

Comparative Analysis of Sustainability of Selected Community Radio Stations

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ABSTRACT

The community radio has made an impression in all grounds of rural society with specific need of sustenance in the long run. The study was taken up to compare the status of three community radios operational each under State Agricultural University (SAU), Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) and Non-Government Organization (NGO). Four villages have been selected randomly from one purposively selected block. Forty (40) respondents from four randomly selected villages from each CRS coverage were selected for the study. Thus, a total of 120 respondents constituted the sample of the study. Sustainability of radio station is considered as the combination of social sustainability (social capital and social equity), operational sustainability (suitability of approach and training-cum problem solving) and financial sustainability. The sustainability index of NGO-CRS was found to 0.60 followed by KVK-CRS (0.58) and SAU-CRS (0.57). It is also revealed that financial sustainability of NGO-CRS was found more important than other indicators of for its long term sustenance.

Key words : Analysis, Sustainability, Community Radio Stations

Radio is the cheapest and fastest mode of information dissemination. Now a day the role of community radio is coming up in a very big way to cater the location specific need of the farming community. Due to the effectiveness of community radio for agricultural technology dissemination, it is becoming popular among the farming community in rural areas (Kumbhare *et al.*, 2015). Community radio is a type of radio made to serve people; encourages expression, participation and that values local culture. Its purpose is to give a voice to those without voices, to marginalized groups and to communities far from large urban centres (Sharma and Kashyap, 2013). According to Al-Hassan *et al.* (2011) community radio is a type of radio service that offers a model of radio broadcasting beyond commercial and public service. In many parts of the world today, community radio acts as a vehicle for the community and voluntary sector, civil society, agencies, NGOs and citizens to work in partnership to promote community development.

According to Balan and Norman (2012) radio was identified as the most accessible mass communication tool for grass root people. As a medium, radio, can easily reach the rural mass in short span of time. It is gaining momentum in recent period. It is not simply about producing radio programme, to put on air, but it is by the community and for the community. CR is giving opportunity for the people representation for different ethnic, social and religious backgrounds and gender. There should be community participation in all aspects of the radio station from establishment to management, from administration to financing. According to Arpita

and Kumar (2012) the major sources of information to the farmers were friends, *Aanganwadi* workers, television, and radio under personal localite, personal cosmopolite and mass media sources, respectively.

As per Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, there are total 200 operational CRS in India (as on 01.11.2016) under educational institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), State Agricultural Universities (SAUs) and *Krishi Vigyan Kendras* (KVK). Considering the importance of Community Radio Station to cater the information need of the rural community, Government of India in 2014-15 budget has allocated 100 crores for the establishment of 600 new CRS in India. This move needs to be supported by a strong community radio movement to ensure greater involvement of local communities in the development process. A recent evaluation found that radio stations created through top-down initiatives tend not to survive when external funding dries up. Where such stations do survive, their purpose often becomes different from what was originally intended. Only in a handful of cases have previously aid-dependent radio stations become sustainable (da Costa, 2012). A comparative case analysis of community radio stations revealed some emerging challenges identified during the study were sustainability of community radio station for long run, low frequency range as CRS is aimed at covering only 10-15 kilometre radius (Kumbhare *et al.*, 2015). In this perspective, the study intended to find the sustainability of the community radio stations under investigation.

METHODOLOGY

The study was taken up to compare the status of three community radio stations operational each under State Agricultural University (SAU), *Krishi Vigyan Kendra* (KVK) and Non-Government Organization (NGO). The community radio stations namely *Pantnagar Janvani* (G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar), *Pravara* (KVK, Ahmednagar) and *Yeralavani* (Yerala Projects Society, Sangli) were selected purposively. Four villages have been selected randomly from one purposively selected block. Forty (40) respondents from four randomly selected villages from each CRS coverage were selected. Thus, a total of 120 listeners were interviewed. The *Ex-post facto* research design was selected in accordance with the adaptability of the proposed design with respect to the type of study, variables under consideration, number of respondents and phenomenon to be studied. Sustainability can be defined as the ability of a radio station to uphold a good quality developmental broadcasting service over a period of time. It also can be viewed as the capacity of a station to manage a range of available resources to sustain its service to the community without compromising its community service mission (Fairbairn, 2000).

Tavhiso (2009) found that sustainability of community radio stations was result of three major interventions such as social acceptance, operational efficiency and financial and marketing management. With the reference to earlier studies, the sustainability is considered as combination of social, operational and financial sustainability. The index used in this work was modified from Prabhugowda (2015). The Social sustainability involves community ownership of the station, and participation in production and airing of programming at both decision making and operational levels. Operational sustainability involves proper application of community radio related regulation;

proper management mechanism; trained work force; effective programming structure; participatory based organizational development and the development of a robust technical resource pool; problem solving techniques and suitability of approach. The social sustainability was taken as combination of social equity and social capital. Operational sustainability was considered as the combination of suitability of approach and training cum problem solving. Thus, experts were consulted to assign the weights to these three main indicators as per their perceived important sustainability indicators for any community radio. Responses were recorded to each sub indicator by listeners of each CRS through a five point *Likert* scale varying from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1).

Sustainability index of community radio is calculated with the help of following formula:

$$\text{Sustainability Index} = \frac{X1W1 + X2W2 + X3W3}{W1 + W2 + W3}$$

Where,

X1=social sustainability W1=2.70

X2=operational sustainability W2=2.85

X3=financial sustainability W3=3.35

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sustainability of community radio stations was considered as the combination of three indicators of which social capital and social equity resulted in social sustainability whereas suitability of approach and training & problem solving resulted in operational sustainability. Financial sustainability was considered as third indicator. The details of the sustainability indicators of selected community radio stations are given below:

- I. **Social Sustainability:** The Social sustainability of community radio station is consisting of social capital and social equity.

Table 1
Social capital indicators for social sustainability of community radio stations
(n=40)

Sl. No	Social capital	NGO-CRS (MS)	SAU-CRS (MS)	KVK-CRS (MS)
1.	Community is given due importance in selection of management committee members	3.67	3.30	3.45
2.	CRS management board conducts regular meeting to pool public opinions	3.60	3.43	3.47
3.	CR has become an integral part of the community and its happening	3.52	3.41	3.50
4.	The rules and regulations of CRS conform to the local norms	3.62	2.65	3.51

The data related to social capital indicators for sustainability is depicted in table 1 revealed that social capital as one of the sub indicators for social

sustainability in which due importance to community in selection of management committee members was perceived high among the respondents of NGO-CRS

with mean score 3.67 followed by KVK-CRS (3.45) and SAU-CRS (3.30). The NGO-CRS was found to be conducting regular board meeting to pool public opinions (mean score 3.60) followed by KVK-CRS (3.47) and SAU-CRS (3.43). With mean score 3.52, the NGO-CRS was perceived by its listeners as integral part of their community and its happening better than

the listeners of radio stations of KVK & SAU. The NGO radio station was found to be more conformed to the rules and regulations of local community with mean score 3.62 which were better than KVK-CRS& SAU-CRS. These findings were in line with Tavhiso (2009).

Table 2
Social equity indicators for social sustainability of community radio stations
(n=40)

Sr. No.	Social equity	NGO-CRS (MS)	SAU-CRS (MS)	KVK-CRS (MS)
1.	There is no discrimination for rich & poor in community participation for radio programmes	4.15	4.30	4.25
2.	There is no tendency of favoring general category over SC & ST in radio station	3.47	3.42	3.30
3.	CRS programmes give equal share to women related programmes	3.10	3.22	2.85
4.	The CR programme are critical in augmenting social values to empower the socially disadvantaged people	2.75	3.37	3.35

**MS-mean score*

The data in Table 2 revealed that social equity as one of the sub indicators for social sustainability in which non-discrimination in the community radio set up was perceived high among the listeners of SAU-CRS(MS=4.3) followed by KVK-CRS(MS=4.25)and NGO-CRS(MS=4.15). The statement on favoring to the general category over SC and ST was found to be disagreed by all the respondents in more or less similar

pattern. Women related programmes were broadcasted high in number at SAU-CRS (4.22) followed by NGO-CRS (3.10) and KVK-CRS (2.85).These findings were in lining with Fairchild, C. (2001).

I. **Operational Sustainability:** The operational sustainability consists of suitability of approach and training and problem solving which is depicted below:

Table 3
Suitability of approach indicators for operational sustainability of community radio stations
(n=40)

Sr. No.	Suitability of approach	NGO-CRS (MS)	SAU-CRS (MS)	KVK-CRS (MS)
1.	CRS suits to local needs and interest	3.67	2.60	2.70
2.	Most of the CR programmes are presented in local dialect	3.90	4.10	4.20
3.	No rigid approach is followed in broadcasting community/ public programme	4.20	4.10	3.80
4.	CRS is regular in arranging expert talks to solve local problems of community	3.40	3.90	3.80

**MS-mean score*

The Table 3 revealed that suitability to local needs and interest was perceived with mean score 3.67 in NGO followed by KVK-CRS and SAU-CRS. KVK-CRS listeners opined with mean score 4.10 followed by the SAU and NGO. Less rigid approach is followed in NGO than in SAU and KVK. Mean of 3.9 was

observed with arrangement of expert talk in SAU followed by KVK and NGO. SAU-CRS was found to be more regular in arranging talks to solve problems of community followed by KVK and NGO.

Table 4
Training and problem solving indicators for sustainability of community radio stations
(n=40)

Sr. No.	Training and problem solving	NGO-CRS (MS)	SAU-CRS (MS)	KVK-CRS (MS)
1.	Community is trained in creation and production of programme by the CRS	2.52	3.07	2.57
2.	Capacity building of rural youth in operating CR is promoted to sustain CR on community itself in future	2.82	3.20	3.10
3.	CRS volunteers effectively create awareness and interest about CRS programmes	2.42	2.80	3.02
4.	Technical snags will be solved quickly with the help of local people	2.07	3.15	2.52

*MS=mean score

The result presented in Table 4 revealed that the SAU-CRS (MS-3.07 and MS-3.2) was found better in training and capacity building of the community for future sustenance of CRS than other two setups. But the volunteers affiliated with community radio

were more effective in SAU-CRS than KVK-CRS and NGO-CRS by comparing their mean scores. It is also clear from the table that KVK-CRS was quick in solving technical snags with the help of local people than SAU-CRS and NGO-CRS.

Table 5
Indicators for Financial sustainability of community radio stations (n=40)

Sr. No.	Finance	NGO-CRS (MS)	SAU-CRS (MS)	KVK-CRS (MS)
1.	Involvement of <i>community committee</i> is necessary in financial matters	2.40	2.75	3.05
2.	CRS can sustain in future only if locals stand by it	3.30	3.12	2.92
3.	Community must be involved in income generating activities for CRS	2.90	2.80	2.97
4.	Community must contribute experts to raise fund to run community radio	2.97	3.10	2.80

*MS=mean score

Financial Sustainability : The data in Table 5 revealed that the involvement of community members was considered more important in KVK-CRS (MS 3.05) than SAU-CRS and NGO-CRS. But the NGO-CRS respondents felt that their involvement is necessary for the sustenance of CRS (MS 3.3). The KVK-CRS respondents opined (MS 2.97) that community must be involved in income generating activities. Thus advertising and other mechanisms shows potential viability for sustainability (Hussain and Tongia, 2007).

The result in Table 6 indicates the comparative analysis of indicators for sustainability of KVK-CRS from each other at 5% level of significance. Social capital found to be more important indicator as perceived by the respondents of KVK-CRS followed by social equity, financial sustainability, suitable approach and training & problem solving for the sustainability of radio. It means that training and problem solving must be given due importance by the KVK-CRS for better acceptability by listeners.

Table 6
Comparative analysis of indicators for sustainability of KVK-CRS (n=40)

Sr. No.	Indicators	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	Groups	
1.	Training and problem solving	2693.500	67.338	A	
2.	Suitability of approach	3357.000	83.925	A	
3.	Financial sustainability	3440.000	86.000	A	
4.	Social equity	4969.500	124.238		B
5.	Social capital	5640.000	141.000		B

Kruskal-Wallis test	
K (Observed value)	45.896
K (Critical value)	9.488
DF	4
p-value (Two-tailed)	< 0.0001
alpha	0.05

Table 7
Comparative analysis of indicators for sustainability of SAU-CRS (n=40)

Sr. No.	Indicators	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	Groups	
1.	Training and problem solving	3010.500	75.263	A	
2.	Suitability of approach	3628.000	90.700	A	
3.	Financial sustainability	4024.500	100.613	A	
4.	Social equity	4648.500	116.213		B
5.	Social capital	4788.500	119.713		B

Kruskal-Wallis test	
K (Observed value)	16.296
K (Critical value)	9.488
DF	4
p-value (Two-tailed)	0.003
alpha	0.05

The data related to comparative analysis of indicators for sustainability of SAU-CRS is given in Table 7. The result revealed that there is a significant difference among the indicators at 5 Per cent level of

significance. Similar to the above finding, training and problem solving is more important compared to other indicators for sustainability in SAU-CRS.

Table 8
Comparative analysis of indicators for sustainability of NGO-CRS (n=40)

Indicators	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	Groups			
Financial sustainability	2185.50	54.638	A			
Suitability of approach	2625.50	65.638	A	B		
Training and problem solving	3941.50	98.538		B	C	
Social equity	5218.00	130.450			C	D
Social capital	6129.50	153.238				D

Kruskal-Wallis test	
K (Observed value)	84.562
K (Critical value)	9.488
DF	4
p-value (Two-tailed)	< 0.0001
alpha	0.05

The data regarding the sustainability of CRS depicted in Table 8 revealed that financial sustainability was more important than other indicators for its long term sustenance. Sustainability of community radio station is considered as the combination

of social sustainability (social capital and social equity), operational sustainability (suitability of approach and training cum problem solving) and financial sustainability. The sustainability of community radio may not be fully attributed to the index developed since

there is always scope for to find the hidden factors ment practices followed in it. from the view point of organisations various manage-

Table 9
Sustainability Index of Selected Community Radio Stations

Indicators	<i>Yeralavani Community Radio, Sangli</i>	<i>PantnagarJanvani, Community Radio, Pantnagar</i>	<i>Pravara Community Radio, Ahmednagar</i>
	Mean Score	Mean Score	Mean Score
Social Sustainability	0.68	0.62	0.65
Operational Sustainability	0.61	0.58	0.55
Financial Sustainability	0.53	0.59	0.57
Sustainability Index	0.60	0.57	0.58

The data related to sustainability index of community radio stations are depicted in Table 9. The sustainability index of NGO-CRS was found to be 0.60 followed by KVK (0.58) and SAU (0.57). Sustainability index score for all the CR stations are observed on par with each other. Dissimilarity between the index score does not indicate a major difference but with few indicators involved in the index. This can be observed from tables pertaining to comparative analysis of indicators for sustainability of individual CRS. These findings were in line with Tavhiso (2009).

CONCLUSION

Sustainability is the major constraints in operation of CRS, thus, this service needs continuous back up from institutions till it reaches to its sustainability. In line with above findings and previous works done, few strategies for sustainability of a community radio stations are suggested below:

1. Institution must ensure financial circuit must be intact so that the radio programmes may not stop because of shortage of funds.
2. Foreign contributions must be accepted under FCRA and be used effectively
3. Community participation is very important for sustained interest of public to listen to CRS. Hence, radio must use all the opportunities to take leverage of public gathering, special programmes on community, culture and uniqueness
4. Quality of programme is one of the most important factor in sustainability. A separate content management committee is helpful in maintaining the quality of programmes.
5. Audience need based programming is a necessary step to reach the listeners as according to their needs and interests. CRS should conduct evaluation studies on time and then to know the pulse of the community.

6. Interactive programming formats such as phone-in, vox-pox, quiz, question and answer may really help to connect audience directly.
7. Infrastructure and facility is another aspect in community radio that one should look in to seriously. As per the study NGO-CRS has set up a small capacity wind mill to generate electricity at the time of power cut. This can be good instance of being eco-friendly measures along with meeting the information needs of community.
8. Training the local community is one broader aspect of capacity building of rural youths to run the community radio on their own in future times. By this, the community also takes interest to develop content and present according to their area.
9. Exposing the community to the radio station and briefing them the importance of radio may create interest among them to participate in larger extent.
10. Concept of social marketing must be the aim of any community radio so as to augment the developmental efforts of governmental and non-governmental institutions.
11. Internal stakeholders such as local leaders and opinion leaders must be roped in to increase the confidence of local community in the radio and its content.

Human resource management is one of the major factors to sustain the volunteerism in the community. Radio should affiliate itself to the interests of community giving due importance to the volunteers, leveraging their experiences in the field, praising their self-less work can really motivate them.

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