

Impact of Community Radio on Investment Behaviour and Employment in Budikote, Karnataka

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ABSTRACT

Community Radio in India is a very recent phenomenon. Most scholars agree with the fact that the condition of the poorest of the poor can be improved by providing them with the most basic information so that they can learn to sustain in their environment by most efficient use of the resources available to them and henceforth improving their worsening condition. But the information delivery strategies on development should be clear and the mistake of putting technology ahead of the community needs should not be followed. One such information and communication technology strategy is Community Radio, which caters to the need of rural community. A study was undertaken in Budikote, Karnataka with the help of Namma Dhwani Community Radio to assess the economic impact of community radio on the people's development in Budikote. The study highlights that the overall economic impact of Namma Dhwani indicated that the overall economic impact of Namma Dhwani programmes indicated that more changes has occurred in savings which was ranked first among the economic impact dimensions which was followed by investments, income, maintenance of creditworthiness and employment opportunities were ranked second, third, fourth and fifth respectively.

Key words: *Community radio; Information; Communication;*

Community Radio in India is a very recent phenomenon. Supreme Court of India declared the airwaves as public property, to be utilized for promoting public good and ventilating plurality of views, opinions and ideas. In a developing country like India where poverty is much more than the mere absence of money, often it leads people to utter hopelessness. Action on opportunities such as education, healthcare, employment, natural resources, services, infrastructure etc. Now the question of the hour is how to uplift these people? Most scholars agree with the fact that the condition of these poorest of the poor can be improved by providing them with the most basic information so that they can learn to sustain in their environment by most efficient use of the resources available to them and henceforth improving their worsening condition. But the information delivery strategies on development should be clear and the mistake of putting technology ahead of the community needs should not be followed. One such information and communication technology strategy is community radio, which caters to the need of rural community hence giv-

ing way to bottom up approach, and providing a voice to the voice less. The community radio is characterized by the active participation of the community in the process of creating news, information, entertainment and culturally relevant material, with emphasis on programme using local voices. Keeping this background in view, a study was conducted with the specific objective to assess the economic impact of community radio on the development of people of the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Karnataka state in Budikote village of Kolar district. Budikote was selected purposively for the study, since it was the only village directly related to the purpose of the study and also because the community radio station services were effectively reaching the people through both cable casting and narrowcasting in this village only. A list of 300 people available in the documents of Namma Dhwani was selected who were actively involved in the activities of Namma Dhwani and the resource cen-

tre. Among these 300 people, 80 respondents were selected purposively. Among these respondents 9 respondents who were working in the community radio station as studio managers with a full scale salary were also interviewed. The data were collected by personal contacts with respondents and by attending SHG meetings and with the help of the interpreter. The responses so collected were tabulated in light of the objectives of the study. The suitable statistical tools were used for analysis of data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Economic impact was considered on the basis of the fact that the resource centre does narrow cast and cable cast income generation programmes, these income generation programmes are usually on activities which can be employed by the villagers as a part time basis on a small scale. Keeping this in mind, an attempt has been made to analyse the economic impact of Namma Dhwani programmes. Apart from programmes on increase in income, it also produces programmes on agriculture; animal husbandry etc. the other economic dimensions selected to study economic impact are income, savings, investments, credit worthiness and employment opportunities for the listeners.

Income: Income was operationalized as the number or percentage of respondents agrees on increase in their income, either directly or indirectly due to awareness created by Namma Dhwani and its programmes. The result of income indicated as under:

- (i) As high as 80 per cent of the respondents had benefitted from the programmes of Namma Dhwani due to timely market information this helped them in their decision making behaviour.
- (ii) Seventy five per cent of the respondents agreed to the fact that they had an increase in their income in agriculture due Namma Dhwani and its programmes, the respondents specially accorded this due to timely announcements of package of practices, information about availability of seeds, programmes on new techniques of management on the farm, scientific information such as use of balanced fertilizers, soil testing, best time for sowing, best time for harvesting etc.

- (iii) Although programmes on animal husbandry is quiet less, 20 per cent respondents agreed for their increase in their income. The timely announcements of arrival of veterinary doctor helped them a lot to maintain the health conditions of their livestock. The timely veterinary information on feed ratio and availability of fodder also helped them a lot.
- (iv) Income from other sources were from activities of self employment such as sambhar powder making, badam powder, eating plates which are made out of special leaves and sold during marriages at a cost of 25 paise per plate, women given training on stitching clothes etc. some of the activities do involve training and capacity building which is fulfilled by the resource centre. Forty percent of the respondents accorded that they were benefitted from such activities.

Table 1. Impact of Namma Dhwani programmes on income (N=80)

S. No.	Impact Dimensions	Change Indicators			
		Yes		No	
		No.	%	No.	%
1.	Timely market information has resulted in increase in respondent's income.	64	80	16	20
2.	Increase in income from agri. due to announcements made on package of practices	60	75	20	25
3.	Increase in income from animal husbandry due to timely veterinary information.	16	20	64	80
4.	Indirect changes in ones income from any sources due to provision of timely information.	32	40	48	60

Savings : Mysore Rehabilitation and Development Agency (MYRADA) has a very strong network of self help groups and the Budikote's resource centre itself has 12 self help groups in the same village, savings have been their agenda for long time now. But Namma Dhwani programmes on advantages of savings reaches all the people in the village whether he is a member of the self help group or not.

- (i) Seventy five percent of the respondents felt there has been increase in their savings in the past few

years and most respondents thanked the awareness created by Namma Dhwani and its programmes which made them realize the importance of savings for future especially to meet any unforeseen circumstances.

- (ii) Most of the respondents i.e. 85 per cent have started to save regularly in Self Help Group's or any other organization such as co-operatives and other commercial banks.

Table 2 . Impact of Namma Dhwani programmes on Savings (N=80)

S. No.	Impact Dimensions	Change Indicators			
		Yes		No	
		No.	%	No.	%
1.	Respondent motivated to increase in savings in the recent past.	60	75	20	25
2.	Saving regularly in SHG's or any other commercial banks	68	85	12	15

Table 3. Impact of Namma Dhwani programmes on investment (N=80)

S. No.	Impact Dimensions	Change Indicators			
		Yes		No	
		No.	%	No.	%
1.	Increased investment on inputs and farm infrastructure	72	90	8	10
2.	Increased income in animal health care	44	55	36	45
3.	Education	72	90	8	10
4.	Housing and material possessions	20	25	60	75
5.	Hygiene and health of family	56	70	24	30

Investments: Economic impact can also be realized from the investment pattern the individual has been following after listening to programmes of Namma Dhwani, because some of the changes to occur do require some sort investment such as in agriculture, education, health etc.

- (i) Investment in agriculture was considered important because Namma Dhwani programmes try to influence the decision making behavior of the people by developing innovative programmes. Some of the programmes on agriculture are

interview with subject matter specialists, programme on water problem inputs and farm infrastructure etc. the result with regard to change in investment pattern showed that 90 per cent of the respondents had increased their investment in agriculture.

- (ii) Animal husbandry programmes also did had some influence, such as providing proper fodder, animal nutrition and health care etc. 55 per cent of the respondents had increased their investment towards animal husbandry.
- (iii) Education was an important dimension in this study since the resource centre has a direct cable feed wire to the school, where children can listen to programmes, the school children have formed a group by the name *Hosa Belaku (New Light)*, these children conduct programmes every saturday based on the topic of their interest. This has an affect not only on the children but also on their parents, when their children have shown marked improvement in their activities it would also motivate them to send them to school and also for higher studies. It was evident here with result showing 90 per cent of the respondents have increased their investment in education.
- (iv) Housing and material possessions also form an important dimension since Namma Dhwani also produces programmes on use stainless steel plates for better health and cleaning purposes, how to use efficiently the smokeless chulas, care that has to be taken while using gas cylinders etc. the data collected showed that only 25 per cent of the respondents had increased their investment in housing and material possessions.
- (v) With regard to health and sanitation the result has shown that 70 per cent of the respondents had increased their investment in health and sanitation. A person now here were more cautious than before says Triveni, who was a resource centre committee member. It was true form the fact that Namma Dhwani has produced programmes and provided need based information whenever it was necessary. For example when Chikun Gunya was prevelant in the area, people had stopped eating meat but never took a step against breeding of mosquitoes, the programmes

of Namma Dhwani on time did help and people started taking precautionary measures.

Maintenance of Credit worthiness: As mentioned earlier MYRADA has a strong network of Self-help Groups and they have been acting as a self help promoting institutions. They promote savings and act as a link between the banks and the SHG's. The data collected with regard to credit worthiness are mentioned below:

- (i) Most of the respondents had positive response for increase in credit worthiness i.e. 95 per cent. The rest 5 per cent did not have negative response but were only dissatisfied with the resource centre for not getting the information on loans in time.
- (ii) Responses for surety for availing credit indicated that 60 per cent of the respondents acted as surety along with the resource centre for availing credit. Namma Dhwani's programmes on advantages of maintaining creditworthiness was highlighted by the respondents. It cannot be accorded as any direct impact but how the respondent perceives the programmes is also important, and most of the responses were based on this perception.

Table 4. Impact of Namma Dhwani programmes on investment (N=80)

S. No.	Impact Dimensions	Change Indicators			
		Yes		No	
		No.	%	No.	%
1.	Banking information improved their repayment behavior of loans.	76	95	4	5
2.	Respondents motivated through programmes to act as sureties for availing credit or its repayment.	48	60	32	40

Employment opportunities: When Namma Dhwani production centre was inaugurated in 2001, 20 volunteers were selected for training and later on employed to conduct programmes, it not only created employment opportunity in the village itself, but also provided for further development of the individuals employed. Through its awareness programmes it also provides news of different employment opportunities for the unemployed, especially for those who have registered

in the resource centre along with their Bio-data.

- (i) Sixty five per cent of the respondents had increased employment opportunities to his family. The respondents had benefitted especially from the timely information provided by the resource centre about the job opportunities that were being provided outside Budikote.
- (ii) The same number of respondents (65 %) agreed that their family was reasonably self employed either in their farm or their nearby relatives farm.
- (iii) Thirty five per cent of the respondents had gone for self employment such as small business establishments, marketing of produce, providing logistic services etc.
- (vi) Some of the respondents were also involved in directly in providing services for the resource centre for which they were paid. It was especially when the respondents help the resource centre in arranging place for stay for guests; collecting information from far off places etc. with regard to this 35 per cent of the respondents had provided such services.

Table 5. Impact of Namma Dhwani programmes on employment opportunities.(N=80)

S. No.	Impact Dimensions	Change Indicators			
		Yes		No	
		No.	%	No.	%
1.	Announcement of vacancies led to increased employment for the unemployed	52	65	28	35
2.	Farm information has improved efficiency of labour	52	65	28	35
3.	Off farm employment to respondents family members.	28	35	52	65
4.	Respondent himself or any of his family member employed in services of community radio station.	24	30	56	70

Overall Economic Impact: The overall economic impact of Namma Dhwani programmes indicated that more changes has occurred in savings with a mean score of 0.8 and hence was ranked first among the economic

Table 6. Overall economic impact of programmes of Namma Dhwani (N=80)

S. No.	Economic impact dimensions	Mean Score	Rank
1.	Income	0.5375	III
2.	Savings	0.8	I
3.	Investments	0.66	II
4.	Maintenance of credit worthiness	0.5166	IV
5.	Employment opportunities	0.4875	V

impact dimensions which was followed by investments, income, maintenance of creditworthiness and employment opportunities were ranked second, third, fourth and fifth respectively. The results of this study are inline with the findings of the studies conducted by Meera (2004), Pavarala (2001,) and Manandhar, (1983).

CONCLUSION

The overall economic impact of Namma Dhwani programmes indicated that more changes has occurred in savings which was ranked first among the economic impact dimensions which was followed by investments, income, maintenance of creditworthiness and employment opportunities were ranked second, third, fourth and fifth respectively. Findings of impact assessment of community radio station would also help the researchers to understand how timely access to information can help in economic development of the people. Dimensions such as income, savings, investments, credit worthiness and employment opportunities for the listeners can bring significant changes in the life of the people in Budikote. Hence community radio can play a catalytic role in bringing about changes in the life of the people.

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