

# Social Marketing Techniques in Community Radio Practices

Sunil Belladi, Shyamsunder Chitta, Hariprasad Soni

**Abstract**— *The first Community Radio Station was set up in India in the year 2006, and presently there are over 251 such operational radios in the country. The paper sets out to locate Community Radio in Indian context, and its practices based on the conceptual definition and framework of social marketing as proposed by Philip Kotler, Alan Andreasen and others. Historically Community Radio has evolved as an alternative to the mainstream media which failed to focus and give due attention to issues and concerns of rural people in general and marginalised sections of the society. The paper maps the practice of Namma Dhwani Community radio which has been broadcasting for over a decade in the state of Karnataka to the Social Marketing techniques, in promoting social ideas to bring out a change in the attitudes and behaviour. The specific objectives of the paper are to explore how Namma Dhwani draws from the theory of Social Marketing, in its implementation of commercial marketing techniques and to understand the role of Community Radio in empowering the community and bringing about a change in behaviour. A case study method approach has been adopted and the paper is conceptual and descriptive in nature.*

**Key words:** *Community Radio, Social Marketing, Namma Dhwani, India, 6Ps*

## I. INTRODUCTION

One of the primary questions that over the years make marketers ponder, is that do they only exist for creating wants and fulfilling material needs. Well the possible answer and a partial relief is that, marketing can also be applied for social causes. Way back in 1971, the term Social Marketing (SM) first surfaced through the seminal work of Kotler and Zaltman, however like any definition many scholars contest and better it over the time so does Alan Andreasen in the year 1994.

Community Radio (CR) long existed since 1940's in the US and Latin American countries, it is only in the Year 2006, the first Community Radio station (CRS) was set up in India. As on today, the official figures state that there are over 251 CRSs that are operational in the country. CR has evolved as an alternative to the mainstream media which failed to focus and give due attention to issues and concerns of rural people in general and marginalised sections of the society, in particular. The present paper is limited to studying one such CR radio which is operating since a decade and is serving the needs of an identified geographic region, namely *Namma Dhwani*.

**Revised Manuscript Received on September 05, 2019.**

**Sunil Belladi**, Assistant Professor, Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication, Pune, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Maharashtra, India. (Email: sunil.belladi@scmc.edu.in)

**Shyamsunder Chitta**, Associate Professor, Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Hyderabad, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Maharashtra, India. (Email: shyam.chitta@sibmhyd.edu.in)

**Hariprasad Soni**, Assistant Professor, Symbiosis Institute of Business Management, Hyderabad, Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Maharashtra, India. (Email: hr.soni@sibmhyd.edu.in)

**Objective of the paper:** The paper sets out to locate Community Radio in Indian context, and maps their practice to the conceptual definition and framework of SM, in promoting social ideas to bring out a change in the attitudes and behaviour.

**Methodology:** In order to achieve the objective, a definitive conceptual framework which is informed by various definitions of SM as proposed by Philip Kotler, Alan Andreasen and other academicians has been chosen. Since the paper is to explore how CR draws from the theory of SM, the chosen CRS, *Namma Dhwani* in its practices is mapped to the theory of SM. A case study method approach has been adopted and the paper is conceptual and descriptive in nature. A survey has been conducted to find out the perceptions of the users of Namma Dhwani with a total of 120 respondents. The results are presented in the form of tables.

## II. SOCIAL MARKETING

According to Kotler and Zaltman (1971) SM is a strategy which aims at consumer acceptance of ideas that are socially relevant and is a purposive effort taking into consideration of the various traditional marketing techniques and which is backed by research. Andersen goes on to build on the Kotler's definition and tries to comprehend it. He states that, SM encompasses not just to generate change in behaviours of the target audience but as well enhance the welfare of the people and society. This, Anderson reminds, can be achieved by analytical planning of the proposed programme, its systematic implementation and objective evaluation, using the existing commercial techniques informed by Marketing principles. John Quelch & Katherine Jocz (2007) observe that, there is a lot, a consumer can learn and be informed from the citizen within and *vis-avis* the citizen in a person can learn from the consumer in them.

One of the descriptions suggested by General Hasting & Christine Domegan (2018) of SM states that, it should not be delimited and aimed at change in individual behaviour but should rather go on to about social change. To put in simple terms SM is all about behavioral change working at two levels, one at individual level and societal level, getting people to change their individual behavior so that it benefits society at large.

### A. 4Ps & Beyond

In order to achieve this objective, a holistic approach is needed for success of any SM campaign. And as suggested, to begin with one should rely on the 4Ps of Marketing and to add to that should include 4 more Ps. Namely to begin with is that of, Publics which represent the people to whom this product is directed towards, the second P representing the partnership, which is much required that would include, stake holders in social change like media who would through their coverage would create much needed awareness. The third P being the Policy, which involves advocacy to make necessary amendments through the legislation to help in bring the desired change. And much required 4<sup>th</sup> P that of Purse Strings, the Planners should identify donors and other partners for the need of funds to execute the social change marketing strategy.

It is known fact that all marketing is directed towards what the business calls the bottom line, profit making. However, in this process, marketing creates inequalities amongst various sections of the society what Hirschman & Elizabeth (1991) refer to as 'dark side of market place'. This observation seems to be true in the two decades of testing the LPG (liberalisation Privatisation and Globalisation of market place and policies in India. The benefits promised by pundits of LPG, and aspirations by people could not be realized, rather the possible threat of globalization are coming to be true. The 80/20 Pareto principle also known as 80-20 rule, first applied in Italy, will be a miscalculation when the principle is extrapolated to the globe and as well India. Recent reports and statistics are pointing to the increase in the economic divide. Less than 2 percent of the population control 98 percent of wealth.

In this scenario, the CRSs can be one of the communication tools for social change and development for the local community particularly the rural areas. Most of the population living in rural India are either Below Poverty Line(BPL) or on the margins of BPL. 33 % of Indian population dwell below the Poverty Line.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review concerning the concept of SM is available in abundance, the reason being the varied implicit and explicit definitions created by academicians, researchers and practitioners. Therefore, a need was felt to narrow down and focus on few selective thoughts. Since CR is mapped to SM, it also finds mention in this section.

Stating that it is difficult to arrive at an agreeable and concrete definition for, alternative media, Mitzi Waltz (2005) goes on to describe alternative media as one, which in the presence of other mass media channels, attempts to give a different point of view, other than the one, provided by the mainstream media. Alternative media, sets on to serve the 'not so well served' communities, with intent to bring about change in the society, Waltz, opines.

Maitrayee Chaudhuri (2010) in the article titled, "Indian media and its transformed public" puts up an argument that the present day media, in India are plying an important role in advancing the neo-liberal capitalism and prescribing the ideology to the public at large, through their coverage. The Author goes on to state that the media have categorically

attempted to redefined the concept of public. This situation is fastened by a decisive role played by media in the country, she asserts.

Kotler Philip & Roberto (1989) in their seminal work that was brought out as a book titled, 'Social Marketing: Strategies for changing public behavior', reiterates the fact that for business to be relevant they need to also engage in SM and the success of any Not for Profit Organization would be dependent on finding solutions for social problems. The book looks at various campaigns that require immediate attention, like AIDS, environmental concerns, substance abuse. The authors go on to state that one of the important objectives and as well challenges of SM is to bring about improvement in the lives of people leading to social change.

Smith, W. A. (2000) argues that one of the primary goals of SM is to aptly find solutions to social impediments and not to further the economic growth of the Marketer, In order to bring clear distinctions between the way commercial marketing and Social Marketing operate, the author brings forth four characteristics that define the functioning of SM. The philosophy of exchange, continual market research, Marketing Mix, and a Positioning strategy are key functions in any successful SM, the author asserts. Same as in the case of Commercial Marketing, the Social Marketing has two clients for it. Though for a commercial unit it is always the consumer and emphasis is on making profits, however for the SM the clients are the donor agencies and its goal is to find solutions to problems faced by the society at large, the author adds.

Brenkert (2002) puts forth his argument that though both commercial marketing and SM encounters more or less the same moral issues, social marketers on the other hand needs to deal with greater moral judgements. The author calls for SM to be transparent in nature. The beneficiaries of any social marketing initiatives are people and social marketing should take them into cognizance and the end results of the initiatives should be clearly spelt out and there should be no room for misrepresentation of the ends met by the SM initiative.

In their article, Social Marketing in Public Health, Sonya Grier & Carol Bryant (2005) calling SM as a continuous process, the authors go on identify about six various stages for its successful implementation. Planning of the SM to begin with, and informed by research and evolving a strategy followed by devolving the programme. All the interventions through the SM need to be pretested and latter implemented. The SM programme should be constantly monitored and evaluated, the authors suggest. Similar to the availability of database to check the success of any commercial marketing initiative, there is an immediate need for the creating a database to monitor behavior change, the authors argue.

Jeff French (2011) in his article, Why nudging is not enough, states that the SM is a highly contested and much debated term and is continuously evolving field. He lays down four forms of exchange namely nudging, shoving



hugging and smacking. The author further goes one to list five interventions that can be put into use for any Social Marketing initiative to bring about a desired social. Control, inform, design educate and support along with the exchange forms are devised as matrix. Social Marketing taken up by the government agencies can map their programmes as per requirement and gauge at which level they need to pay more attention to.

#### IV. NAMMA DHWANI

It is a CRS is located at Budhikote Village in Kolar District, Karnataka where the community members speak a mix of Telugu and Kannada Languages, as the place borders with the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. *Namma Dhwani* in literal translation into English language means 'our voices' is a CRS and is integrated along with thrift groups and goes by the name Community Managed Resource Centre. This entity was sponsored by MYRADA and is backed by UNESCO. All this started in the year 2001 by airing radio programmes using cables which is known as narrowcasting to around 20 villages in regions. Today *Namma Dhwani* broadcasts for six hours in a day and airs programmes related to health, importance of sanitation, sending girls to the schools, dowry elimination, preventive care of children, leadership and other community related programmes.

##### A. Mapping CR Practices to SM

An effort would be made in this section to map the various marketing techniques informed by the of SM to the chosen CR, *Namma Dhwani* and its implementation.

- **Product:** Here the product is a service and is a radio broadcast from the CRS *Namma Dhwani*. According to Principle of marketing mix, a product should be introduced in order to meet the needs of the consumers. Similarly, in the Case of *Namma Dhwani*, the CRS serves the members of the region who have been deprived of much needed information and knowledge to better their lives. That too in their own dialect and in cultural environment.

- **Place:** One of the important components of Marketing is where the product is sold and how it is delivered. When it comes to *Namma Dhwani*, the Radio station is equipped with I Kilo wat transmitter and can be heard over a radius of 8 Km. The twenty odd villages in and around the rural hinterland of Budhikote in Kolar District can receive the radio broadcast by tuning on to the radio sets or mobile devices. The radio is also played in the schools and weekly *mandi* (market) using loud speakers.

- **Promotion:** How awareness need be created amongst the consumers is of prime importance to the marketers. The greater the awareness the more likely the product is known to the consumers. In the case of *Namma Dhwani* a feed forward study was conduct in over 10 villages to know about the kind of programmes they would like to listen to even before they began broadcasting. The preference of broadcast time and type of radio formats was elicited from the members of the community. The villages knew about the CRS even before it was set-up. For the outside world *Namma Dhwani* is known through Academic Discourses and various news sources. Word of mouth by

community member about *Namma Dhwani* overrides all other promotional channels.

- **Price:** Since the SM strategy is to bring about a positive change in the behavior of individual leading to change in society, price has different meaning than to that as used in traditional marketing principle. The costs are traded with the benefits arising from behaviour change. The price the community pays for *Namma Dhwani* is that they sacrifice their time in helping the CR in planning and programming, and this time could be used for livelihood earning. However, the benefits arising from the costs is, they can have control of the type of radio programs and can design the content and their by display and enhance their creativity.

- **Publics:** In SM, publics represent the people to whom the product is targeted at. And for *Namma Dhwani* CRS the publics are a well identified community member who make a living through agriculture and allied activities and some who run businesses. The literacy is not on the higher side and *Namma Dhwani* caters to all ages and all sections of the community by providing radio programs that represents and that is relevant to the community on the whole.

- **Partnerships:** The various stakeholders for whom the SM technique is applied is crucial for the success of the product. Since *Namma Dhwani* is a CRS which means it is a kind of radio for the community, by the community and of the community, there exists a great partnership. Members of the community are involved in identifying the issue to be covered by the CRS, the station is run by the volunteers of the community and through regular field studies and feedback the community expresses their views and suggestions. Along with this, local village panchayats, schools, hospitals also actively take part in *Namma Dhwani*. On major events and achievement, the media both electronic and print give time and space to *Namma Dhwani*. The CRS also received the Yeomans Award in the year 2005 as an appreciation for generating local content.

- **Policy:** Any SM programmes should lead to change and influence public policy. Though *Namma Dhwani* was operating since 2001, through narrowcasting as it was not granted license for broadcasting by the Government of India, advocacy groups and Civil societies took a que from 1992 judgment by the Supreme Court that said airways belong to public. And in the year 2006 the Government have a green signal to go ahead with CR broadcasting.

- **Purse Strings:** In order to execute and sustain the SM strategy, the marketers should identify donors for funds. *Namma Dhwani* to begin got financial assistance from its Parent NGO MYRADA and UNESCO. The Equipment was purchased under subsidized rates and the community members made a one-time payment at the beginning of setting the radio station. *Namma Dhwani* continues to operate and meet its financial requirement through airing sponsored programs and selling air-time. *Namma Dhwani* also received financial support form the from Swiss development aid.



V. DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS

**Table-1: How Often Do You Listen to the Radio**

Frequency	Every day	51.0%
	Every other day	11.0%
	3 times a week	13.0%
	2 times a week	1.0%
	Once a week	17.0%
	Never	7.0%
Total		100.0%

**Table-2: Chi-Square Test Results**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	72.990	5	p=0.000

The  $\chi^2$  value emerged as 72.990. This confirms that there is a significant difference among the listeners on this issue (p=0.000).

*On an average, how long do the respondents listen to the radio in a day*

The relevant data on this issue was subjected to  $\chi^2$  analysis.

**Table-3: Chi-Square Test Results**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.798	3	p=0.122

The relatively lesser figures suggest the low attention span of the listeners. Those looking after the programme content need to ensure that the listeners are kept interested and find the broadcasts of practical utility to them.

*When do you Listen to Radio*

The data is subjected to  $\chi^2$  analysis and the results are given below.

**Table-4: Timing for Listening to the Radio**

Timing	Morning	41.0%
	Afternoon	32.0%
	Evening	17.0%
	Night	10.0%
		100.0%

**Table-5: Chi-Square Test Results**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.610	3	p=.035

The  $\chi^2$  value is 8.610. It is evident that there is significant difference among the listeners on this issue (p=0.035). It was not surprising that the night slot was not very popular with the respondents from CRS. The possible reason could be that most of them would have been too tired after a hard day's toil.

*Where do you Listen to Radio*

Due to the almost total domination by the transistor radio, one need not be confined to one place to listen to a radio programme. The discussion below will give an idea about the places most popular with the respondents of the CRS. The data was subjected to  $\chi^2$  analysis. The results are given below.

**Table-6: Chi-Square Test Results**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.522	2	p=0.000

The  $\chi^2$  value was found to be 30.522. This indicates that there was a significant difference among the listeners on this issue (p=0.000).

Despite the portable nature of the transistor radio, the largest proportion of respondents stated that they listened to the radio from their homes. The option of 'while travelling' was found to be reasonably noticeable. The lowest priority accorded to the workplace is quite understandable since majority of the respondents were engaged in agriculture-related occupations which do not allow much of leisure needed for listening to the radio.

*Preferred types of Programmes*

The community radio has a different agenda from that of the conventional one. Here, the focus is on combining information with entertainment. Also, the target audience is almost totally restricted to the local community. The Table below gives an idea of the preferences of the respondents in the study area. The data was subjected to  $\chi^2$  analysis.

**Table-7: Preferred types of Programmes**

Types of programmes	Agriculture Related	21.0%
	Health related	43.0%
	Local information	3%
	Education Related	33.0%
	General Entertainment	0.0%
Total		100.0%

**Table-8: Chi-Square Test Results**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	59.408	4	p= 0.000

The  $\chi^2$  value came to 59.408. This brings out the significant difference among the respondents on this issue (p=0.000).

The conclusion that could be drawn is that residents of the study area were more inclined towards subjects which were perceived to be of practical utility.

*Whether these Radio Programmes are of any help and use*

The data was subjected to  $\chi^2$  analysis. The results are given in Table below.

**Table-9: Whether these Radio Programmes are of any Help and use**

Response	Very helpful	19.0%
	Helpful	38.0%
	Of little help	30.0%
	Not at all helpful	13.0%
Total		100.0%

**Table-10: Chi-Square Test Results**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.879	3	p=0.020

The  $\chi^2$  value was found to be 9.879. This leads us to the conclusion there was a significant difference among the listeners on this issue ( $p=0.020$ ).

A very encouraging finding was that the lowest proportion of respondents at the CRs found to programmes 'not at all helpful'. However, the perceived degree of usefulness was not to the same extent.

## VI. CONCLUSION

As the paper set out to apply the commercial techniques of SM to the implementation of CR with special reference to *Namma Dhwani*, all the 6Ps used in success of SM have been mapped to *Namma Dhwani*. Marketing principles through the SM can contribute to bringing about change in behavior and enable social change. *Namma Dhwani* through its various radio broadcasts covers important issues like health, organic farming, water harvesting, HIV/AIDS, drip irrigation, information about goods being sold, crop prices, social messages and birthday greetings etc. that have immediate relevance to the community. Though *Namma Dhwani* started with 30 minutes of broadcasting over the years it has increased to six hours in a day, this indicates the patronage by the members of the community. The radio is financially sustainable and is driven through volunteering by the members, no one person owns *Namma Dhwani*, expect the community members where it broadcasts.

*Namma Dhwani* radio acts as a voice for the community, the stories of the villagers, their experiences, their problems and possible solutions, the expression of culture and traditions are aired by the CRSs their by increasing their emancipation leading to a significant change in the socio economic and cultural development of the people of that region. And as envisaged by any SM strategies and techniques to work for the betterment of society.

## REFERENCES

1. About Namma Dhwani can be accessed at <http://www.communityvoices.in/directory/community-media-profile/1327/>
2. Andreasen. A. R., SM in the 21st Century. Thousand Oakes, Sage Publication, CA, 2006.
3. Andreasen. A. R., "SM Its Definition and Domain", *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 1994, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, Vol. 13, pp. 108-114
4. Brenkert, G. G. "Ethical challenges of social marketing." *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 2002, 21<sup>st</sup> Edition, Vol. 1, pp. 14-25

5. Chaudhuri, M. "Indian media and its transformed public. Contributions to Indian Sociology", 2010, 44<sup>th</sup> Edition, Vol. 1&2, pp. 57-78.
6. General. H. and Christine. D., SM Rebels with a Cause, Routledge, NY, 2018.
7. Grier, S. and Bryant, S. "Social marketing in public health", *Annual Review of Public Health*, 2005, Vol. 26, pp. 319-39.
8. Hirschman, Elizabeth, "Secular Morality and the Dark Side of Consumer Behavior: Or How Semiotics Saved My Life," *Advances in Consumer Research*, 1991, Vol. 18, pp. 1-4.
9. Jeff French. "Why nudging is not enough", *Journal of Social Marketing*, 2011, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 2<sup>nd</sup> Volume, pp. 155-162.
10. Kotler Philip & Roberto. *Social Marketing: Strategies for Changing Public Behaviour*, New work, Free Press, 1990, 401 pages.
11. Kotler. P. and Zaltman. G., "SM: an approach to planned social change", *Journal of Marketing*, 1971, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Vol 35, pp. 3-12
12. Namma Dhwani wins Yeoman Award, the article can be accessed from the UNESCO website at [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/news-and-in-focus-articles/all-news/news/unesco\\_supported\\_project\\_wins\\_yeoman\\_ward\\_for\\_local\\_content/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/resources/news-and-in-focus-articles/all-news/news/unesco_supported_project_wins_yeoman_ward_for_local_content/)
13. Pavarala V. & Malik. K. "Other Voices. The Struggle for Community Radio in India", ND Sage Publications, 2007.
14. Quelch. A & Jocz. K. "Greater Good: How Marketing Makes for Better Democracy", 2007, Boston, MA: Harvard Business Scholl Press, pp. 331.
15. Smith, W. A. "Social marketing: an evolving definition". *American Journal of Health Behavior*. 2000. 24<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1<sup>st</sup> Volume, pp. 11-17
16. Waltz, M. "Alternative and Activist Media" 2005, UK: Edinburgh University Press.

## AUTHORS PROFILE



Sunil Belladi is presently working as Assistant Professor at Symbiosis Centre for Media and Communication Pune. His areas of research interest is in Development Communication and Political Economy of Media. He is an M.Phil and Ph.D from Department of Mass Communication in Journalism from Osmania University.



Shyamsunder Chitta is Ph.D in Finance with an MBA from Kakatiya University. He is presently working as Associate Professor at SIBM Hyderabad. His areas of interest are MSMEs, Banking, Microfinance, Portfolio Management.



Hariprasad Soni is a Gold Medalist in both B. Com and M.Com university examinations. He is a cost accountant and a rank holder in HSC examination. He is currently working as Assistant Professor at SIBM Hyderabad. His research interest include Fixed Income Markets, Derivatives, Corporate Finance.

