

DHIMSA RADIO – TRANSMITTING SOCIAL CHANGE IN KORAPUT

In a nutshell: Dhimsa, a community radio station, has become a tool for social change in disseminating information on government schemes.

Nodal agency: District administration Koraput, implemented by South Odisha Voluntary Action (SOVA) with UNICEF support, Odisha

Community Radio, Dhimsa is bridging gaps in information dissemination to the rural masses by creating a platform where local language and local youths play an important role to take the government messages to the community repeatedly in time. The platform is people-centered and people-responsive.

Highlights:

- It reaches out to areas in a 12 km radius, covering a population of 1,25,000 people spread across 63 villages of six gram panchayats.
- It broadcasts for nine hours in a day, including one hour of live show where information on government schemes, people's rights and issues are highlighted by reporters.

The community radio is set up by the district administration and is being implemented by SOVA with support from UNICEF at Chhapar village of Koraput. The community radio broadcasts for nine hours a day and has been disseminating information on government schemes, highlighting various issues and news through narrowcasting in Desia language and other local dialects. There are listeners clubs in each village of the district. The community radio station has 12 reporters who travel extensively to all the rural areas in the district and interview villagers.

Community radio features:

- The community radio highlights many issues, from food sovereignty, organic farming to women's health and empowerment and problems faced by children.
- The radio also provides a platform to the rural residents to air their grievances and local artistes to showcase their talent.

The community radio covers specific programmes at specific hours. While mornings are meant for programs like 'Gitkudi' (musical show by tribal artistes, 'Sust Gagod' (good health), 'Chasi Bhaitanay Poday (agriculture updates and techniques), the evenings are meant for special shows like 'Kenta Koley Kenta Hoisi' which focuses on how to avail government benefits and 'Emti Amor Gaon' where villagers are given training on skills like making leaf plates, paddy preservation and bamboo products among other things.

Impact

During the pandemic time when the schools were closed, the community radio focused on bridging the education gap in tribal villages. They had roped in teachers who taught children different subjects, class-wise in a program called Pathsala. Besides, Anganwadi workers and ANMs have a phone-in program 'Katakoru' where they speak to women about various health and livelihood issues.

Also, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Dhimsa was one of the key channels for disseminating information across district. With State government's awareness campaigns on dos and don'ts during COVID-19 mostly being in Odia language, the radio played an important role in producing and broadcasting information related to the disease and its preventive measures in local dialects.

Scale- up

Community radio 'Dhimsa' looks to upgrade its existing system for better outreach and quality service for the people of unreached areas in the tribal districts of Odisha.

- The community Radio station will reach out to an additional 5000 listeners within the next two years and plans to conduct special talk sessions with different government department officials on government provisions and entitlements.
- Initiatives to bring more local youth to the radio network will be the prime focus of Radio Dhimsa in the coming two years.
- To improve learning level of children that has been reduced during the pandemic, the community radio will develop digitized content specific audio lessons based on the school curriculum for primary class children



Community radio used to broadcast information on health and nutrition issues in Koraput district