



Research Unit
Press Information Bureau
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India



World Radio Day (13 February)

Celebrating 20 Successful Years of Community Radio in India

(Ministry of Information & Broadcasting)

February 13, 2024

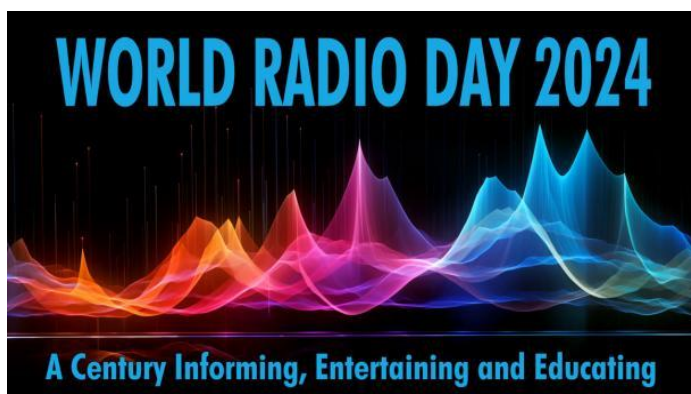
INTRODUCTION

In an age characterized by the rapid pace of technological advancement and the swift obsolescence of successive shiny platforms, Radio is embarking on its second century of service as one of the most reliable and widely utilized forms of media worldwide.



Designated in 2011 by the Member States of UNESCO and endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 2012 as a UN International Day, February 13th was established as World Radio Day (WRD). With its origins tracing back to the 1800s, radio encompasses technology, science, communication, and the programming of audio elements, firmly establishing its presence well into its second century.

THEME & CELEBRATION



The theme for this year's World Radio Day is ***“Radio: A century informing, entertaining and educating.”***

The theme shines a broad light on the radio's remarkable past, relevant present and promise of a dynamic future.¹ UNESCO coordinates World Radio Day activities at a global level, UN

member countries, through their radio stations and media stakeholders, celebrate the day in a variety of ways they see fit, including offerings of some optional programme ideas

¹<https://www.unesco.org/en/days/world-radio>

offered by UNESCO, information, news, audio and video resources every year. To know about past editions of WRD, [click here](#).

20 YEARS OF COMMUNITY RADIO IN INDIA

Meanwhile, India is celebrating 20 years of successful Community Radio services in 2024. Community Radio is an important third tier in Radio Broadcasting, distinct from Public Service Radio broadcasting and Commercial Radio. Community Radio Stations (CRSs) are low power Radio Stations, which are meant to be set-up and operated by local communities.

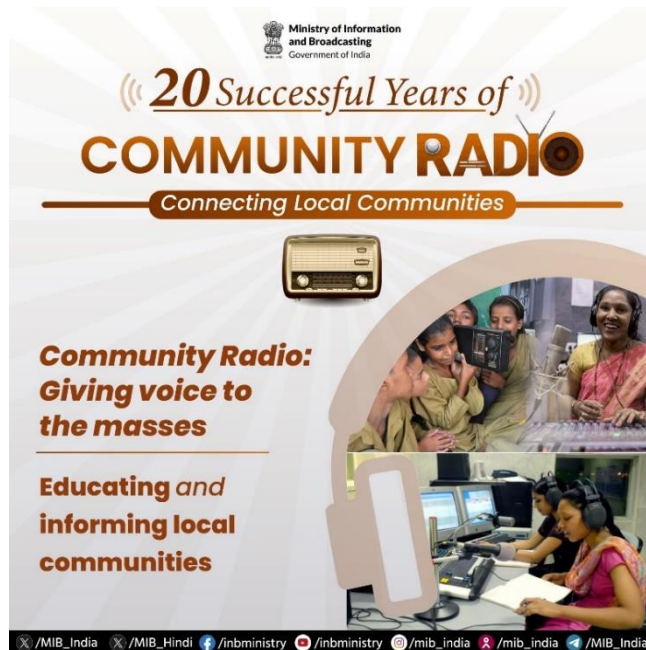
The journey of Community Radio in India started in the year 2002, when the Government of India approved a Policy for the grant of licenses for setting up of Community Radio Stations to well established educational institutions including IITs/IIMs. Considering that Community Radio represents voice of the community, the Government decided to broaden the policy by bringing 'Non-profit' organisations like civil society and voluntary organisations etc. under its ambit in order to allow greater participation by the civil society on issues relating to development & social change.

As a result, the first Community Radio Station was inaugurated by Bharat Ratna Shri Lal Krishna Advani on 1st February 2004. The journey was started at a slow pace and later impetus was given when the other community-based organisations were also allowed to set up the Community Radio Stations. In 2005, Anna University marked a pivotal moment by commissioning the first Community Radio, Anna Community Radio 90.4 MHz. As we celebrate 20 years of Community Radio in India, this milestone reflects the enduring impact of this medium.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY RADIO?

Community Radio is a community centric radio broadcasting service owned and managed by not-for profit community-based organizations. The basic objective of the Community Radio broadcasting is to serve the cause of the community by involving members of the community in the broadcast of their programmes.

A Community Radio Station is a low power FM Radio station having coverage of around 12-15Kms. The setup cost of Community Radio ranges between Rs. 10 to 15 Lakhs. Not-for Profit organisations/institutions such as Educational institutions, Krishi



Vigyan Kendras, ICAR institutions, NGOs, registered societies, public charitable trusts etc. are eligible to apply for setting up of Community Radio stations.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY RADIO

Community Radio offers an opportunity for organisations to provide a platform to local community to broadcast programmes having immediate relevance for the community. Since the broadcast is in local language and dialect, people are able to relate to it instantly. Community radio is of, for and by the people. Based on this tenet, the station should engage community at all the stages on programming. A group of community members can be formed as advisory group for the station to look into its various content, community engagement needs. There could be varied ways of engaging the community; through recordings, calls, feedback, and others.

Radio is also the best suited platform for local voices and talent to be showcased. Promoting local talent through radio station, engaging local resource persons from government departments, civil society, can help generate regular content for the station. Celebration of special days with the community can also help increase awareness about an issue/topic and also involve communities.

UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH IN THE LAST DECADE

The past decade has witnessed phenomenal growth in Community Radio Stations (CRS), propelled by continuous capacity-building programs organized by the government. Workshops, webinars, and national gatherings have played a crucial role in fostering awareness and peer learning among stakeholders.

Current Landscape and Future Prospects

With 481 operational CRS and approximately 200 in various stages of setup, the sector has experienced exponential growth. From a mere 140 CRS in 2014, the number has surged to 481 in January 2024, showcasing the enduring impact and potential of Community Radio in India.



To conclude, Community Radio has the potential to strengthen people's participation in development programmes through its holistic approach. In a country like India, where every state has its own language and distinctive cultural identity, CRSs are also a repository of local folk music and cultural heritage. Many CRSs record and preserve local songs for posterity and give local artists a platform to showcase their talent to the community. The unique position of CRS as an instrument of positive social change makes it an ideal tool for community empowerment.²

References:

- <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/world-radio/history#:~:text=The%20decision%20to%20set%20World.of%20UNESCO%20at%20the%20time.>
- <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/world-radio/audios2024>
- <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/world-radio/past-editions>
- <https://prasarbharati.gov.in/all-india-radio-2/>
- <https://prasarbharati.gov.in/growth-development-air/>
- <https://newsonair.gov.in/About-Us.aspx>
- <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2005299>

Other Important Links

- <https://embedpp.gov.in/pdf/profile%20of%20ESD.pdf>
- https://twitter.com/airnewsalerts?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Eembeddedtime%7Ctwtterm%5Escreen-name%3Aairnewsalerts%7Ctwcon%5Es1_c1
- <https://twitter.com/airnewsalerts?lang=en>
- <https://prasarbharati.gov.in/all-india-radio-2/>
- <https://mib.gov.in/mann-ki-baat#>
- <https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/tag/radio/>

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² <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2005299>