

## **MAKE A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY RADIO IN INDIA**

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**Abstract:** Information and entertainment are now ingredients of human development along with food, clothing and shelter. However, it is also a fact that the mainstream media is unable to cater to the true information needs of the community, as it is primarily market driven and run with profit maximizing motive. Hence, the question of alternative media comes, which definitely has to have space in terms of localization of content, participation and involvement of the community. Community Radio can play a vital role in this, especially in narrowing down the differences between the broadcaster and the audience. Interestingly, the Govt. of India has also come out with an updated Community Radio Policy and is keen to give license to around 4000 Community Radio Stations by 2008. This is no doubt a new approach towards empowerment at the grassroots level, which, in turn, will definitely strengthen the tenets of democracy.

Radio is the main source of news and entertainment for most of India. All India Radio is in the top tier of radio coverage, as it is the public service broadcaster. Private FM Radio Stations have now become the second tier. Community Radio promises to be the third tier, closest to the people. Just hearing themselves on radio is an empowering experience for people, who realize that this, truly, can be their own voice and help them get a better deal from the government and other agencies or groups. Community Radio focuses on low cost and low return pattern of operation, which is aimed at educating and entertaining the community using their own idioms and language in contrast to the private FM Radio, which is primarily driven by entertainment and business considerations.

The history of broadcasting in India is very interesting. As per the Govt. of India Act 1935, state governments were allowed to run radio stations. With the constitution coming into force in 1950, broadcasting was put in the central list. In 1942 during the Quit India Movement, Dr. Ram Monohar Lohia ran an underground Radio Station for three months.

The decade of 80's was rather the decade of Television and Radio was neglected, not only in the government policies but in popularity too. All India Radio started opening what they called Local Radio Stations (L.R.S) in small towns primarily with a view to catering to local needs and giving local talents a platform. Though several LRS's were established across the country but how far its basic objective was fulfilled is yet to be ascertained.

The resurgence of Radio actually took place in India in 1995 with the commencement of FM broadcast by AIR, where some slots were given to private producers on sponsorship basis. Privatization in Radio came to India in 2003 with private players being given the licenses to operate FM Radio Stations. This practice continued with more and more FM Stations being given licenses in phases. The entertainment programmes primarily based on music and vociferous Radio Jockeys along with interactive formats made FM very popular, especially among the young people and radio sets got back their positions in the households and found new places in buses and auto rickshaws.

