

## **MEDIA ARTICLE**

**Project : Shubh Kal**

**Supported by CDKN**

**New Delhi August 13, 2012**

### **Alternative media takes the lead to bridge the communication gap between farmers and decision makers in Central India**

---

Farmers in central India are struggling with extreme climatic changes. The situation is so adverse that almost everyday we get to hear number of cases of farmers' suicide, selling of assets like cattle and land, selling of women and daughters and mass migration. To control the situation and help the vulnerable farmers' government has set up many scientific committees to study and find solutions; it has also introducing farmers' friendly schemes and packages. But the fact remains the situation is not improving but becoming worse. One of the major reason for so is lack of communication. There is no concrete system of reaching to the remotest of the farmers. Even established bodies like KVKs (Krishi Vigyan Kendra) which is spread across the country has not been able to reach out to the bottommost of the pyramid. As we all know India is vast and reaching to every nook and corner by one body is next to impossible. Therefore it is imperative that alternative bodies come upfront to share the responsibility. In sharing the responsibility of reaching out to the farmer at the remotest corner community radios of Bundelkhand has set up a successful example. The four community radio stations of Bundelkhand - Lalit Lokvani, Chanderi Ki Awaz, Radio Bundelkhand and Radio Dharkan has come forward to take up the responsibility of communicating the scientific information and government schemes to the farmers at the right time, not when the time is over.

These radio stations are training their identified reporters to collect relevant scientific information like whether forecast, crop sowing advice, etc. from local scientific bodies including KVKs, Govt. of India's agriculture and water department, etc . This information then will be communicated to the farmers by the community radio reporters through their community radios. These reporters will also communicate the available schemes and packages that are made to help the vulnerable farmers. The uniqueness of the system is not that they will communicate the information but the way they are doing it. The community radios of Bundelkhand will convert the scientific and development information into simple messages and programs. These programs will be made in the local languages and with local examples. The reporters being from the community itself has full knowledge of the need of the communities therefore they will communicate exactly the way the local farmers want to know and the way it will be beneficial for them. The continuous dialogue that the reporters will engage with the local farmers, community and local agencies will help is opening the gate for two way communications between all the three stakeholders – farmers, scientific community and decision makers.

There are many examples across the world where community radios have played the lead role for bringing about mass scale change at the grassroot level. If we look at South African examples there are many issue which found solutions and community acceptance after intervention from their community radios. The issue varies from health, aids awareness to policy change. Since World War II community radios across the world has been playing critical role is bringing about change. It is high time that even in India we acknowledge the power of alternative mediums of communications and encourage them to take the lead. Who knows may be tomorrow these handful community radios of Bundelkhand sets an example that the whole country follows and a new era of communication dawns. Lets hope for the best!

**A PRODUCTION OF DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES GROUP**

**WRITER : SOMA BISWAS**