



Defeating COVID-19 Poverty through Community Radios

- Lessons Learnt and Good Practices

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Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic, that started as a health crisis has led increasing food insecurity and further impoverishment of the population, and warnings of an impending hunger pandemic are becoming more urgent internationally. COVID-19 has also led to an increase in the number of people at risk of falling into poverty.

The project **Promotion of Resilient Communities: Addressing COVID-19-related Poverty by Community Radios in South and Southeast Asia** was implemented by the World Association of Radio Broadcasters (AMARC) Asia-Pacific regional office to support community radios in four countries - Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Nepal - in producing programmes that serve as an “emergency response” to help the most marginalised and needy people in the local communities, who have been impacted by the pandemic.

In all four countries included in the project, the lockdowns deprived the poorest sections of the population - such as migrant workers and day labourers - of their livelihoods. The people in the rural and especially the hard-to-reach regions are hardly noticed in the public discourse, and some are completely cut off from the general flow of information due to technical, financial and/or language barriers. In contrast, community radios have key characteristics that make them stand out: they are perceived as a trusted part of the community, and their programmes are mostly produced in partnership with and with the participation of community members.

32 community radio journalists from 16 community radios in four countries participated in the training workshops that were organized early this year. There were eight participants from four radio stations in Bangladesh – Radio Jhenuk, Radio Mahananda, Radio Sarabela and Radio Sagorgiri, six participants from three radio stations in India – Gurgaon ki Awaaz, Radio Benziger, and Saiyere Jo Radio, six participants from three radio stations in Indonesia – Lintas Merapi FM, Pass FM, and Rasi FM and two from the community radio association of Indonesia, JRKI and 10 participants from five radio stations in Nepal – Radio Dhading, Radio Parasi, Radio Rudraksha, Radio Sindhu and Radio Udayapur.

This publication is a document that summarizes the training workshop sessions and serves as reference/training material for not just the participant radios but the member radios of the association.

Poverty and Violence against Women

The World Bank describes poverty as:

“Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time.

Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways. Most often, poverty is a situation people want to escape. So poverty is a call to action -- for the poor and the wealthy alike -- a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities.”

According to the World Bank, about 9.2% of the world, or 689 million people, live in extreme poverty on less than \$1.90 a day. And, women experience higher rates of poverty than men. The poverty situation has further intensified due to the Covid-19 pandemic. New projections of global poverty by UN Women, UNDP, and the Pardee Center for International Futures estimate that, globally, 388 million women and girls will be living in extreme poverty in 2022 (compared to 372 million men and boys).

When women are poor, their rights are not protected. And, poverty can increase violence. Women and girls living in poverty are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, including trafficking. And those who experience domestic violence fear leaving violent relationships, due to a lack of income and resources. The prevalent gender discrimination means women have fewer resources to overcome their situation.

Hence, it is imperative to learn about Violence against Women and address it in order to create a conducive environment to combat poverty.

A. SOME FACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- Crimes against women have been steadily increasing over the years.
- Much of the crime against women goes unreported – hence there is very little data on this subject.
- Women and girls are more at risk of violence from their own family members.
- Sexual violence against children is one of the most unreported crimes.
- Although men from certain castes and classes are also vulnerable to certain forms of violence such as child sexual abuse and bonded labour, the experience of violence is to a large extent determined by gender-related vulnerabilities, making girls and women most vulnerable.
- Most studies show that the prevalence of abuse among girls is 1.5 to 3 times that among boys.
- Some laws relating to the prevention of violence are such that they become a barrier to providing justice to women. The situation is even worse when people who are responsible for providing justice are not sensitive and are guided by patriarchal values.



B. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: TYPES, FORMS AND CONSEQUENCES

Violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide. It exists in every country, cutting across boundaries of culture, class, caste, education, income, ethnicity and age.

The term ‘violence against women’ (VAW) refers to many types of harmful behaviour directed at women and girls because of their sex. The United Nations defines violence against women in a very comprehensive manner and includes the following types of violence in its definition:

- Acts of physical, sexual and psychological violence in the family and the community
- Beating up spouse
- Sexual abuse of female children
- Dowry-related violence
- Rape, including marital rape
- Traditional practices harmful to women such as female genital mutilation
- Sexual harassment and intimidation in school and at work
- Trafficking in women
- Forced prostitution
- Violence perpetrated or condoned by the State such as rape during war

The World Health Organisation (WHO), in addition to the above types of violence, also includes the following in its definition of what constitutes violence against women:

- suicide and
- other self-abusive acts

Violence against women and girls is rooted in unequal power relations. It is a clear manifestation of the subordinate social status occupied by women and girls. Society has created very different norms and expectations for the behaviour and roles to be performed by men and women. Women are expected to mainly perform household-related jobs and be submissive, serve others and have unending patience.

Men are, on the other hand, expected to do chores outside the house, earn and protect the family. They are, therefore, expected to be powerful and strong.

Discrimination and unequal treatment in the way boys and girls are reared and cared for, the denial of education, health care and other rights to girls and a strong preference for male children in our society make women vulnerable to different forms of violence. Violence is used as a tool to reinforce and maintain gender roles and to punish women who refuse to follow them. Domestic violence is seen as justified if women do not perform their ‘motherly’ or ‘wifely’ duties. In our society, women are seen as responsible for maintaining the honour

of the family and, in many instances, rape and sexual violence are used by men to 'dishonour' families or communities.

C. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN LIFE-SPAN OF WOMEN:

Pre-natal Stage:

- Pre-birth elimination of female foetus
- Beating up of wife during pregnancy

Infancy:

- Female infanticide
- Discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition, and health care

Childhood:

- Child marriage
- Child sexual abuse
- Child prostitution
- Discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition, and health care

Adolescence:

- Molestation
- Rape
- Incest
- Sexual harassment at workplace
- Forced prostitution
- Trafficking
- Violence associated with pre-marital pregnancy, abortion
- Kidnapping and abduction
- Discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition, and health care

Youth and adulthood

- Domestic violence
- Marital rape
- Dowry-related abuse and murder
- Forced pregnancy
- Homicide
- Sexual harassment at workplace
- Molestation, sexual abuse and rape
- Desertion
- Discrimination in access to care, education, nutrition, and health care

Old age

- Abuse of the elderly, widows
- Threat of sexual violence
- Lack of access to care, nutrition, and medical facilities

Throughout their life, women are prone to violence in different forms. Women with disabilities and women who face other disadvantages of caste, class, etc. are more vulnerable. Also, younger women, married women and women with more children are at a greater risk.

D. ALL THE CATEGORIES OF VIOLENCE MENTIONED MAY TAKE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING FORMS:

1. Physical abuse

This includes punching, hitting, beating, choking, kicking and pushing, burns, throwing objects at a person and using weapons such as knives, etc. to hurt another person and is used to control another person.

2. Psychological abuse

Criticising, threatening, insulting, and inciting another person to get angry and humiliate the woman making her more dependent and frightened of the abuser.

3. Sexual coercion

Rape, sexual assault, molestation and forced marriage are all ways of forcing women to have sex against their desire.

4. Controlling behaviour

As a result of the power relationship and discrimination, especially due to patriarchal norms, women are often not allowed to work outside the home, are not given control over money, their movements are monitored, and their access to information is restricted.

E. SOME CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

a) Effect on health

- Injuries, bruises, fractures and other physical problems
- Disability
- Psychological and emotional disorders like depression, anxiety, alcoholism, drug abuse, etc.
- Sexual and reproductive disorders, and/or
- Fatal health consequences such as suicide and homicide

b) Other effects

- Loss of income for family where the woman is also earning
- Economic burden on the woman and the family for accessing health services, legal services and other support services
- Violence against women prevents them from accessing the benefits of development schemes as it is likely to limit their ability to move or act freely.

However, the beliefs, norms and culture of our society prevent women from talking about the abuses they face within and outside the family. If and when they seek help and justice, they are often confronted with further discrimination from their own families, communities and even the criminal justice system.

Over the years several laws have been passed to prevent violence against women. Enacting laws is not sufficient to end VAW as even the laws and the entire judicial system, e.g. lawyers and judges and the police are governed by a patriarchal mindset. Hence, often women have to go through embarrassment, humiliation and harassment while registering a case and during the trial period. It requires action at several levels. Along with the victim, the immediate family, the leaders and citizens need to jointly respond and exert community pressure. Informal social control mechanisms need to be used to punish the perpetrators to restore women's rights. Providing counselling services, shelter homes where women can go if they decide to leave their home, starting helplines, giving information and timely guidance

and counselling, and establishing alternative forums for resolving cases of VAW such as federations of women that mediate in cases of VAW, building public awareness among men and women and supporting youth and women's collectives are some of the positive ways in which this serious concern can be addressed.

However, the Covid-19 pandemic led to the intensification of the VAW especially domestic violence as lockdown measures left the women isolated from the people and resources that could have helped them. This has been called the Shadow Pandemic which is growing amidst the Covid-19 crisis and there is a need for an urgent global collective effort to stop/end it. Furthermore, with women's voices majorly left out by mainstream media, the issue has been overshadowed.

Therefore, community radios should and can play a significant role in combatting this social issue by raising awareness about violence against women and promoting gender equality. By broadcasting radio programmes that inform the community about the problem and allows discussions on issues of importance to the women of the community, community radios can help address the issue.

In fact, one of the participants of the "Addressing pandemic-related poverty in rural regions of South and Southeast Asia" program, Ms. Upasana Kumari Tiwari from Radio Rudraksha, Nepal shared that her radio has been working towards mitigating domestic violence in their community for quite some time. The radio produces and broadcasts public service announcements (PSAs) that focus on key messages like recognizing domestic violence as a violation of women's human rights and not accepting it as an 'internal matter of the couple or family'. And, their fortnightly program on women's rights, "Meri Aawaj Suno" (Listen to me) is centred on raising awareness about women's rights and gender-based violence.

During the pandemic, the radio went out of its way to help the victims who contacted with their grievances. The radio had assigned staff as a focal person to provide help and support to the victims of gender-based violence, and the focal person's phone number and the local police station's phone number were shared through their PSAs. The focal person also assisted the victims with filing the reports at the police station.

The radio's dedication to addressing gender inequality and gender-based violence in the community is truly commendable. And, this initiative can be replicated by community radios across the region.

Some useful Links:

1. <https://www.radiorudraksha.com.np/>
2. Strengthening gender sensitive practices and programming in community radio (<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379941>)
3. On Air with Rural Women (https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/unesco_booklet_a5_uk_final_02_0.pdf)

Community Radio Udayapur's Gender Policy

Radio Udayapur from Nepal was one of the participants in the project and the radio station has adopted a gender policy that guides them in their day-to-day activities.



Things to keep in mind when producing and broadcasting from Community Radio Udayapur 102.4 MHz

- 1) Radio Udayapur's primary target audience is community women. Women's empowerment and equality are important to us. We fight for equality by speaking out against the inequalities that result from unequal power relations.
- 2) Our guests and experts are not those who have been imprisoned after raising concerns about social abuse and social conduct (in cases such as sexual violence, rape, violence against women, and corruption). However, such voices can be used as sound bites in programs and the news. Its basis should be made up of citizen decisions and court papers.
- 3) Through radio content, redefine the gender-based division of responsibilities and present women, men, and sexual minorities in equal roles and responsibilities.
- 4) To portray the female character in the advertisement as a powerful, fearless woman who breaks gender stereotypes.
- 5) Producing and broadcasting information that demonstrates that men and women accept equal responsibilities for household tasks such as cooking, laundry, cleaning, and child care.
- 6) Songs that praise women's beauty, compare women to anything, present women's bodies as consumables or position women as second-class citizens will not be played on the radio.
- 7) In public speeches and news reporting, women's voices shall be prioritized.
- 8) To include as many female news sources and experts as possible.
- 9) To produce and broadcast news and programs that emphasizes the contributions of women to the community's betterment.
- 10) To promote women's traditional skills and art, to air programs encouraging small businesses, and provide special discounts in commercials for women entrepreneurs.
- 11) Telling the stories of women who have risen to positions of leadership in their communities.

Formats of Radio Programme



A radio station broadcasts various types of radio programmes. Radio programmes refer to a set of programmes broadcast by a radio broadcaster to the public. The different types of programmes are called formats. The radio broadcasters produce programmes in various formats based on the needs of the audience. Some of the popular formats include:

1. **Announcements:** These are specifically written messages to

inform. They can be of different types such as station/programme identification or public service announcements (PSA). PSAs are messages of public interest disseminated to raise public awareness. They may be informal and resemble ordinary conversation and can have more than one presenter.

2. **Radio talk:** This is probably the oldest format on radio. It involves discussion of varied topics with experts or prominent persons. The experts are required to speak for 10 or 15 minutes on a specific topic although today, shorter duration talks are broadcast.

3. **Radio interviews:** An interview is a structured conversation where one participant asks questions while the other answers. In the media, be it the newspaper, magazine, radio or television, journalists use this technique to get information or opinions from the interviewee. There can be different types of interviews in terms of their duration, content and purpose.

Firstly, there are full-fledged interview programmes. The duration of these may vary from 10 minutes to 30 minutes or even 60 minutes depending on the topic, and the person being interviewed. Such interviews are usually with well-known people in the field of public life, literature, science, sports, films, etc.



Secondly, there are interviews which are used in various radio programmes like documentaries. Here the interviews are short and the questions are specific. The purpose is to get a very to-the-point answer.

Thirdly, there are a lot of interviews or interview-based programmes in news and current affairs programmes.

Another interview-based programme involves asking one or two questions to ordinary people or people with knowledge on some current topic to measure public opinion. Such programmes are called 'vox pop' which is a Latin phrase meaning 'voice of people'.

4. Radio discussions: This format allows people to put forth their varied opinions on matters of public concern. Radio discussions are produced when there are social or economic issues which may be controversial. Generally, these discussions are of longer duration from 15 to 30 minutes. Two or three experts and a moderator take part and discuss a particular topic.

5. Radio documentaries/features: Just like documentary films are based on real people and issues, radio documentaries are based on real sounds and real people and their views and experiences. However, unlike documentary films, radio documentaries have only sound – i.e. the human voice, music and sound effects.

Radio documentaries are also called radio features.



6. Radio drama: A radio drama or a radio play is like any other play staged in a theatre. The only difference is that while a stage play has actors, a stage, sets, curtains, properties movement and action, a radio drama has only three components – the human voice, music and sound effects.

7. Running commentaries: Running commentaries on the radio can be on various sports events or on ceremonial occasions or events like festivals, swearing-in ceremonies of ministers, etc. A commentator gives the details of the event.

8. Magazine programmes: A radio magazine is broadcast periodically (a particular time on a particular day of a week or a month). It has variety in content and includes some or many formats of radio such as talks, discussions, interviews, reviews, music etc. The duration of each programme or item in a magazine programme varies. Another characteristic of a radio

magazine is that it has a signature tune. A magazine programme has a name and involves one or two presenters.

Magazine programmes are generally broadcast for a special or specific audience.

9. **News:** Among all the spoken word formats on radio, news is the most popular. News bulletins and news programmes are broadcast every hour by radio stations. The duration of news bulletins vary from 5 minute to 30 minutes. The longer news bulletins have interviews, features, reviews and comments from experts.

In addition to the above-mentioned radio programme formats, music is the main stay in the radio. There is no radio without music. Music is used in different ways and there are programmes of music and music is also used in different programmes. These include signature tunes, music used as effects in radio dramas.



And, with the technological development, radio has also applied information technology in its broadcasts by introducing formats such as:

a) **Phone-in programme:** Phone-in is the most important format where the listener and the presenter talk to each other. Their talk goes on air instantly. The listeners can dial up the announced telephone number at a stipulated time and get their problems discussed with experts in the studio. Initially, this format was introduced for playing the listeners' request-based songs. Now it is being used for health related programmes, rural broadcasts, complaints against the government/administrative machinery etc.

b) **Radio on internet:** Radio on internet is a growing phenomenon with thousands of radio stations operating through computer modems. It is altogether a new format that removes the restrictions of frequency or license. It is relatively cheap to set up. It is now possible to listen to the programmes from a radio station while working on a computer.

These are some of the formats a radio station can use while making a radio programme. The ingredients of a radio format are spoken word, music and special effects. And, some factors that have to be taken into account for making a radio programme include area population, sex ratio, languages spoken, health facilities, religions, climate, the main occupation of people, etc. This helps in producing effective and interactive radio programmes.

Role of Campaigns in Community Radio

A campaign is a planned set of activities that people carry out over a period of time in order to achieve something such as social or political change¹. Campaigns help educate the public about various issues and motivate them to support change. Campaigning is important as they call attention to issues or problems, identifies solutions, and coordinates efforts of the masses.

Campaigning is mobilizing public concern in order to achieve a social, political or commercial aim. Campaigning is an engine for social change. It not only educates the public about an issue but also motivates them to speak and act in support of change. The media plays a significant role in spreading information and raising awareness on varied issues.

Likewise, community radios can be mobilized for campaigns. As community radios cater to the information needs of people living in a particular locality, and in the local languages, they can serve as an excellent tool for communication. Further, community radios offer an opportunity for contributions from people whose voice is not covered by the mainstream media thereby increasing participation and opinion sharing. Therefore, community radios can serve as an effective medium for campaigning.

Most of the campaigns undertaken by community radios involve awareness-raising. Radio campaigns are an efficient tool to influence public opinion as they have a wider audience and are accessible to people isolated by geography, illiteracy or poverty. One of the most effective radio campaigns was the campaign against Covid-19 that provided vital information on health measures to the public. This campaign was adopted by radios across the world.

Campaigns generally emphasise a particular set of activities around a common theme and identity. It involves collaborative work with a wide set of stakeholders and reaches diverse audiences across multiple platforms. Campaigns offer a consistent and long-term approach to issues. Campaigns are the engines of social change.

An effective campaign involves various stages such as:

- Identifying the issue/problem: This is the first step of campaigning. It involves exploring and researching a particular issue or key problem existing in the community. The campaign should have an action point like a goal to achieve or a problem to address.
- Identifying the target audience: The next step is learning about the target audience for the campaign. Collecting information about the important stakeholders, influential key players, their media habits, and their views about the topic/issue of the campaign.
- Creating content: Campaigns should have a distinct identity that is different from regular programmes. On social media using the same hashtag for the posts denotes that the posts are a part of the campaign. Similarly, community radios can use slogans and by-lines or fictional characters that appear in all the programmes associated with a particular campaign. This helps with easy recall as people can associate it with the campaign. The

¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/campaign>

content should also include diverse perspectives and involve collaboration with primary stakeholders. Campaigns should ensure responsible representation and every message or information is fact-checked.

- Promotion of the campaign: To make a campaign successful, additional media should be utilized which could include social media such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. The language however should be local and simple. The use of images, videos or posters can make the campaign more effective. Likewise, organizing public gatherings and discussions and broadcasting them live can be equally helpful in reaching out to a wider audience.
- Evaluation: It helps in tracking the effectiveness of the campaign. It should be done while the campaign is running so that one can make necessary changes where needed.

Since community radios are generally owned and operated by communities themselves to highlight community issues, adopting campaigns can help address the social issues at the community level.

During the pandemic, radio became the most popular and effective medium for information dissemination to a larger audience across countries. And, almost all radios launched campaigns against Covid-19 that included critical information such as signs and symptoms of COVID-19, do's and don'ts during the crisis, social distancing, and preventive measures. Community radios came across as a trusted source of public health information during the pandemic when fake news and misinformation was rampant.

Radio Drama for Change

Gurgaon ki Awaaz (GKA), one of the participant community radios of the project and the only community radio station in the National Capital Region of India, caters to the problems of the urban poor population. GKA has been broadcasting for 22 hours every day since 2009 acting as a communication bridge linking residents to local administration, doctors, lawyers, and counsellors.



Since attending the training workshop, GKA has started adopting the radio drama format to address sensitive issues in the community. Immediately after the training, GKA produced two radio dramas that attempt to address the issue of gender inequality in the community. Usually, women are not given the role of decision-makers in the family and have to follow whatever is dictated to them by the male guardian of the society. However, in the drama, GKA has reversed the gender roles to draw attention to this issue.

Fighting Stereotypes: The drama tries to show that even women can be the decision-makers in the family. In the drama, the female members of the girl's family goes to meet the groom's family instead of the male members. Generally, it is the male members who visit the bride or the groom's family while the women are left out. The role reversal in the drama highlights the gender inequality that exists in the society.

Pregnancy and Women: In this drama, a wife tells her husband that she does not want any more children as they already have two daughters. Due to the pandemic, the children have online classes so the wife has to take care of them the entire day in addition to the household chores. The husband gets angry and tells her that he needs a son and that he too gets tired from working at the office all day.

In the next scene, the husband gets pregnant and he experiences everything a woman does during pregnancy like morning sickness, giving up their favourite outfits and changes in their body. As the husband needs to keep visiting the hospital, he needs to take leave from the office due to which his boss gets angry at him. Just as he is experiencing labor pain, he wakes up from his dream. He then comes to realise the problems a woman faces during pregnancy and decides not to have any more children and tells his wife about it.

These two dramas were well received by their listeners. Therefore, GKA has given continuation to radio dramas.

Likewise, Radio Dhading, another participant community radio from Nepal too produced a radio drama following the training.

Alternative Livelihood: In the drama, a man loses his job due to the pandemic so he takes a loan from a moneylender in his village. However, he is unable to repay the loan on time and the moneylender gives him an ultimatum. He and his wife are worried about the loan when a health volunteer visits to inform them about the Covid-19 vaccination. He requests her to search for jobs for both of them. The health volunteer in turn asks the man to meet a woman entrepreneur from the village who has recently started a grocery shop. Upon meeting her, she suggests he start vegetable cultivation on his land. He takes up her advice and starts vegetable farming. It turns out to be profitable and he is also able to repay his loan. The drama attempts to convince listeners to consider alternative livelihoods to overcome the pandemic-induced poverty.

The participants from the radio mentioned that they found the session on radio drama very helpful and inspiring. Although the radio station had been producing Public Service Announcements (PSA) in drama format, they did not know much about the format. The training session helped the participants understand the elements and know-how of drama which has now led to the production of feature-length radio dramas.

Useful Links:

<https://www.cloudrad.io/radio-drama>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/profiles/tnkQgSgPJVWM4ZpZ3hHbjv/ten-tips-for-writing-a-play-for-radio>

<https://www.gurgaonkiawaaz.in/>

Interviewing for Radio

An interview is aimed at drawing out information, facts, opinions or reasons, and emotions on a particular issue from an expert, or personality. It is a structured conversation where one asks questions and the other answers.

Interviews usually take place face-to-face and in person, but at times when the parties are separated geographically videoconferencing or telephone interviews are adopted.

Likewise, radio interviews can be categorized on the basis of content such as informational, opinion or vox-pop and on the basis of production/location such as live interview, studio, field or telephonic interview.

While preparing for an interview, interviewers should bear in mind the following points:

- ❖ Research on the topic and resource persons
- ❖ Prepare questions beforehand
- ❖ Interviewer should be flexible with questions, time, and location
- ❖ Be conversational: Follow-up questions can be formulated from the answers given by the interviewee
- ❖ Start with safe questions
- ❖ Remember the audience

In addition to the above points, there are some key points to remember while interviewing victims of violence such as:

- ❖ Obtain informed **CONSENT**: Communicate the purpose of the interview, how and where it will be used.
- ❖ Communicate clearly what kind of support of you and CR station can provide the survivor. Do not raise her expectation as it can break her **TRUST**.
- ❖ Respect survivor's **RIGHT TO REFUSE** interview at any point – before, during or even after the interview is recorded.
- ❖ Create a **SAFE ENVIRONMENT** for the survivor. Choose a location which ensures privacy and makes her feel comfortable and safe to share their experience.
- ❖ Ensure **CONFIDENTIALITY**.
- ❖ **DO NOT DISCLOSE IDENTITY of the SURVIVOR**, or any detail which could identify the survivor. Respect her dignity and privacy.
- ❖ The interview should empower her and not make her feel a helpless victim. Remember she is **CHOOSING to SPEAK UP** and this shows her agency.
- ❖ The interview should be a **CONVERSATION**. Do not launch into the questions. Begin with small talks giving the survivor time to warm up to the conversation before she is ready to answer the question.
- ❖ Allow the survivor to speak at her own pace. Do not rush her or interrupt her.
- ❖ Do not ask for personal details or questions not relevant to her experience.
- ❖ Choose words carefully: Avoid words like 'victim', 'disabled person' instead use of terms like 'survivor', 'person with disability'.

<https://www.shara.ir/media/file/00000FILE635126670873688620.PDF>

Community Research for Community Radios

What is Community Research?

First we have to know what is research – Research is a study or an investigation aimed at discovering or interpreting or in other words. Research is defined as careful consideration of study regarding a particular concern or problem using scientific methods. For example, in Indian context before setting up a community radio, needs assessment is designed so that radio can fulfil community needs in the form of information.

Now, moving on to Community Research – Community Research is basically community-based research with all types of research methodology, traditional and modern to help Community Media/ Radio or Community Based Organization to advocate for a cause or support community action.

Community Research acknowledges community members' knowledge and emphasizes how that knowledge can be used with stories, case studies to bring change in behavior, attitude or thoughts or beliefs or in our policies. Community Research takes place in community settings and involves community members in the design and implementation of research projects, give space and acknowledge for the contributions changes that are made by community partners or community as well as maintains dignity and privacy.

So, Community Research (CR) is a participatory approach where research is driven by community priorities and the community is involved throughout the entire research process, from writing the project proposal to analyzing the results and taking action using the research outcomes.

Why is Community Research important?

Community Research is important to understand the need of the community and fulfil the communication gap and knowledge gap. It also tries to help in finding local and relevant, sustainable solutions of issues. So here are few more points:

- ❖ To understand community – profile, likes, dislikes, background, strengths, weaknesses
- ❖ To understand community needs and produce effective programs
- ❖ To bridge the gap between policymakers and community
- ❖ To know stakeholders of an area
- ❖ To make an effective programs language and tone of programs
- ❖ To start discussion on sensitive/hidden/grey topics
- ❖ To bridge the gap between broadcasters and community
- ❖ To build the capacity of broadcasters on specific topics

Is it costly? How can it be managed with least resources?

Research of any kind always incurs cost, be it financially or in the form of human resource. Research goes through many processes, some are for a short time and some for a long time. A Community researcher requires training, so that s/he can follow the ethics of research and understand its importance. Such training should be done not once but time and again at fixed intervals or program specific. Many Community Researchers may not necessarily be an employee of any organization or community radio organization, they are mostly volunteers and majority of volunteers move on or change their job, after a few years, while the newcomers need to be trained.

Community researchers do get financial help, in fact it is like a form of employment for the community. Their work is acknowledged and gives them an identity. This form of research is cheaper than hiring external research institutions as all the resources are local, and this saves miscellaneous expenses such as travel expenses and food and accommodation costs. There will also be no need for a translator, so if all this cost is saved, then it brings down the cost of conducting community research.

Who can be a Community Researcher?

Researchers from Research Agencies? University/College students or Intern? Community Radio staff? Supporting agencies? Or, University/College students or Intern? Ideally, there is no fixed category a researcher should belong to. So, on the basis of experiential learning of community radio practitioners, the researcher should be from the intervention area and should have geographical and demographic knowledge and understanding of community. Sometimes, a researcher may be biased as they come from the same community but one should understand that any researcher might be biased on their thoughts, belief, gender, age, caste, policy acceptance behavior. It is the formal training that helps a researcher stay away from all types of biasness and turn into a professional researcher.

What are the Ethical Guidelines for Community Research?

It is important to conduct research ethically as a community researcher asks several questions to the community and expects them to give honest answers so that valid data can be collected. So if a researcher follows the ethical guidelines, it would be easier for respondents to answer without any reluctance and help maintain trust and good relationship.

Some of the Ethical Guidelines are:

Introduce yourself and explain purpose of this research – Community members need to know the Community Researcher. Introducing your name and profile and explaining the purpose of the research – Why Community Researcher is asking so many questions, what will happen after that, each and every thing, Researcher should explain to community?

Consent – It is very important to get consent from the community to be part of the research process. It could be written or in audio format. Researcher should have a consent form.

Confidentiality – During research, community shares several information, personal stories. It should not be made public in any form. Sometimes if they are revealed, might be harmful for them. So Community Researcher should ensure that any information shared by communities shouldn't be revealed and their identity should be confidential....

Non-Judgmental – Need to respect community behaviour, beliefs and attitudes without being judgemental. Even if community researcher is part of the same community knows all truth and facts but still have to be non-judgmental during the research process.

Sharing the research findings – It is very important to share the outcome of the research with the community who participated in the research process, so that they can trust on Community Researcher for future reference also.

What are the prevalent practices of Community Research in India?

In India, generally Community Radio Practitioners do research for different types of research on project basis or on daily production basis. On daily basis to know the program quality or efficiency or access to radio program, community research is always in priority ... as it is easier

to contact with community researcher. But for finding a large impact or gathering information from a large community and diverse community, still it is challenge as community researcher is not well trained form data collection to writing proposal and collects funds for implementation of community action. But during pandemic lots of survey happened and due to economic crisis, community radio professionals came forward to accept this research challenge. They trained their staff and community members. Radio brahmputra, Assam, India conducted a survey on access to online classes for children (based on conversation during Poverty Induced seminar conducted By AMARC) . Other example, Waqt ki Aawaz,Community Radio Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh, India conducted a survey on domestic violence cases during pandemic based on conversation during Poverty Induced seminar conducted By AMARC). Many examples are there but need to do research on this topic also , how many CRs are opting Community Research. But it is very exciting and gives a hope that community radio is not only generating programs but also directly intervensing in policy making through evidence and scientific research method.

Note: Excerpts of an interview with Soumya Jha, one of the trainers. Soumya Jha is a community radio practitioner, professional and trainer.

What the Experts Recommend?

“Gender equality is not only a fundamental right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. In a highly unequal and patriarchal world, women who constitute nearly 50% of the global population, lag behind in every aspect of life. That is why one of the reasons for Sustainable Development Goal is ‘achieve gender equality and empower all women and girl’ (SDG 5).

The last few years have seen historic achievements in reducing the number of people who are poor. However, gender discrimination means that women experience higher rates of poverty than men. When women are poor, their rights are not protected.

Hence, the role of the media in promoting the women’s equality is vital.

And, community radio should be at the forefront of achieving the objectives:

- to increase the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new information communication technologies (ICTs); and
- to promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.

Community radios should have a Gender Policy. It is a tool for ensuring gender equity within the community radio station.”



Nimmi Chauhan
AMARC-AP WIN Representative

“The pandemic caused job losses and reduced incomes across all countries. In many countries, governments offered subsidies, relief packages and even cash grants to people most affected like the daily wage laborers. Likewise, the Indonesian government disbursed various kinds of assistance and subsidies to prevent people from falling into poverty.



Imam Prakoso
Director, Center for Civic
Engagement and Studies

The pandemic also led to restrictions in peoples’ mobility. This largely affected the education sector and long distance learning policy was implemented by the government.

One of the efforts to reduce structural poverty is to get adequate education, including going to school. However, learning from home was not quite effective as not all families had a smartphone. Moreover, not all regions had good internet so children were being deprived of an education.

Therefore, one community radio in Pekalongan Regency, Central Java Province, Indonesia started radio school to ensure every child in the region received education.

This was replicated by other community radio stations and schools across the country. The community radios would first provide training to the teachers on speaking in front of microphone, from opening to closing, and improving voice intonation and broadcast timelines. The radios offered time slots for the classes free of cost. This was their way of helping out the community in times of crisis.

The true community radio are those who are sensitive to the social problems around them and seek the solution together.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic caused health problems as well as an infodemic or “misinformation tsunami.” The infodemic is a serious issue because it jeopardizes the safety of people who lack media literacy. It makes people doubt vaccination and health care by medical personnel. As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic has become endless.

The prolonged pandemic has also caused many people to fall into poverty as the daily wage earners had to stay home due to the lockdown imposed by governments.

An infodemic is a flood of false information that spreads rapidly and widely throughout society. The spread is so rapid that it exacerbates the situation caused by the pandemic. And, the best way to deal with infodemic is through community involvement.

Governments across the world are overwhelmed by the infodemic and this has caused the community to deteriorate. Therefore, everyone in the community, especially community radios must work together to combat it. Community radios should make it a point to verify the information before dissemination.”



Mario Antonius Birowo,
Lecturer, Atma Jaya University

“The government-imposed lockdown to control the spread of COVID-19 had a direct impact on schools as schools across the country were closed. With the prolonged closure of schools, learning came to a standstill.

Students from rural areas who had no access to the internet or television were the hardest hit.



Subas Khatiwada,
Vice-President, AMARC-AP

Therefore, Nepal’s community radios came in and set an example by starting radio school. The Association of Community Broadcasters Nepal (ACORAB) operated radio school through the Community Information Network (CIN). The Ministry of Education too produced a 15-minute radio program on each subject for grades 8, 9 and 10 which was broadcast on 180 FM radios.

The community radios were willing to broadcast radio lessons without receiving any financial assistance from any one. The radio lessons were broadcast for about three months.

Many students from marginalized communities benefited from the radio school launched by the community radios across the country. In this way, the community radios of Nepal fulfilled its responsibility towards the community. This shows that community radios can and should effectively address the issues or problems arising in the community.”