

Community Radio

January 13, 2021

In News

- Another community radio has come up, Radio Manjeera 90.8 FM is a Sangareddy-based Community Radio Station under an NGO called Sister Nivedita Society.

Ministry: The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB) is the nodal agency for dealing with the community radio licensing process.

What is a Community Radio Station ?

- Community Radio Stations (CRS) are small (low power) FM radio stations with a coverage area of around 10-15 kilometer radius, depending on the geography of the area.
- CRS play a significant role in dissemination of agriculture-related information, Government schemes for people's welfare and weather forecast etc.
- They are expected to produce at least 50 per cent of their programmes locally in the local languages or dialects.
- The functional CRS are broadcasting in various languages including local dialects giving marginalised communities a platform to make their voice heard and an opportunity to express their views.

Eligibility For Community Radio Station

- Any non-profit organisation or a community-based organisation functional for three or more years is eligible to apply for a Community Radio Station.
- Educational institutes, krishi vigyan kendras, civil society, voluntary organisations, registered societies, autonomous bodies and public trusts registered under

Societies Registration Act or any such relevant act are eligible for having a community radio.

- **They need to have** a transmitter, feeder cable and antenna, instruments for recording and playback and other studio needs, studio mixer and monitor. This can cost somewhere between Rs 6 Lakh to Rs 27 Lakh or more

Need For Community Radio Station

- Even as All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan were serving rural areas, there were still **several remote quarters** where there was no medium for the Government to reach out to people through dialogue.
- **To ensure that the Government schemes are reaching the masses**, awareness is important and in that case the role of Community Radio stations becomes crucial.
- **Use of the local dialect** makes it even more popular among the community.

Community Radio Station During COVID-19

- From creating awareness about Coronavirus infection to precautions to be taken, community radios have been of immense help.
- They also disseminate information about availability of masks, sanitisers or other important items in the local market.
- The medium also helped in busting several myths regarding the pandemic. In a nutshell, community radio helped the Government in reaching out to even more people during pandemic.

Challenges to the Community Radio

- Lack of journalistic and technical skills and thus a consistent demand for training.
- Community Radio derives its strength and popularity from community participation. In practise participation is harder than it seems, because it is labour intensive,

requires the right attitude, skills and mobile equipment.

- Without proper management skills, as well as some knowledge of financial management and income generation, it is very hard for Community Radio to survive without donor funding.
- Community Radio is by definition relatively small and often situated in locations where basic services, like a constant supply of electricity, are lacking. Due to these conditions equipment suffers and needs to be vigorously maintained and/or regularly replaced.
- Absence of a clear regulatory framework in which Community Radio operates.