

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
on
Managerial and Operational Aspects
of a Community Radio Station

SEPTEMBER 21-24, 2010



A REPORT

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For the last one year Community RadioJU and CEMCA have been actively involved to turn the dream of Community Radio in Bangladesh into reality. To serve this end Community RadioJU and CEMCA organized an International Workshop at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India. It was a four day workshop, where the participants came from various parts of Bangladesh Most of whom represented organizations which have been granted the permission to begin a Community Radio. The workshop started on 21/09/2010 and ended on 24/09/2010. There were all total fourteen participants in this workshop.

On 21/09/2010, the very first day of the workshop began with a general introductory lecture by Professor Nilanjana Gupta, Convener, Community RadioJU. In her lecture Professor Gupta stressed on the significant role played by the community radio in the development of the concerned community. She also talked about the importance of the community radio in the lives of the common people of that particular community. A community radio is capable of building up connectivity among the community members. This connectivity helps them in turn to realize the self identity of the community.



She also spoke on the several activities of community radio. While talking about the activities of the community radio she drew the example of organizing Training Workshops. This discussion further led into the programme production of the community radio. She also talked about the broadcast time of a community radio. According to her the sustainability of a community radio station depends on mainly three factors: firstly a

community radio station has to justify its existence. In other words it needs to clarify the needs behind its existence. Secondly, after coming into existence it has to concentrate on the programme production part. All the programmes of the community radio should involve the community in some way or the other. Its programmes should deal with the development issues of the community people. The third and the final factor is the financial one. Managing the finance and making the best possible use of the available resources play a vital role in the sustenance of a Community Radio. Thus she ended her thought provoking introductory lecture.

The first step towards establishing a Community Radio is to have a sound knowledge regarding the studio set up. Sri Abhishek Das, Programme Coordinator, Community RadioJU delivered his lecture on Knowledge about Studio. Sri Das started his lecture by

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introducing the participants to the purchase and the maintenance of the studio equipments. He also discussed the accessibility of these equipments in the market. In his lecture he asked the participants to ensure that the studio equipments be user friendly. He also stressed on the types of furniture one should use in the studio. The furniture should not hinder the traveling of the sound waves and also should not cause any problem while sound recording. This further led to the discussion on the proper acoustic treatment of the studio.



While talking about these technical aspects of a studio set up, one of the most important points which he highlighted was the selection of a proper location for the studio. A proper studio location brings clarity in the programme transmission. Other than location, there are other studio equipments which play an important role in the proper programme transmission. Tower is one such an important instrument. To make the discussion fruitful and to give the participants practical

experience he took them to the studio of Community RadioJU. There they were taken to the rooftop to see the tower used by Community RadioJU. Sri Das explained the function of the tower to all the participants. He also discussed the importance of the lightning arrester for a Community Radio Station. Inside the studio he explained the usage different kinds of Microphones and the Jacks. Other than these he also made them acquainted with equipments like compressor, audio mixer, console, studio phone. He discussed the various functions of these instruments. While talking about recording he spoke on the various recording software available in the market and their price range. He also spoke on the difference between a recorded and a live programme. In this portion of his lecture he mainly highlighted on the technical functioning of the Community Radio Station.

The other half of his lecture was basically about the non technical aspects which also help in the smooth running of a Community Radio Station. A thorough programme planning for a whole year is the first step towards it. Similarly to assess the expenditure over different levels is also equally vital. The success of any Community Radio Station depends on its involvement with the concerned community. The quality of its programme must be involving as well as appealing to that particular community. In other words the programmes should have high programme quality and should maintain their fidelity. To maintain the high quality of broadcasting the station must have a calendar database and have some back up arrangement to tackle all sorts of technical failures or disorders. Just producing good programmes might not be sufficient for the sustenance of the Community Radio. Its publicity is also important. Certain marketing stunts were also discussed by Sri Das in his lecture. He stressed on the marketing strategies and the protocol of the

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Community Radio Station. He also shared certain instances of how with minimum input a Community Radio Station can manage to get a bigger and profitable output. In other words how to make the best possible use of the resources available to us at hand. Last but not the least he raised a vital point regarding the behavior of the Community Radio Station Staff. This aspect is very important for an interactive radio station like Community Radio. With this we came to the end of our pre lunch session of the very first day of this workshop.

In the post lunch session Sri Bidhayak Banerjee from WEBEL addressed the participants. He delivered lectures on the 'Knowledge about Equipment: Recording and Broadcasting' and on 'Designing the Studio: Database Management'. In his lectures he discussed the types of audio mixing console, bass speaker, microphones, their functions, recording software, studio set up and the equipments used in more details. He also talked about the use of a suitable and professional headphone.



He also spoke on other important technical aspects of the studio such as Stereo Distributing Amplifier, Active Monitoring System, clear AC Power, PC with UPS, Antenna and its placing and structure, its weight and its coverage area etc. While talking about FM Bandwidth he drew a radio frequency chart so that the participants could get a clear picture of it. He explained that transmitter is a vital equipment of a Radio station. Three things which have to be checked in a transmitter are: first its forward power, secondly, its reference power and third, the Voltage Standing Waves Ratio (VSWR). He then discussed the studio set-up and the acoustic treatment of the studio. While talking on the studio set up he emphasized the proper placing of the equipments inside and outside the studio. Thus, he highlighted the importance of space management. He said that it is essential to maintain a proper pressure level in the studio and discussed that too in details. He also discussed the recording aspects inside the studio. He spoke on the aspects which are necessary to consider while recording. With this technical information as packed lecture by Sri Banerjee we came to the end of the first day of the workshop.

On 22/09/2010, the second day of our workshop began with a marathon session on 'Sound Forge, Zara Radio, Window Media Player, Free Source Software' by Sri Abhishek Das. In his lecture he introduced the participants with these softwares. These can be helpful for a Community Radio Station. All these softwares are used mainly for recording and editing of any programme. Other than these they have various other functions to perform such as adding sound effects, changing the voices completely for a dramatic effect etc. Thus, we ended the pre-lunch session of the second day of the workshop.



During the post-lunch session, Dr. Manas Pratim Das from All India Radio (AIR), lectured the participants on 'Pre and Post Production'. He started his lecture with the early FM Broadcast and also talked about Local Radio Station (LRS). Dr. Das said that around from 1995 "freedom from formality" regarding the use of language in a radio broadcast started arriving. The language became more and more casual. It became very much like the language we generally use during our day to day

conversation. By 2003-2004 this casual language took over the radio broadcasts completely. In the year 2004 Radio Mirchi started broadcasting from Indore with this casual approach in language. This in turn led to the changing of the target group. FM radio selected the age group of 12-25 as their target audience, an audience, which mixes up various languages in their day to day conversations. This target audience is also commercially profitable, because they frequently change their brands and habits. In other words this new target audience is brand conscious. Dr. Das now highlighted a major problem of language regarding community radio. He said that we are all surrounded with numerous commercial FM channels. Thus, we continuously hear the kind of language they use. As a result, when we think of community radio, we tend to think in the language used by the commercial FM stations. One of the basic differences between the commercial and the community radio station is that their target audiences are completely different. That is why it is quite obvious that there will be some differences in their use of language too. Generally we tend to cater to capitalism and commercialism. In case of community radio, one needs to be very careful about this tendency while designing a programme for community radio station.

Dr. Das also stressed on certain requirements which are to be fulfilled before starting a community radio station. According to him a Recce is a must. Then he discussed the funding agencies, such as big business houses which mainly serve as the funding body of the commercial FM stations in the current times. He then spoke on the resources which can be made use of. While talking about the kind of programmes of community radio station he stressed on proper research for a good programme. He encouraged the use of internet as an effective source of research. He explained how the selection of a good music and background music is important. He also spoke on how a community radio station has to maintain a balance between the interest of the state and of the public, since both might be different on certain issues. Finally he stated that community radio programmes are also supposed to give its audience a sense of joy. The participants had a very rich interaction with Dr. Das at the end of his lecture.

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The second and final lecture of the last session of the day was delivered by Sri Kaushik Sen from All India Radio on “Use of Console”. Sri Sen discussed the functions of the console and its handling in detail with the participants. Similarly, he demonstrated them several uses of the microphone and also shared his certain experiences regarding this aspect. With these we came to the end of the second day of this workshop.

On 23/09/2010, the third day of the workshop began early in the morning with a field visit to Shantiniketan, Bolpur.



At Shantiniketan the participants visited the local AIR studio. The officials there took keen interest to explain the studio set up and other functions to all the participants. They also showed the participants various types of studios used for various functions. They shared some of their experiences regarding the programme production and also about the local artists and the common people who are actively involved with their productions. The AIR officials also answered various questions asked out of curiosity by the participants. During this visit all the participants had the chance to have a hand on experience. They also discussed the functioning of the radio station with the officials of AIR.



After the lunch the participants were taken to the Visva Bharati University, Bolpur. With the help of a hired guide the participants came to know the various facts of this university. They also took a look at the several artifacts within the university campus. At the end of this visit the participants were taken to Rabindrabhavan. It is a museum dedicated to Rabindranath Tagore. Here the participants had a chance to know Rabindranath closely.

On 24/09/2010, the final day of the workshop began with the lecture delivered by Dr. Mans Pratim Das from All India Radio on “Survey, FPC”. In his lecture he explained to the participants the difference between a Fixed Point Chart (FPC) and Daily Programme Chart in details. He stressed that the performance of a radio station depends greatly on its FPC. This chart is made just for once. The advertisements are not placed in this chart but in the other one, that is, Daily Programme Chart. While talking about advertisements and their slots, Dr. Das explained that the placing of advertisements depends on various other external factors too. These factors he stressed should be kept in mind while taking the advertisements. With Dr. Das’s permission Smt Rukmini Vemraju shared her work experiences with the various community radio stations in India and abroad. This richly enlightened the participants. To give the participants a better idea regarding the FPC, Dr. Das drew it on the board. There he also explained the various factors like the time zone, the season which are to be kept in mind. He stressed on the creation of a programme file. The next aspect which Dr. Das discussed is the aspect of monitoring. According to him a radio station must have a ‘duty officer’ to fulfill the responsibility of monitoring the radio

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station. He also described the kind of responsibilities a ‘duty officer’ has to fulfill. In the next part of his lecture Dr. Das spoke on the survey. He gave a lot of importance to audience survey and he also discussed various methods of doing audience survey. He ended his lecture discussing extrapolation.

Next Smt Rukmini Vemraju from CEMCA gave a presentation on “Community Radio Infrastructure”. She also discussed the project survey and its several aspects. Her presentation gave the idea of the fund circulation from the Government to the Community Radio Station to all our participants. She also suggested the formation of forum for a proper and regular interaction among the several community radio stations. She also emphasized on the pre broadcast survey because it is important to understand the audience and to promote the radio station accordingly.



She also shared the information regarding different experiments conducted in this field. Her presentation ended with the discussion of the aspect of using music and songs and finally copywriting.

In the post lunch session Professor Nilanjana Gupta, Convener, Community Radio JU spoke on “Content Creation”. She discussed various types of programmes, their production and their impacts. Through out this workshop the participants were given hands on experience to operate a community radio station. All the sessions previously mentioned were all very interactive. All the participants had shown very keen interest on various aspects of the lectures. This communication between the speakers and the participants made each and every session rich with experience. The workshop ended with a valedictory session where the participants received their certificates.

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