Puduvai Vaani Community Radio as Source of Information to Educational Programmes for Rural People in Puducherry: An Evaluative Study

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to study the impact of educational programmes broadcast through Puduvai Vaani Community Radio from Pondicherry University. It is the public broadcaster to awaken, inform, enlighten educate and entertain all section of the people including the programme on women empowerment, communal harmony, health and education. A survey was conducted with questionnaire from the people of four villages and total of 43 respondents were identified for the study by simple random sampling. The result revealed that It was found that women and students are the major listeners have been influenced by community radio programs.

Keywords

Community radio; Puduvai Vaani,; Source of Information; Puducherry; East Coast Road; Pondicherry University.

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INTRODUCTION

Millions of people in developing countries like India are ostracized from a vast range of information and knowledge, especially the rural poor are leftover inaccessible from both traditional media and new information and communication technologies, which would improve their living standards and development. (Balan & Norman, 2012). There have been a number of studies conducted with various purposes on community radio as a powerful medium to educate the people particularly in the rural areas. A few studies (Agrawal, 2008; Siva & Jebaraj, 2012; Diamanka, 2013) were found on community radio as primary source of information for women. These studies reveal that radio has offered an opportunity for the women to their own voices through radio broadcasting, both for educational and entertainment; the talk shows were a remarkable empowering and educational platform for the women to negotiate, articulate and re-invent themselves. They realized after the interactions on the talk shows that they were more than just receivers of knowledge; and the radio eliminates literacy barriers and it allows and encourages the women to use the community radio as their primary source of information.

Further studies on access to information and communication through radio programmes were conducted by many researchers (Mtimde, Bonin, Maphiri, & Nyamaku, 1998; Buckley, 2007; Navarro, 2009; Tahir, 2010). The results witnessed that community radio (CR) has a major role to play in bridging the digital divide. With the advent of Internet, CR can connect people together which enables them to have a global dialogue in a local context to promote relationships and equitable exchanges among people in the society.

The outcomes of some more studies on radio as a leading source of information (Ochieng, Majozi and Ilboudo, 2000; Chapman, Blench, Kranjac-Berisavljevic & Zakariah, 2003; Madamombe, 2005; Sterling, O'Brien & Bennett, 2009; Al-hassan, Andani & Abdul-Malik, 2011; Hannides, 2011) proved that community radio plays a significant role to inform, to advocate, to educate, to promote social learning and dialogue, and to entertain at the grass roots level for rural development. The use of community radio reinforces the use of modern means of communication. Information is now considered as a complicated commodity and the provision of such information and skills has gained momentum in society as a unique and effective tool. In view of the

above, the study aims to bring the value of education among the rural community to the forefront. As the rural society are not well informed about the recent developments and educational upliftment that are happening around them, it is high time to make them aware of all these facts. This education can be given to them only through the medium of radio which is one of the cheapest and more accessible medium of communication in rural area. How the reach of community radio is highly effective among the rural communities, how the educational programmes broadcast by the Puduvai Vaani meets the educational need of the concerned community and the impact it creates among community for betterment of their life and how it helps enhance the society by providing a wide and varied information on a variety of subjects like health care, agriculture, fishing, language learning, are the main focus of the current study.

PUDUVAI VAANI: AN OVERVIEW

Pondicherry University in India is involved in extension and outreach activities throughout the year. Keeping in mind the knowledge and intellectual resources available in the university should reach the unreached for their empowerment. Puduvai Vaani was started with the support of UGC, New Delhi in 2008. It is the public broadcaster to awaken, inform, enlighten educate and entertain all section of the people including the programme on women empowerment, communal harmony, health and education. It also brings out the hidden talents of the students in and around the University campus. (http://qbase.co.in/fm/).

Community stations serve geographic communities and communities of interest. The geographical boundary of Puduvai Vaani community radio starts from Kottakkuppam to Kanagachettikulam. The main population of these villages includes fishermen, farmers, women, students and so on. So the target audience of Puduvai Vaani includes fishermen, farmers, women, school students, college students and university students.

METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

A survey was conducted using questionnaire instrument to study the impact of educational programmes of Puduvai Vaani community radio. Questionnaires consist of both open and closed ended questions on demographic characteristics, media of preference for primary source of information, participation in community radio programmes, influence of community radio educational programmes, satisfaction level of community radio educational programmes, etc. The target population constitutes four rural areas of East Coast Road (ECR) in Puducherry namely Pillaichavady, Kanagachettikulam, Periya Kalapet (West) and Periya Kalapet (East). A total of 43 respondents were identified for the study by simple random sampling. The questionnaires were self-administered and personally hand delivered. Through survey, there were five categories of respondents identified such as Self Employed (SE), Government/Private Employees (G/P), Home Makers (HM), Student Respondents (SR), and Wage Labourers (WL). Hereafter, acronyms of these categories will be used throughout the paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents by Category

As mentioned earlier, the distribution of respondents based on their category indicates that among total number of respondents, 12% of them were found to be self-employed while there were 30% of government/private employees, 26% of homemakers, 28% of students, and 5% of wage labours are there. It could be inferred that majority of the respondents (30%) are government/private employees. And only a few of them (5%) are from wage labourer's category.

Gender wise distribution of respondents

A total of 43 respondents representing all the four villages were considered for the study. The gender wise analysis of the respondents reveals that out of 43 respondents, 18(41%) were male and 25(51%) respondents were female.

Age wise distribution of respondents

Table 1 indicates the age wise distribution of respondents of five categories from four rural areas. Among the total number of 5 self-employed, 40% falls under the age group of 36-40 and rest of them aged above 40. Out of 13 government or private employees, maximum (31%) were aged of above 40. About 23% of respondents ranged between the age group of 26-30 and 36-40. 16% people are the age of 31-35 and least number of respondents was noticed in the age group of 21-25. Among 11 respondents from homemakers, 31% was aged above 40. 54% of respondents was at the age group between 26 and 40. Only 9% of respondents was between 21 and 25.

Among total number of 12 students respondents' maximum number of students are aged of 10-15. Out of which 25% of respondents were in the age group of 16-20. And rest of 17% is aged between 21 and 25.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age

Age	10-15	16-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	Above 40	Total
SE	-	-	-	-	-	2(40%)	3(60%)	5(100%)
G/P Employees	-	-	1(8%)	3(23%)	2(16%)	3(23%)	4(31%)	13(100%)
HM	-	-	1(9%)	2(18%)	2(18%)	2(18%)	4(36%)	11(100%)
ST	7(58%)	3(25%)	2(17%)	-	-	-	-	12(100%)
WL	-	-	-	-	-	-	2(100%)	2(100%)
Total	7(16%)	3(7%)	4(9%)	5(11%)	4(9%)	7(16%)	13(30%)	43(100%)

It is obvious that maximum number of respondents (30%) falls under the age of above 40 and least number of respondent's ranges between 16 and 20 which mainly belongs to Students category.

Distribution of respondents based on their qualifications

Table 2 shows the educational status of the respondents. Out of total respondents only 12% of them completed their post graduate, 21% of them were under graduate/diploma. Less than one-tenth of the respondents (7%) are illiterate. And it is quite surprising that majority of them (30%) was found to be school dropouts. This shows that the level of higher education among the people in these areas is very low. Illiterates were found from the category of Homemakers and wage labourers. 12 respondents did not respond to this question.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on their qualifications

Qualifications	Illiterates	School dropouts	UG/Technical (Diploma/IT)	PG/General	Total
SE	-	5 (100%)	-	-	5 (100%)
G/P Employees	-	3 (23%)	5 (38%)	5 (38%)	13 (100%)
HM	2 (18%)	5 (45%)	4 (36%)	-	11 (100%)
WL	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	-	-	2 (100%)
Total	3 (10%)	14 (45%)	9 (29%)	5 (16%)	31 (100%)

Respondent's preference to the media

Table 3 indicates the preference of media source by the respondents for getting primary information. Among total number of 5 self-employed, only 20% of them preferred Television and rest of them (80%) preferred radio as the primary source of the information. Out of 13 government/private employees a large number (46%) of respondents preferred Television, followed by Newspapers (31%), 23% of the people prefer radio and no one prefers Internet as the primary source of the information. Among total number of Homemaker respondents, maximum number (36%) of respondents selected Newspaper and Television as the primary source of the information. Only 28% of the respondents selected Radio and here also no one preferred Internet as the primary source of the information. Out of 12 student respondents, 42% of respondents selected TV, 33% of them selected Newspaper, only 7% of them selected radio, and only 8% of them prefer Internet as the primary source of the information.

Table 3: Respondent's preference to the media

Preference to Media	News-paper	TV	Radio	Internet	Total
SE	-	1 (20%)	4 (80%)	-	5 (100%)
G/P Employees	4 (31%)	6 (46%)	3 (23%)	-	13 (100%)
HM	4 (36%)	4 (36%)	3 (28%)	-	11 (100%)
ST	4 (33%)	5 (42%)	2 (17%)	1 (8%)	12 (100%)
WL	2 (100%)	-	-	-	2 (100%)
Total	14 (33%)	16 (37%)	12 (28%)	1 (2%)	43 (100%)

Preference of Television over the Radio

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents who prefer TV to the radio. Among total number of self-employed, 60% prefer TV to the radio and rest of the 40% of the respondents prefer radio only. Out of government/private employees, 54% of them prefer TV to the radio and rest of them prefer only radio. Out of 11 Homemakers, 64% of them prefer TV to the radio and rest (36%) of them prefers only radio. Out of 12 student respondents, a large majority (75%) of them prefer TV to the radio and rest of the students prefer only radio. 50% of the wage labourers prefer TV to the radio and rest prefers only radio.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents who prefer TV over the radio

Responses	Yes	No	Total
SE	3(60%)	2 40%)	5 (100%)
G/P Employees	7 54%)	6 46%)	13100%)
HM	7 64%)	4 36%)	11100%)
ST	9 75%)	3 25%)	12100%)
WL	1 50%)	1 50%)	2 (100%)
Total	27(63%)	16(37%)	43100%)

Time spent in listening to radio

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents of time preference in listening to radio. The time slots of Puduvai Vaani community radio (CR) starts from 6.00 am to 10.00am, 1.00pm to 2.00pm and 4.00pm to 6.00pm. Among total number of self-employed 60% of the respondents listen to CR from 6.00am to 8.00am where as 40% of them listens from 4.00pm to 6.00pm. Out of 13 Government / private employees, 46% of them listens between 4-6 pm, 38% of them listens during 6-8 am and 16% of the respondents listens at the time of 8-10am and 1-2 pm respectively. Out of 11 Homemakers, 72% of the respondents listen during 1-2 pm and 4-6 pm respectively. Whereas 19% of them listens during 8-10 am and the remaining 9% listens at 6-8 am. Among 12 students, 67% of them listen from 4-6 pm, 17% of them listen during 6-8 am and rest of the 16% of the respondents listens during 8-10am and 1-2 pm respectively. 50% of wage labours listens at 1-2 pm and rest of them listens at 4-6 pm.

Table 5: Distribution of respondent's time spent in listening to radio

Timings	6-8 am	8-10 am	1-2 pm	4-6 pm	Total
SE	3 (60%)	-	-	2 (40%)	5 (100%)
G/P Employees	5 (38%)	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	6 (46%)	13 (100%)
HM	1 (9%)	2 (19%)	4 (36%)	4 (36%)	11 (100%)
ST	2 (17%)	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	8 (67%)	12 (100%)
WL	-	-	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2 (100%)
Total	11 (26%)	4 (9%)	7 (16%)	21 (49%)	43 (100%)

Frequency of listening to radio in a week

Table 6 indicates the distribution of respondents by frequency of listening to radio in a week. Among self-employed, 60% of the respondents try to listen to radio always, 20% of them listen 3-4 times and rest of the 20% listens 1-2 times a week. From total number of Government/Private employees majority of them always listens radio and 38% of them listens 1-2 times whereas 8% of them listens very rarely, that is 3-4 times a day. Out of 11 Homemakers, 36% listens to radio always and with the same number of respondents listens to radio 3-4 times per week where as a very few number of people listens to radio 1-2 times per week. Among 12 students respondents, 42% of them listens radio 3-4 times/ week and 1-2 times a week. And rest of the 16% of them listen to radio always. 100% of wage labourers listens to radio every day.

Table 6: Frequency of listening to radio in a week

Frequency	Always	3-4 times	1-2 times	Never	Total
SE	3 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	-	5 (100%)
G/P Employees	7 (54%)	1 (8%)	5 (38%)	-	13 (100%)
HM	4 (36%)	4 (36%)	3 (28%)	-	11 (100%)
ST	2 (16%)	5 (42%)	5 (42%)	-	12 (100%)
WL	2 (100%)	-	-	-	2 (100%)
Total	18 (33%)	11 (26%)	14 (32%)	-	43 (100%)

On the whole, majority (42%) of the respondents listen to radio on daily basis. Only 26% of the respondents listen to radio three to four times a week. 32% of the respondents are listening to radio once or twice a week. From the total respondents it is clear that everyone listens to radio at least once in a week. The development of television tends to reduce the radio listening.

Convenient time for listening to educational programmes

It is obvious from Table 7 that 49% of respondents preferred morning time to get educational programmes, where as 23% of them preferred to get educational programmes at noon time, 9% of them preferred to get prime time and rest of them (7%) felt that if educational programmes are broadcast every time then they can tune at any time they want. However, from students' category, a large number (75%) of them felt morning as the best time to get educational programmes. They believe that it increases the performance in the classes. Many useful tips can be extended to other friends of them. 17% of them felt it will be better if educational programmes are broadcast every time. And other 8% of them said noon is the better time.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by time convenient

Timings	Prime time	Morning	Noon	Every time	Total
SE	2(40%)	2(40%)	1(20%)	-	5(100%)
G/P Employees	4(31%)	7(54%)	1(8%)	1(8%)	13(100%)
HM	3(27%)	3(27%)	5(45%)	-	11(100%)
ST	-	9(75%)	1(8%)	2(17%)	12(100%)
WL	-	-	2(100%)	-	2(100%)
Total	9(21%)	21(49%)	10(23%)	3(7%)	43(100%)

Purpose of listening to radio

Table 8 explains the details of the most favourite programmes in radio channels. It was observed that more than 50% of the respondents are eager to listen to programmes related to social awareness. Another majority of the respondents (21%) likes to hear entertainment programmes. Whereas 16% of the respondents desired the programmes like group discussion, interview etc. Less than one tenth of the respondents (9%) like to listen to informative programmes like Radio tutor. Most of the respondents are interested in listening to social awareness programmes which will make the people to know about surrounding.

Table 8: Purpose of listening to radio

Timings	Entertainment	Social awareness	Radio tutor	GD,Interview etc.	Total
SE	2(40%)	2(40%)	1(20%)	-	5(100%)
G/P Employees	5(38%)	6(46%)	-	2(15%)	13(100%)
HM	1(9%)	8(73%)	2(18%)	-	11(100%)
ST	1(8%)	5(42%)	1(8%)	5(42%)	12(100%)
WL	-	2(100%)	-	-	2(100%)
Total	9(21%)	23(53%)	4(9%)	7(16%)	43(100%)

Choice of other language programmes

Table 9 shows the distribution of respondents who listen to other language programmes than Tamil language. 41% of the respondents is not at all interested in other language programmes, 21% of the respondents moderately listens to other language programmes mainly English, and 19% of them are very interested to listen to other language programmes. Puduvai Vaani community radio broadcasts English, Hindi, Tamil and French language programmes. Among five main categories of respondents students are eagerly interested to listen to other languages like Hindi and English programmes. They opined that Hindi tutorials are the main programme that they listen to. English programmes like drama, interactions etc are the main programmes they listen. The main reason behind it is that it helps improve their language other than Tamil and also it enhances the learning skills.

Table 9: Distribution of respondents by other language programmes

Timings	Very much	Mode-rately	Little	Not at all	Total
SE	1 (20%)	1 (20%)	-	3 (60%)	5 (100%)
G/P Employees	-	4 (31%)	3 (23%)	6 (46%)	13 (100%)
HM	-	2 (18%)	2 (18%)	7 (64%)	11 (100%)
ST	7 (58%)	2 (17%)	3 (25%)	-	12 (100%)
WL	-	-	-	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
Total	8 (19%)	9 (21%)	8 (19%)	18 (41%)	43 (100%)

Satisfaction of the Respondents on CR programmes

Table 10 shows the distribution of respondents by their level of satisfaction on the presentation of community radio programmes. 72% of the total respondents were very much satisfied. Rest of them were moderately satisfied with the presentation of the programmes in CR. Among total number of self-employed, 80% of them are satisfied with the presentation and clarity of the programmes and rest of the 20% are moderately comfortable with the presentation of CR programmes. Among the total number of G/P employees, 77% of them are very much satisfied and 23% are moderately satisfied.

Table 10: Respondent's satisfaction on CR programmes

Level of satisfaction	Yes a lot	Yes a bit	Not at all	Total
SE	4(80%)	1(20%)	-	5(100%)
G/P Employees	10(77%)	3(23%)	-	13(100%)
HM	7(64%)	4(33%)	-	11(100%)
ST	8(67%)	4(33%)	-	12(100%)
WL	2(100%)	-	-	2(100%)
Total	31(72%)	12(28%)	-	43(100%)

Respondents' participation in CR programmes

Table 11 reveals about the participation of the respondents in Puduvai Vaani Community Radio Station. Out of total respondents, 47% of them participated in different programmes which are live in nature. Students are mainly participating in group discussion, quiz kind of educational programmes. Other category of respondents mainly participated in live programmes where they can actively participate. A Programme namely '*Ungalaithedi'* is the main programme in which the rural people participate actively.

Table 11: Respondent's participation in CR programmes

Responses	Yes	No	Total
SE	3(60%)	2(40%)	5(100%)
G/P Employees	5(38%)	8(62%)	13(100%)
HM	6(54%)	5(46%)	11(100%)
ST	5(42%)	7(58%)	12(100%)
WL	1(50%)	1(50%)	2(100%)
Total	20(47%)	23(53%)	43(100%)

Respondents' opinion on the dedication of CR educational programmes

Table 12 reveals the results whether the community radio programmes are exclusively dedicated to educational programme. Majority of them (38%) agreed that the CR programmes are completely dedicated to educational programme. 30% of the total respondents strongly agree that CR programmes are completely dedicated to educational programmes. Other 30% of them are moderately comfortable with educational programmes. Whereas a few of the respondents strongly disagreed in the statement CR are completely dedicated to educational programmes

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Table 12: Respondents' opinion on the dedication of CR educational programmes

Variables	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Strongly disagree	Total
SE	2(40%)	3(60%)	-	-	5(100%)
G/P Employees	4(31%)	3(23%)	5(38%)	5(8%)	13(100%)
HM	3(27%)	5(45%)	3(27%)	-	11(100%)
ST	4(33%)	4(33%)	4(33%)	-	12(100%)
WL	-	1(50%)	1(50%)	-	2(100%)
Total	13(30%)	16(38%)	1(30%)	5(2%)	43(100%)

Respondents by influencing factors in life

Table 13 reveals the details of the most influenced programmes in community radio. Majority of the respondents (30%) expressed that programmes related to protect moral values have influenced them. 26% of them said that they improved their General awareness on the surroundings. About 14% of them got influenced to mould the courage to participate in local issues. More than one tenth of the respondents (12%) were influenced by improving general knowledge. Less than one tenth of the respondents (5%) got information about agriculture programmes.

Table 13: Respondents by influencing factors in life

Influencing factors	Local issues	Improved GK	Providing health tips	Moral values	Good agricultural practices	General values	Total
SE	-	-	1(20%)	3(60%)	-	1(20%)	5(100%)
G/P Employees	4(31%)	1(8%)	2(15%)	3(23%)	-	3(23%)	13(100%)
HM	-	3(27%)	1(9%)	5(45%)	-	2(18%)	11(100%)
ST	-	1(7%)	2(17%)	2(17%)	2(17%)	5(42%)	12(100%)
WL	2(100%)	-	-	-	-	-	2(100%)
Total	6(14%)	5(12%)	6(14%)	13(30%	2(5%)	11(26%)	43(100%)

Distribution of respondents by influence in change of life Style

Table 14 highlights the distribution of the respondents by their change in life style through the programmes of Puduvai Vaani CR. Most of the respondents, nearly 21% improved Knowledge, health condition by receiving health tips and Motivation and self-confidence respectively. Above 17% of them get improved in family management. 7% of the respondents developed in their education aspects by the programmes of Puduvai Vaani CR. It is clear that 100% of the wage labourer were changed in their working area in fishing and agriculture and the rest of 5% of the respondents could improve their attitude, agriculture and fishing respectively. Some of them (3%) could improve the source of income particularly the students from various institutions who are engaged in transmission and live duties. Close to 20% of the respondents could improve their ability of managing family, agriculture and fishing techniques through the programmes of Puduvai Vaani. So it can be inferred that programmes in CR improves their life standard

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Table 14: Distribution of respondents based on the changes in life style

Influencing factor	Categories					Total
	SE	G/P employees	HM	ST	WL	
Attitude	-	-	-	2 (17%)	-	2 (5%)
Knowledge	-	5(38%)	2(18%)	2(17%)	-	9(21%)
Health	1(20%)	2(15%)	1(9%)	5(41%)	-	9(21%)
Family management	1(20%)	3(23%)	4(36%)	-	-	8(17%)
Income	-	-	1(9%)	-	-	1(3%)
Agriculture/fishing	-	-	-	-	2(100%)	2(5%)
Nutrition	-	-	-	-	-	-

Education	-	-	1(9%)	2(17%)	-	3(7%)
Motivation & self confidence	3(60%)	3(23%)	2(18%)	5(8%)	-	9(21%)
Total	5(100%)	13(100%)	11(100%)	12(100%)	2(100%)	43(100%)

Distribution of the best presented programmes

It was an attempt to identify the best programmes on community radio based on the responses of the participants. The result revealed that out of total respondents, almost half of the respondents (47%) opined educational programmes as the best presented programmes. The other programmes in next ranks include *Chinna Chinna Sinthanaigal* (12%), *Varalatril Indru* (9%), *IndriyaVingyani* (7%), *Nam Ulagam* (7%), *Hindi Pesalam* (5%), *Radio Tutor* (5%), *Learning through Listening* (2%), *I Can* (2%), *Kaalai Kathambam* (1%). It was also found that these programmes mainly have influence on the students. 19% of the total respondents said that other programmes like *Samudhaya Sirpigal* (social awareness programmes), *Iravinmadiyil* (other language programmes), *Environment*, *Sattam Sattam* (programmes for rules and regulation) are also equally useful. Only 12% of the total respondents prefer entertaining programmes like *Isaipayanam*, *Ungalaithedi*, *Innisai Thendra*l. About 7% of the respondents perceived that programmes related to children and women are best programmes in the community radio. It is clear that all the programmes broadcast through Puduvai Vaani are useful to varied audience depending upon their interest.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The study has brought out relevant facts that how effectively the educational programmes are broadcast in Puduvai Vaani community radio. It was found that women and students are the major listeners have been influenced by community radio programs. The study also indicates that majority of the respondents commonly prefer TV as the primary medium because educated respondents are not much aware of the community radio programmes and they mainly use it for entertainment. Impact of educational programmes of Puduvai Vaani on rural people could be evidenced. The community people need education on environmental protection to handle environmental related issues like land degradation, indiscriminate tree felling, waste management, desertification and climate change, water saving etc. It is therefore concluded that more people including the illiterates can have access to information and contribute to programmes through community radio. People are more informed about local traditions and customs, certain programs have great impact at societal level. Undoubtedly, radio plays crucial role of educating illiterate people. It eliminates literacy barriers and allows and encourages a great number of people to use it as the primary source of information.

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