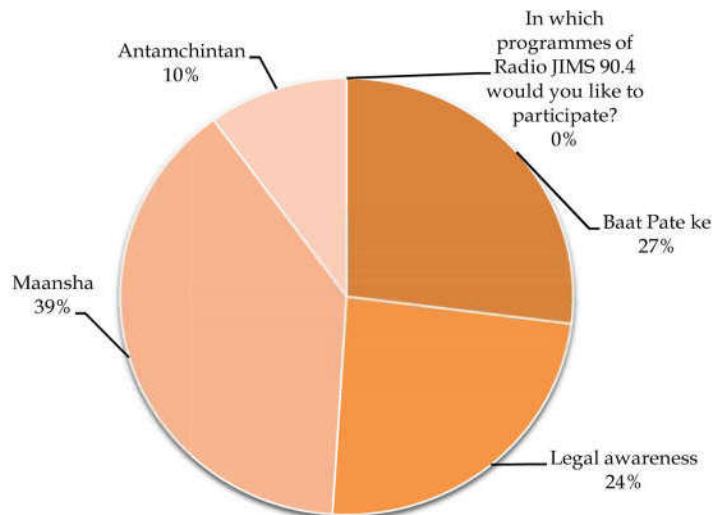
**Do you think women issues and concerns are taken seriously by people at the Radio Stations/Organisations?**



**Graph 4:** Shows that 30% showed their discontent about the same More than three fourth (78%) of the respondents, showed their keen interest in listening to the programs on women empowerment.



**Graph 6:** Nearly half of the respondents (52%) reiterated that community radio can play a very effective role in raising their concerns and at the same time they also showed eagerness in generating content for their community radio (Graphs 5 & 6 respectively)



**Graph 7:** Reveals about the pursuit of the respondents to participate in categories of programs of Radio JIMS Vasant Kunj. 39% of the respondents were willing to participate in women’s programs.

Fig. 8:

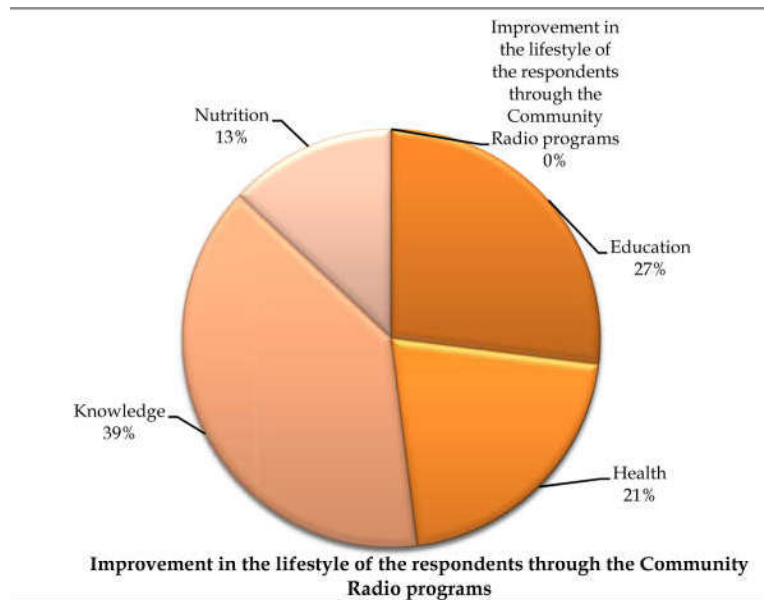


Chart 8 presents the distribution of the respondents by the alteration in their lifestyle through the plans of the community Radio. About 87% of the respondents, nearly felt improvements in teaching. Close to education, they got enhancement in knowledge and health too. Approximately 13% of the respondents developed in their nutrition aspects by the programmes. Hence, more than half of the respondents got improvement in their mindset.

### Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi very aptly stated “if you cultivate a man you educate an individual, merely if you educate a woman you educate an entire household”. This education is likewise one of the prime needs of women towards its evolution and authorization in the club.

Radio can change the lives of women, by giving them a voice, supporting them to fight for their rights, by building awareness about numerous concerns from the rights of women, maternity, to health, nutrition and violence. Radio also can enlighten women about their political rights, reservations, empowering them to fight back the domestic violence, biases, encourages them to express their opinion etc. If it used properly community radio can do wonders for the development, upliftment or empowerment of women.

The important conclusions drawn from the methodology point to the fact that to empower women, is to increase their command over the decisions which will touch their lives both inside and outside the home.

Women should be instigated to take their knowledge and skills, vision and leadership, views and hopes into the growth schedule. This radio as a medium has a number of qualities that makes it an efficacious tool in supporting women’s participation in decision-making processes and organizational structures.

1. A nationwide survey on the radio listening habit of women be carried out as a means of reinforcing the finding of this study and to decide the strength of wireless as a powerful force in calling up women for national course. This is necessary to furnish an equal platform for women and to put an end to the contentious matter of women marginalisation particularly in government.
2. That all offices involved in dissemination of information on health, laws, income generation, self help groups, among others intended for women should utilize the means of community radio in doing so.
3. The stations should go with a social responsibility high degree of women’s participation. They can do so by:
  - By creating a social climate supportive and vulnerable to diverse women’s issues.
  - By producing content for the economic independence of women through their participation and listening. This includes the psychological, economic, cultural, political and societal.

Hence, radio can be the source of empowerment of women. Radio can change the lives of women, it gives them voice, it gives them courage to fight for their rights, it creates awareness about various issues from

the beginning the rights of women, to health, maternity, violence, nutrition. Radio also educates women about their political rights, voting, etc. It endows them to fight back the domestic violence, male preference attitudes with men, gives them courage to speak their opinion on all issues, to express their interests. It gives them confidence to live their life. So community radio can do wonders if it applied properly for the development or upliftment or empowerment of women. It can play as a platform or bridge to exit the barrier of essential communication and info; education is fundamental, pre-requisite of all human beings.

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