



MITS RADIO 90.8 MHz

COMMUNITY RADIO STATION

MADANAPALLE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE
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Report on

“Voices of Experience: The Role of Radio and Community Radio in Social Development”

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MITS Community Radio 90.8 continues to serve as a dynamic platform for knowledge sharing, cultural enrichment, and community empowerment. As part of its educational and outreach initiatives, an insightful interview was conducted with **Dr. R. A. Padmanabharao**, Former Additional Director General of **All India Radio (AIR)**, a veteran media professional with over three decades of experience in broadcasting.

The program aimed to expose students and listeners to the evolution of radio, the significance of community radio, professional experiences from public broadcasting, and guidance for aspiring Radio Jockeys and media professionals. The interaction was conducted by **RJ Tara and RJ Rubee**, under the guidance of the MITS Community Radio team.

Profile of the Resource Person – Dr. R. A. Padmanabharao

Dr. R. A. Padmanabharao is a highly respected broadcasting professional whose career with All India Radio spans more than **30 years**. His contribution to radio journalism, administration, and public service broadcasting has influenced generations of broadcasters.

- Former **Additional Director General, All India Radio**
- Extensive experience across all categories of radio broadcasting
- Conducted interviews with eminent national leaders
- Actively involved in shaping radio as a medium for education, information, and entertainment

His presence added immense academic and professional value to the program.

Overview of the Interview Discussion

Understanding Radio as a Medium

Responding to the question “*What is Radio?*”, Dr. Padmanabharao described radio as a hearing instrument of the masses, emphasizing its historical role in reaching people even before the digital era. He highlighted that Akashvani (All India Radio) dominated the broadcasting landscape up to the 1980s and served as the most trusted source for education and entertainment across India.

Radio, according to him, has always been a powerful medium because of its simplicity, accessibility, and emotional connect with listeners.

Passion for Choosing Radio as a Career

When asked why he selected radio as a profession, Dr. Padmanabharao stated that **radio was his passion**. This passion enabled him to work continuously across diverse formats of radio broadcasting for over three decades. His journey reflected commitment, patience, and love for journalism and public communication.

Radio vs. Community Radio

Dr. Padmanabharao clearly explained the distinction between mainstream radio and community radio.

- The first community radio originated in Bolivia
- In India, the first community radio station was established in 2003
- In Andhra Pradesh, the first community radio started at SV Oriental College
- Sangam Radio became a notable community radio initiative in the state
- By 2008, community radios were largely promoted through NGOs

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, community radios gained popularity due to their grassroots reach
- At present, nearly 500 community radio stations operate across India

He emphasized that community radio differs from commercial radio by focusing on local needs, participation, and social development.

Memorable Experiences from Radio Career

Sharing his best professional experiences, Dr. Padmanabharao recalled interviewing distinguished personalities:

- **Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam**, Former President of India
- **Ms. Uma Bharati**, Former Union Minister (interviewed during his tenure as Director)

These experiences highlighted the credibility and reach of radio as a medium capable of connecting leaders with the public.

Challenges and Difficult Experiences

Speaking candidly, Dr. Padmanabharao also shared a difficult experience from his career. While working as a commentator in **Bhadrachalam**, he faced disrespectful treatment from certain endowment officers. He emphasized that such challenges are part of professional life and must be faced with dignity and resilience. This honest sharing helped students understand the realities of media professions.

Advice to Young Radio Jockeys and Aspirants

Dr. Padmanabharao offered valuable guidance for young generations aspiring to enter radio and journalism:

- Work with **dedication and hard work**
- Develop strong foundations in **journalism**
- Be patient and prepared to **wait for success**
- Stay updated with **current events**
- Treat radio as a service-oriented profession

His advice emphasized discipline, perseverance, and continuous learning.

Functions of Community Radio

Dr. Padmanabharao highlighted the key functions of community radio:

1. Addressing rural people's needs
2. Creating awareness on local issues
3. Acting as a voice for marginalized communities

Community radio, according to him, acts as a bridge between policy, information, and grassroots communities.

Strategies to Improve Community Radio at MITS

When asked about improving community radio, especially at MITS Community Radio 90.8, he suggested:

- Designing programs focused on people's welfare
- Giving priority to current affairs and local issues
- Conducting more phone-in programs to encourage community participation

These strategies aim to make the radio more interactive and socially relevant.

Skills Required for Radio Professionals

Dr. Padmanabharao emphasized essential skills for aspiring radio professionals:

- Effective communication skills
- Well-trained vocal skills
- Clarity of speech and language
- Listening and interviewing skills

These competencies are crucial for sustaining credibility and audience engagement.

Conclusion

The interview with **Dr. R. A. Padmanabharao** was an enriching and inspiring experience for students, faculty, and listeners of MITS Community Radio 90.8. The program provided historical insights, professional wisdom, and practical guidance on radio broadcasting and community media. The session concluded with **RJ Tara and RJ Rubeer** expressing heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Padmanabharao for sharing his invaluable experiences. The presence of **Sri. M. Narasimhacharlu**, Program Manager, added institutional significance to the event. Overall, the program reinforced the role of community radio as a powerful medium for education, participation, and social development.

Outcomes of the Program

- **Enhanced Media Awareness:** Students and listeners gained a clear understanding of the evolution of radio, the distinction between commercial and community radio, and its role in education, journalism, and social development.
- **Skill and Career Orientation:** Aspiring Radio Jockeys and media students were guided on essential skills such as communication, vocal training, patience, and awareness of current affairs, helping them align career aspirations with industry expectations.

- **Community-Centric Perspective:** The program strengthened awareness about community radio as a platform for addressing rural needs, people's welfare, and participatory communication, reinforcing social responsibility among students.

Alignment with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The program aligns with the following Sustainable Development Goals:

- **SDG 4 – Quality Education:** The interaction promoted media education, journalism ethics, communication skills, and lifelong learning through expert knowledge sharing.
- **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities:** Emphasis on community radio's focus on rural and marginalized communities supports inclusive communication and social equity.
- **SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions:** By encouraging responsible journalism, informed citizens, and transparent communication, the program contributes to strong and accountable institutions.
- **SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals:** Collaboration between industry experts, academic institutions, and community radio strengthens partnerships for sustainable development.