

**6th Regional Consultation on Community Radio Awareness
(North-East Zone)
Academic Staff College, Khanapara ,
Guwahati, Assam, 28th and 29th January 2009**

In collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India and Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) , Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University, organized the Sixth Regional Consultation for spreading awareness about Community Radio on 28th and 29th January, 2009, in the north eastern region of India.

The workshop was held at the Assam Administrative Staff College, Khanapara which was inaugurated by Shri Tarun Gogoi, hon'ble Chief Minister, Assam. Professor Srinath Baruah, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University presided over the inaugural session. KKHSOU invited the educational institutes, Universities, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, the study centres of KKHSOU and NGOs from all over the north eastern region, to this Regional Consultation. The focus of the 6th Regional Consultation on Community Radio Awareness was generating awareness about Community Radio and its impact as a tool for community empowerment.

INAUGURAL SESSION

28th, January 2009

The workshop got a rhythmic start with the playing of the signature tune of proposed Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University Community Radio. It was soon followed by the welcome address by Shri P.K. Bisoi, Director, (Broadcast Development), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India.

The workshop was formally inaugurated with a Borgeet, a devotional song of Assam performed by local folk group and Shri Tarun Gogoi, hon'ble Chief Minister, Assam formally inaugurated the Consultation. Delivering the address, Sri Gogoi announced that the government would provide financial support of Rs.10 lakhs each to ten community radio stations in the state. He said that Community Radio can prove to be very important communication tool for community empowerment and thereby help in the process of development. The CM hoped that the radio stations would prove powerful in generating awareness in the sphere of agriculture, health and education.

Prof. Srinath Baruah, the hon'ble Vice Chancellor, of Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University, gave the presidential address. He welcomed all the participants to the workshop and talked about the importance of Community Radio especially in the open and distance learning of the country. He also lauded the support from the Government of Assam for providing facilities in order to develop the new technologies arriving in the field of education. Prof. Baruah acknowledged the support from the Ministry of

Information and Broadcasting and CEMCA for transforming the idea of Community Radio into a reality in the North –East. He also made it known that all the interested institutes and organizations could avail the advantages of Community Radio through KKHSOU which would be acting as the nodal agency of CEMCA and the ministry in the whole of North – East.

Dr.R.Shreedher, the Director of CEMCA, welcomed the government's move, saying that community radio services have gained popularity in states like Karnataka and Bihar. He said that the promotion of CRS is very significant for the development of the northeastern states. He hoped that in the North East the entire concept of Community Radio will receive the same response and soon gain popularity.

SESSION I

The first technical session, on *Community Radio in India*, chaired by Shri P.K. Bisoi Director, (Broadcast Development), Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India began with his address and speech. This was followed with the introduction of the participants.

This session was soon followed by an audio-visual presentation '**Step by Step**' by Dr. R. Shreedher , Director of CEMCA. After this there was an open house discussion on community radio and the views of the participants. This session was monitored by Shri P.K. Bisoi, Director (B'cast Development), MIB.

SESSION II

The second technical session began post lunch. This was a live broadcasting demonstration involving participants from the community. All the participants visited a village in Chandrapur. The broadcasting session was monitored by the experts from All India Radio, Guwahati and WEBEL (Courtesy temporary Licence by WPC, Govt. of India). The entire team received a warm welcome from the local people. The local folks performed various folk dances. The Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University group arranged a live phone-in programme with the local people.

29th, January 2009

SESSION III

The second day of the workshop began with the felicitation session of the guests of honour. The third technical session began with the lecture of Dr. Manoj Pataria, Director, NCSTC, Government of India. He spoke about the importance of Community Radio and people's knowledge on science. It was followed by a speech from Shri Pinaki Haldar, UNICEF, MIB Officials & Rep. of UNESCO.

SESSION IV

The fourth technical session, based on *Aspects of Community Radio* began with a speech from Shri R.N.Chakraborty, former Dy. Dir. General, Doordarshan .He suggested the types of programmes that should be aired on community radio. He said that programmes based on drama, women, religion, nationality, religion, music, etc, should be given more priority.

It was soon followed by the presentation-‘Community Radio-The answer to solving social needs’, by Shri. Abhijit Dasgupta, renowned Broadcaster. Shri Dasgupta explained the power of media, specially in a country like India, where there is diversity in every sphere, like language, religion and caste. He talked about the adverse effects of television, which is the most powerful media today. The presentation spoke about the business sentiments of the broadcasters. The women folk is utmost exploited for business purpose in case of television. He spoke about the effective communication through radio. Satellite radio is an upcoming concept. The merits of radio like its local flavour and target specific were also discussed by him.

The technical session concluded with the speech from Shri Vipin Sharma, Radio Expert. He talked about the quality of programmes in community radio, which should be need based.

The next session on “Setting up a CR Station and Technicalities” was chaired by Shri R.B. Prasad, Dy. Wireless Advisor to Govt. of India. Speakers from WEBEL gave a presentation on the background of WEBEL and their functioning.

Post lunch the session resumed with a speech from Shri. A. Bhaduri, Representative of WEBEL. He talked about the setting up of a studio, time setup arrangement, frequency, etc.

There was an interaction session with the participants. The distinguished guests answered the queries, related to Community Radio, raised by the participants.

VALEDICTORY SESSION

The valedictory function began with the welcome address by, Professor Srinath Baruah, the Vice Chancellor, Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University. He thanked the participants for making the workshop a grand success. The Guest of Honour of the event was Prof. N.C. Pant, Chairman National Open School. He encouraged the initiative and wished to see it turn into a grand success. Dinesh Das, Station Director, All India Radio, Guwahati, Prof. O.K Medhi, hon’ble the Vice Chancellor, Gauhati University and Mr. Taneja, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, were present to grace the occasion.

The participants were invited to share their views and experience about the two-day workshop. The participants expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to become a part

of such an event. They showed their enthusiasm in taking initiatives to make Community Radio a reality. They had gained from all the sessions as well as the interactive sessions. It was soon followed with the submission of completed application forms.

The Director of CEMCA, Dr.R.Shreedher, delivered the valedictory address. He thanked the organizers as well as the participants for making the concept of Community Radio available to the interested lot. He hoped to see a good response in the near future from the entire North-East. The workshop came to the close with the vote of thanks by Shri R.B.Mahanta, Registrar, Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University.

Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University has received temporary license for running the first community radio service in the state. It is the second after Manipur to do so in the region. The two day workshop focused on the potential of community radio, technical details, financial issues and live broadcast demonstration. The ministry has given a temporary license and assigned a frequency of 90.4-mega hertz for experimental broadcast of the proposed KKHSOU community radio. This frequency was used for demonstration during the event.

RECOMMENDATIONS