

Science for Women Baseline Study Report

For

VASUNDHARA VAHINI FM STATION (90.4 MHZ)

VIDYA PRATISHTHAN'S INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION AND
TECHNOLOGY, BARAMATI.

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1. Project Context

1.1 The Background

The **Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia** (CEMCA) catalyzed and supported by **Rashtriya Vigyan Evam Prodyogiki Sanchar Parishad** (RVPSP), Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, New Delhi, has embarked on a pan-Indian project to evaluate and encourage understanding and application of science in everyday life for women. 'Entitled Science for Women' (SFW) this project aims to reach out to the women in the poorly literate as well as literary challenged sections of society both in the urban and rural sectors across the country. Through participatory programmes specially designed with specific issues in focus and using the community participatory form of radio-programming this project will spread over two financial years and study how best women can be encouraged to the benefits of science in daily life. In the first phase, this project plans to operate through Community Radio Stations (CRs)

licensed to educational institutions and will reach out to women living in communities covered within the primary and secondary catchment areas of the radio stations owned and operated by the selected educational institutions.

A pilot study for the project was conducted at Anna FM, Anna University, Chennai during the year 2004–2005. Eighteen educational institutions which had been granted the license to run community participatory radio stations were invited to a workshop held on March 8 and 9, 2007, under the aegis of RVPSP and at the end of the workshop each of the participating educational institutions were asked to submit proposals suited to develop the Science for Women Programme through the community radio stations run by the institutes.

CEMCA with its expertise in research, community participation and capacity building, was selected as the nodal organization and was asked to submit a comprehensive proposal to RVPSP for implementing and monitoring the project. CEMCA's role in the project is extensive – CEMCA is the focal organization for selection of educational institutions. It has been entrusted with the following responsibilities:--

- a) Help in identifying the communities and conduct a baseline study to profile the communities within the catchment areas of the community radio station
- b) Act as facilitator for capacity building within the students and the women from the communities so that the programmes developed can be truly community participatory,
- c) Ensure that the programmes are of interesting enough to motivate the women participating/listening to understand the importance of science in everyday life
- d) Ensure proper utilization of the funds generated by RVPSP.

CEMCA has designed to implement the project in two phases. In the first phase a baseline study would be conducted using girl students and women from communities. Through this study a profile of the community will be mapped, the current practices and knowledge base vis-à-vis a range of issues/subjects in the community will be documented and an assessment will be made of the needs and shortcomings among the women in the communities. The baseline study will also help in motivating the students to understand and interact with the community so that the programme production can become more relevant to the needs of the community.

In the second phase, workshops will be conducted in the educational institutions for a capacity building exercise for the production teams which will be designing and producing the community participatory radio programmes with central theme of Science for Women.

Fourteen Educational Institutions granted by I&B Ministry license to set up Community Radio stations have been selected by CEMCA and RVPSP for awarding the SFW Project.

The following report is the finding from the baseline study in some selected villages covered by the **VASUNDHARA VAHINI FM RADIO STATION** licensed to **VIDYA PRATISHTHAN'S INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY,**

BARAMATI. The baseline survey for project was conducted by girl students of VIDYA PRATISHTHAN'S INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY belonging to various departments.

1.2 Profile of Vasundhara Vahini FM Radio Station at Baramati.

The **Vasundhara Vahini FM**, the community radio is run by the students of **VIDYA PRATISHTHAN'S INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY, BARAMATI.** This FM community radio was started in the month of April 2004. The frequency for this station is 90.4 MHZ. The area covered by the Vasundhara Vahini FM radio station is around 20 km's surrounding the college campus. The radio station has its own broadcast and recording studios, transmission tower and equipments for outdoor recordings. The Broadcasting time is in the morning 6:00 am to 10:00 am and 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

Vasundhara Vahini Community radio is a broadcasting organization established to provide communication support for the social, economic and cultural development of community within geographical location and owned and operated by the community on a non-profit basis.

The main objective of the Vasundhara Vahini Community radio is to provide the information to the farmers, weaker sections of the society and other communities in rural areas right at their doorstep and in affordable way.

Vasundhara Vahini FM programmes are in the local language – Marathi. At this moment, the station is operating twice a day, in shifts of four hours in the morning and evening and reaches out to around 30,000 farmers.

Many students from the college are involved in programme production, presentation and management of the radio station. As Vasundhara Vahini FM is the only community radio station in the region, community members are encouraged to participate in the programmes. Students are responsible for the programme production and maintenance of the hardware in the station. Teachers and administrative staff of the college act as facilitators to successfully run the station.

Vasundhara Vahini FM broadcasts programmes from morning to evening, extending a little beyond the regular college hours. The radio station also provides information on the history of Baramati, its local environment, traffic rules, national events, Programmes are broadcast on issues related to women. Doctors are invited to talk about various diseases and their treatments. Music broadcasts is a popular section of the broadcast. As most of the villagers are involved in agricultural activities, a lot of programmes based on agriculture are produced and broadcasted for the benefit of the farmers. Through this FM station, farmers are provided important and useful information on various agri related aspects like- new varieties of seeds, updated commodity rates, weather forecasts, various pesticides and medicines, animal

diseases and information on research done by the scientists from various agricultural universities. Day by day this community radio is becoming an integral and essential part of farmer's life and its popularity itself shows its success.

2. Baseline Study Objectives & Design

2.1 Objectives

The baseline study aims to achieve:--

- A documentation of the socio-economic and demographic profile of the target listeners.
- An in-depth understanding of the media habits of the women, particularly with reference to Radio.
- Identify the issues of concern for the community.
- Assess the willingness/interest among women for participation in the community radio initiative.
- Build awareness for the Community Radio and SFW programmes.

2.2 Study Methodology :--

2.2a Sample

A thorough study of the catchment pattern of the radio signals of the community radio run by the educational institution was made and thereafter some villages were selected for sample survey. The villages covered in this survey are:

ISMT Colony	Jalegaon(KP)	Janikwadi
Ghadge Basti	Kharawagaj	
MIDC Colony	Kasaba	Kaneri
Pandare	Khandobanagar	Dhekalwadi
Vadagaone	PatangshahNagar	Limetek
Korhale(K)	Dhawan Vasti	Pimpli
Someshwar	Satav Vasti	Bhavaninagar
Wanewadi	Solaskar Vasti	Sanasar
Jalkewadi	Dattawadi	Belwadi
Junction	Medad	Katewadi
Lasurane	Avachat Estate	Tavashi
Anthurane	22 Phata	Shivnagar
Kalam	Jalochi	Malegaon
Walchandnagar	Malgunde Vasti	Malegaon(Kh)

Pawarwadi	Malad	Vidyanagri
Thoratwadi	Bandalwadi	Shirivali
Phaunewadi	Gunawadi	Paitankar vasti
Malegaon Kharkhana	Nimbalkarvasti	22 Phata
Choromolewasti		
Khandaj		
Andobawadi		

All the above villages are located in **Baramati taluka** and within 20 km distance from the Community radio station. All these villages are grampanchayat villages having average population of 3000.

Around 1000 households were identified from the villages and from each household one woman was selected for baseline sample study. Care was taken to ensure that women from all age groups above 16years were included in the survey; households were selected to cover all economic strata in the community and effort were made to ensure that the sample is representative of the spread of literacy/education among women.

2.2b Study instrument

CEMCA designed a detailed questionnaire comprising of more than 50 questions for the baseline study. The questionnaire was sent to the educational institution well in advance so that the questions can be translated in the local language and modifies to suit the local profile. The translated questionnaire was rechecked and finalized in consultation with CEMCA before the baseline study workshop commenced. 1200 copies of the questionnaire was prepared by the institution along with an equal number of sticker advertising the FM channel through which the SFW programmes will be broadcast in the future months. The institute selected a requisite number of student volunteers among the girls for conducting the baseline study. The entire programme was guided and supervised by an expert and officers of CEMCA. In case of the present study the expert selected was **Gloria Khamkar** and on behalf of CEMCA **Dr. Shreedhar** was present to oversee the entire exercise. The questionnaire consisted of five distinct sections:--

- a) Information on socio-economic and demographic profile of the listeners of the FM station
- b) Media habits of the listeners- ownership, frequency of listening, interest, utility
- c) Current information sources and nature of solution for problems on issues like health hazards, family planning, social hygiene, childcare
- d) Issues of local importance
- e) Issues that community women would like to hear as well as participate on radio

2.3 Data Collection

A field team was created for data collection. It comprised of:--

- i) 25 Student volunteers who had some exposure to programme production at the Community Radio Station of the institute.
- ii) Community representatives who were trained by CEMCA expert at the preliminary workshop on how to conduct a survey. They community volunteers also helped the students identify the households where women could be asked questions for the survey.
- iii) Staff coordinators from the educational institution associated with the FM Radio station run by the institute.

In addition a team was selected to process the data immediately after collect so that at the end of the five day data-collection schedule, a detailed report can be prepared about the demographic nature of the community women and target participants. A one-day workshop was held prior to the data collection process to explain the entire project, methodology of data-collection, precautions to be observed during visiting the village households, and the procedure for tabulation. Training during the workshop included mock-interviews and tips on how to ask questions so that the exact information can be obtained. The students were encouraged to carry their cameras and photographs the interviewees. The pictures offer a visual presentation of the community, its economic status, the warmth and cooperation that the student volunteers received from the community and the reaction of men in the houses during the question-answer sessions.

To ensure that the student volunteers are able to collect a truly representative data of the women in the two selected communities, supervisors occasionally accompanied them. They also interacted with the community independently to understand the community from the perspective of the SFW project.

The complete data, duly tabulated was sent to Delhi for comprehensive report and analysis by the CEMCA expert in accordance with the pre-designed framework developed by CEMCA.

3. Data Analysis

Over 89.5% of the women interviewed were married and about 5% widowed. Only 3.6% of all the respondents were above 60 years of age. Majority of the women interviewed were in the age range of 21-30 years. 68.6% women interviewed were housewives while 12% were daily wage workers and a mere 6.1% were self employed.

3.1 Socio-economic demographic profile of community

The community selected is predominantly rural, with over 44% of the households living in semi pucca houses and 29.5% living in pucca houses. More than 19.2% of the respondents

belonged to households with monthly income below Rs. 1,500. Mosquito problem was reported by 88.2% of the women in the lowest income bracket and all the age groups and all the economic strata accepted that it is a problem faced by the community. Around 30.6% of the women felt that women did not have enough employment opportunities. The community is essentially Hindu (90%) with a percentage of 6.2% Muslim families living in the villages. Over 93% of the houses showed presence of male members as the head of the household and presence of the female members as the head of the household was merely at 5.9%.

3.2 Lifestyle Indicators

19.2% of all the households selected were in the lowest economic strata, i.e. income less than Rs. 1500 per month. Almost 40% of the rest of the respondents belong to the economic bracket of Rs.1501–5000 per month and the rest were in the higher income group earning above Rs. 5000 per month. The life style indicator for the economic strata below Rs.15000 per month was, as expected, bereft of most commonly known utility items or luxury goods except a TV set or a transistor radio. In the other economic strata, more than 86% women from all age groups reported possessing electric mixer-grinder in the house, and an average of 63% houses also possessed a two-wheeler. Almost 50% of the households of all the income groups possessed a tape recorder. In the higher income groups about 17% houses reported owning a washing machine and an equal percentage also had four wheelers including car or tractor. Computer was also a very rare possession even among the affluent. Most of the houses were pucca/semi-pucca (over 73%). Less than 5% of the women interviewed lived in apartment type flats. 16.3% lived in independent houses with proper roof. Almost all the houses, including many from the lowest economic strata had electricity connection and over 60% of all the homes had a proper source of water in the house. Only 7% of the people used the well or ponds as a source of water. 16% people used Firewood as the medium for cooking 79% of the houses had LPG connection. Over 67% of the houses had proper toilet and drainage and 20% reported use of open fields. A few had common toilets shared by a group of hutments.

3.3 Condition of Women - literacy, education, status within family

Overall condition of women in these villages was comfortable enough for almost 44% of them to find time for Self Help Group activities and 90% were interested to join Self Help Groups. Nearly 96% in the age range of 21–30 years were aware of the literacy programmes in the villages though the overall literacy figures are not too encouraging. only 5.7% of the women interviewed were graduate or above and a majority (30.7%) were educated only up to 6th standard. 29.8 % women had completed their HSC. Nearly 16% were illiterate. 94% wanted to avail vocational training to become financially self-sufficient. More than 30% also reported lack of employment opportunities for women in the villages but most of the women also admitted inadequate education as a reason for unemployment. Most of the women, (cutting across educational and economic background) did not feel that women suffered from lower status in the household. Around 40% of women from all age groups and economic strata felt the region has high pollution levels while the other 60% did not agree to this view. Over

95% of women said that they manage their homes efficiently and 96% said they know how to keep their surroundings clean.

3.4 Primary issues of concern in community

The area is infested with snakes and over 53% of the women interviewed reported that snakes are a major hazard for them. The other major health hazard is the presence of mosquitoes (Over 88%) which almost all the respondents agreed is a major concern for the community. Inadequate drainage is one major problem and pollution due to use of firewood was identified as an important problem in the community. Around 27% of women also reported water scarcity as a perennial problem. More than 23% said lack of doctors in the village was also one of the problems and wanted health tips in radio programmes regularly. Only 20% said Drunkenness among men is also a community problem. It was also found that the 20% women were not properly educated about the importance of vaccination as a preventive measure for diseases like chicken- pox, measles.

3.5 Primary issues of concern in household

Nearly 19% of all information on health issues was hearsay or elder's advice and only 12% picked up health related advice from radio/TV. More than 64% took the help of doctors for the family health problems and 61% women took doctors advice for their own health related problems. Care during pregnancy was also steeped with superstition and inadequate information. Over 66% women believed that a pregnant woman gets affected by the eclipse and 54% believed that pregnant women should not eat papayas. Information about adolescence care and hygiene during menstruation and pregnancy are two important areas where information flow needs to be stepped up.

3.6 Media Profile -ownership, consumption, needs

The women reported that most households (over 60%) did not get any newspaper and over 81% did not subscribe to any magazines and their source of information was limited to word of mouth or information through television programmes/ advertisements. Most houses had a television set (over 80%) and out of these 61% had colour TV sets. 53% of homes owned a radio set and out of them around 50% owned radio sets with FM bands. Most of the women were familiar with the concept of DTH/cable connection as cable connection was available with nearly 70% of the households owning TV sets. Households with younger members in the age range of 21-30 years had greater number of TV sets with cable connection while households with predominantly older people were more attuned to radio programmes. 70% of the radio sets were found in households with women in the age range of 50-60 years. Over 56% of women preferred to watch SAYDHARI TV CHANNEL and 22% of them watch E-TV MARATHI. The thrust of listening on FM was on good music (77%) and useful information programmes (34%).

Here people were well aware about the **VASUNDHARA VAHINI FM STATION**. As many as 68% of households owning radio sets with FM channels actually listened to the

VASUNDHARA VAHINI FM PROGRAMMES indicating the reach and relevance of the community radio channel in the region. The bulk of the listener ship (76%) however was for the programmes that were broadcast during the early hours of the day (6–8am) and majority listened to radio at home while engaged in household chores.

More than 84% of the women interviewed were eager to participate in organized group listening and out of these over 78% felt that radio programmes can be useful in finding solution to the community needs. They wanted information on farming techniques/agriculture and health related problems which they felt were central to their daily life. So far information from radio on issues like child health, epidemics, and pre and post-natal care has not been adequate. Their information outflow has been more through traditional systems like elders guiding with experience and doctors and local health workers. 50% of the women showed interest in participating in the community radio programmes and 45% showed their disinterest.

3.7 Community participation in CR programmes

The present status of community participation in VASUNDHARA VAHINI FM programmes is negligible but nearly 50% of the women interviewed showed readiness to participate in community radio programmes. While more than 33% of the women, between 30–40 years opted to be community representative in the radio participatory programmes, the trend among the younger women was towards radio jockey roles. Women in the age range of 31–40 preferred to be participants in useful programmes. This trend was most clearly visible in the income group of 3000–5000 rupees per household, irrespective of the literacy levels. Around 50% of women cutting across all income groups also wanted to be the community representative for radio programmes on VASUNDHARA VAHINI FM.

The overall impression of the sample is that the women in these selected villages were aware of the community radio, were enthusiastic about participating in radio/TV programmes. They seemed responsive to new ideas and information. There was an overall progressive attitude among the women which the surveyors felt will be useful for the science for woman project.

4. Implications for VASUNDHARA VAHINI FM Station

In the door-to-door survey, the students and staff got an opportunity to meet over 1000 women face-to-face to build an audience for the CR station in general and also explain SCIENCE FOR WOMEN PROJECT and its objectives. Thus, a valuable asset was created for the CR station that can be tapped both for SFW and beyond as the database contains unique identification for the respondents, identifying those who are willing and ready to participate. During the course of the year, on different issues, where direct community participation is possible, these women can be invited to participate. Their presence in the programme will make the radio more relevant and interesting to its listeners.

Further, each of the surveyed household carries a sticker, proclaiming the name of the programme SCIENCE FOR WOMEN in Marathi language that will serve as a constant reminder to the community to tune in to VASUNDHARA VAHINI FM. The use of stickers announcing the SFW Programme entitled the programme name and the FM frequency will help develop awareness about the community radio. Test transmission was carried out during the survey period of one week which gave the listeners a first hand experience. Thus, VASUNDHARA VAHINI FM has become a household name among 1000 households. The data shows the following information for the programme planners of VASUNDHARA VAHINI FM station

1. Television (80%) at present scores over radio (53%) in engaging the community but in Baramati there was a good percentage of awareness and interest about Vasundhara Vahini FM station. If programmes are made in the local dialect listenership will further increase. But some devices will have to be put in place so that there is more number of radios available for listening, more community listening habits need to be developed and Self Help Groups harnessed for improving FM-community interaction.
2. The villages also reported lack of sanitation facilities as 20% still use the open fields and 12.4% use the common toilets. Information on personal as well as community hygiene also needs to be provided. It is important for Vasundhara Vahini FM to devise programmes that can provide information through radio on mid-wife training, nursing school facilities and simple medical know-how.
3. A large section of the respondents were educated up to only sixth standard. So, these should be the target audience who should be encouraged in participatory programmes, such efforts generate breaking the literacy barrier and non-formal mode of information dissemination at the grass-root levels.
4. Most of the women are home makers. They can be encouraged to participate in interactive programme at times suited to their daily household schedule. The close proximity of Vasundhara Vahini FM radio station to the slums is a convenient opportunity for creating a truly participatory community radio.
5. The Vasundhara Vahini FM radio team need to build linkages with the local NGOs (many of the women interviewed were members or attached to local self-help-groups) so that the requirements of the community are regularly monitored
6. The survey showed women prefer to listen to radio in the morning and afternoon i.e. in the 6-12am Vasundhara Vahini FM needs to keep this in perspective and build programmes to extend interest in radio for longer duration.

7. Currently 68% people are listening to Vasundhara Vahini Radio. The CR station needs to motivate the community to acquire radios and listen to its programmes. As an incentive, radio sets can be given as gifts for participation in radio programmes. Efforts will have to be made to continuously involve the community members in the radio programmes to expand the listener ship.
8. Music interspaced with useful information and messages is one of the most convenient ways of information dissemination in radio. As indicated earlier, there are not many offerings by way of FM radio. Myths and beliefs abound in the community—this creates a good entry point for SCIENCE FOR WOMEN programmes to understand the myths, local beliefs and taboos practiced in the community. A listening culture has to be built through SFW, by making programmes using these local forms which can help make a programme relevant, participatory and interactive while imparting correct, factual and useful information, especially in the present context of science for women.

5. Recommendations of CEMCA

1. Correct and sustained information on environmental issues especially health and other related problems caused by mosquito menace is required. The need to keep the surroundings clean and how cleanliness is a health hazard needs to be emphasized in the programmes.
2. A major gap area in information is lack of understanding of child nutrition and pregnant women healthcare issues. Lack of employment for women is also one of the problems and people
3. It would also be useful if participatory format of programming is used for programmes on agriculture to facilitate better understanding of key issues.

This report has summarized only the broad findings. Detailed tables in the appendix may be looked at for cross tabulations of habits and preferences with independent variables.