



## **Democratic and Participatory Potentially of Community Video in India**

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### **ABSTRACT :**

Community media may be termed as any form of media that is created, managed and controlled by a community or a social group, either its' existence in a geographic terrain or its' identity or interest. The nature of community media is different from commercial media or state run media. As media created by a community, there is an implied component of community engagement in the management, production, circulation etc. The community media may be based on different forms of media, such as print, electronic or new media. Community newspapers, community magazines come under community print media. It is perhaps oldest form of community media after traditional folk media. The practice of publishing community newspapers and magazine constitutes one of the most common trends of community engagement in communication for Indian societal architecture.

But for community media based on electronic communication, needs special assistance from the policy makers, experts and support agencies. Though community radio is in a vibrant position in the country, but the initiatives on community video or film production are almost in budding stage and are in negligible strata. In India, where 350 million of the country's 1.2 billion people are illiterate, and 250 million live below the poverty line, community film or video has a delicate role to be played. A small number of community volunteers have been working with a few non-profit organisations in India using video to empower communities to take action around critical issues relevant to their development. Hundreds of rural people have been trained to produce videos for themselves. The International organisations like USAID, UNICEF have been providing assistance to the non-profit organisations such as Video Volunteers, SEWA, Dristi etc to empower rural community by producing videos to create a social platform for themselves.

Keywords: Community Video, Participatory Video, Community Media, India

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Considering the importance of strengthening cultural identity, the UNESCO Mac Bride Report (1980) says,

*"Promoting conditions for the preservation of the cultural identity of every society is necessary to enable it to enjoy a harmonious and creative inter-relationship with other cultures. It is equally necessary to modify situations in many developed and developing countries which suffer from cultural dominance" (p. 259).*

We cannot deny that culture is one of the most influential identity of a community/ society/ a state/ a country. But to preserve, explore, project the own identity of the small communities are still difficult with the present scenario of media in India after more than three decades of the recommendation of MacBride report. After the historic judgment of the Supreme Court of India on democratization of airwaves in 1995, the importance of community media has been increasing tremendously. In a democratic political architecture, media is popularly 'known' as the fourth estate or pillar of democracy. Like other pillars of the democracy, media is also related to the people, but not close to the people. The media is now on the people, but not by the people, not for the people and not of the people. Here, the term people refer to the common masses, not the elite class. The mainstream media is now for a special class of the society. The media houses are supported by this special class of people and in return media support them. Silvia Balit (2003) says while writing the Foreword of Shirley A. White's edited book 'Participatory Video', 'Pluralism and media liberalization have encouraged the decentralization of information production, shifting control away from central governments. Horizontal 'people to people' processes are replacing the 'authority driven' top-down communication tradition'.

The need of alternative media comes here. Community media as a form of alternative media is the mirror of a particular community. It is basically a platform for the marginalized, deprived section of the society to provide and share the information, knowledge, education, entertainment and resolve their conflicts. Apart from the community based print media, community radio is an established stream of media in almost in all developing nations. In India, community radio is an Accepted form of broadcasting media with about 170 operational community radio stations as on March 2014, though the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of the Union Government of India has the target to establish 4000 community radio stations in the country by 2020.

Community video, which is also known as participatory video, is an advanced mode of Community communication with added advantage of audio- visual impact. Dristi, Video SEWA, Video Volunteers, Digital Green, Deccan Development Society, Hope are a few organisations who have been involved in the mission. Although it is the age of internet and the concept of community new media has already been emerged in different Indian states like Rajasthan, Gujrat etc. with the projects e-Chouk, Farming Marketing Helping Desk and so on.

The purpose of this study was to examine the growth and development of community video in India and its' impact in democratizing the community's voice to point out existing challenges and opportunities. This paper explores a few initiatives of community video production in India and tries to identify the approaches of these initiatives.

Finally, it is a sincere endeavour of the researchers to provide a suitable model of community video production and delivery considering the socio-economic condition of the country towards sustainability of the sector.

This research work may pave a new dimension in democratic participatory communication in India using the medium of community video and it is thought to be very helpful in the democratizing media which our country needs a lot.

## 2. UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY VIDEO

Community media can be described as the tools of horizontal communication to gather, share information. It is a podium to converse the issues of a particular community for overall development. Berrigan (1981) says 'Uses of communications media which include two-way communication have been called 'community communications' or 'community media''. In last few decades, we have been discussing about the definition of the 'community' in community media. Our simple conceptual framework on the term goes with two phases- common and unity (common+unity), whether it may be of geographical, identical, cultural, virtual or homogeneity in speaking language and nature. Though, Indian community radio policy justifies with geographical community, but in case of community video, the scope is there to narrow down from geographical description with an about 10 km radius. The community in community video may be a village or a few or a particular ethnic group or a small dialect based population.

Community video is a development communication tool considering the objectives of the medium and a participatory in nature. Nair and White (1994) define participatory development communication as a two-way, dynamic interaction, between "grass-roots" receivers and the "information" source, mediated by development communicators as renewal facilitators. Bessette (2004) defines participatory development communication as "a planned activity based on the one hand on participatory processes, and on the other hand on media and interpersonal communication, which

facilitates a dialogue among different stakeholders, around a common development problem or goal, with the objective of developing and implementing a set of activities to contribute to its solution, or its realization, and which supports and accompanies this initiative".

Servaes (2008) elaborates participatory communication for development as where the point of departure must be the community. It is at the community level that the problems of living conditions are discussed, and interactions with other communities are elicited. The most developed form of participation is self-management. This principle implies the right to participation in the planning and production of media content. However, not everyone wants to or must be involved in its practical implementation. More important is that participation is made possible in the decision-making regarding the subjects treated in the messages and regarding the selection procedures. Beyond the micro or community/local level, participatory communication in development also applies at the international, national, as well as project management(organizational) and individual level. Its foundation is in Freire's (1970) basic model of the dialogue, originally asserted in the context of educating the underdeveloped sectors of society, now considered an important development communication model (Cadiz, n.d., p. 146-147).

As a participatory tool of communication, Community Video has a great role in social change. The model of Communication for Social Change describes an interactive process where "community dialogue" and "collective action" work together to produce social change in a community that improves the health and welfare of all of its members (Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani, & Lewis, 2002, p. iii). The practitioners of Community Video argue with its impact and hence, creating community dialogue is an essential criterion with a collective action.

Freire's model of participatory development communication gives a few characteristics on how best to proceed with participatory communication in development. Practitioners should mind that five inter related attributes or qualifiers of the dialogue are in place if they are to employ participatory approaches in development. These are- communication between equals, problem-posing, praxis, a cycle of action and reflection, Conscientizing and five values-love, humility, hope, faith in development partners' capability, and critical thinking (Cadiz, n.d., pp. 147-149).

Why Democratic Participatory Communication? Its emphasis is that the prevailing democratic, commercial and professional hegemony in media system should be done away with so as to ensure easy access to the media by allowing potential users and consumers. This theory has greater relevance in the liberal democracies of the developed world. This is not to say, however, that it does not have relevance to some developing nations. The emergence of the theory is motivated by discontentment with the libertarian media theory or free press and the social responsibility theory. Such discontentment arose because of their failure to achieve social benefit anticipated for them. The theory also advocates equality between sender and receiver or what has been called association mode as against the command mode or superiority of the sender to the receiver in a one way communication system. The theory equally observed that given the fact that the mass media has became too important socially, it should not be left in the hands of the professionals. This theory has been described as the press equivalent of grassroots democracy (Democratic Participant Theory, 2013).

### 3.COMMUNITY VIDEO INITIATIVES IN INDIA

The concept of community video or participatory video was mainly evolved with the Fogo Process in Canada.

The National Film Board of Canada started a special programme titled 'Challenges for Change' in the late 1960s with an objective to encourage interactive film and video as a tool for social change and empowerment in remote underdeveloped locations. The Board and the Memorial University of Newfoundland of Canada provided film and video equipment to isolated communities to record and project their collective image of themselves and their social problems. This interactive video production process was started in the island of Fogo. The experiments were carried on in the United States, Africa and Asia later (Crocker, 2003, pp. 122-123).

The community video in India emerged in India with the initiation of the Kheda Project. The approach of peoples' involvement in the programme production in the local level pledged the concept of community or participatory video in the largest democracy of the world.

Frances J. Berrigan (1981) describes that it developed, not as a plan nor as a first phase in a move towards local television, but as an offshoot of Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), the programme of the Space Applications Centre in Ahmedabad (Vyas, Sharma, Kumar 2002). With the backing of SITE, members of this team began to try out programming for a certain sector of the population in the area. From this almost 'accidental' beginning has developed Kheda TV. Television sets are not owned by the poor, but there are sets in community centres in the small villages. This project was launched in 1975 and 607 community television sets have been installed in 443 villages of Kheda district of Gujrat (Choudhury, 2011). The idea was that sets are switched on for community viewing for the one hour each day. The largest proportion of Kheda TV time was given to the socio-economic area, and got 43 per cent of output. In this area, subjects like untouchability, superstition, minimum wages and exploitation were dealt with, whereas the basic information programmes on agriculture and farming gave

matter-of-fact information. About 120 people used to watch television programming per set, and the daily audience was made up of approximately 5000 children, 5000 men and 2000 women. The data depicts that near about 12,000 people used to watch the programming each day (Berrigan, 1981). N.S. Contractor, A. Singhal and E. M. Rogers (1993) commented on Kheda project as 'Intellectually, the Kheda Project rejected the utopian, dystopian, and neutral views of satellite television's role in rural development. Instead, the Kheda Project identified many of the contingencies that determined the efficacy of using satellite television in India'. With this initiation, after more than a decade, a few organisations realized the impact of participatory video as a vehicle for social change and development.

Following the trend of Kheda Communication project, an organization named Centre for the Development of Instructional Technology (CENDIT) started producing community based videos may be in the late eighties (detailed information not available). Catalysts for Change is one such series, made by CENDIT (Ninan, 1992). The last decade, particularly from 2005-2009, this period can be considered as the golden period for community video initiatives in India. So many organisations started video production with the help from leading community video producers like Dristi or Video Volunteers. Here a few visible and important case studies have been discussed regarding the participatory community video production initiatives in India:

#### *Video SEWA*

Video SEWA was first come into existence in 1984. Giving the technological training to the grassroot level people and advocacy the rural development remained as the center concepts from its very inception. All the activities are based on villagers and slum dwellers of Gujrat.

Video SEWA was registered as a cooperative 'Shri Gujrat Mahila Video SEWA Samiti Communication Sahakari Mndali Limited' in 2000 ("SEWA Academy", n.d.).

With the hardcore motivation, mobilization and intensifying the members of Video SEWA, countless videos have been produced. Various issues like legal, health, nutrition and Government Policies as well as programmes for self-employment, national development plans and programmes are usually focused in the produced video by SEWA. The organization especially focuses on the information sharing process among women community.

*A Few Major Activities:* 'A Sun Has Risen in My Heart' is a film on the need of training and literacy on economy for women which aim to help capacity building of the marginalized community. ManekChowk is a programme depicts the Video SEWA struggle and the effort to the street vendors to overcome their personal and professional encumbrance along with a special emphasis on the income generation of poor women. Invisible Workers is a project on Home Based work for local and global labour movements. It focuses on better earning process of community people. Along with amplifying the core objectives of Video SEWA, Women's Alternatives (one kind of video programme) highlighting the women activities as video producers ("SEWA Video | Our Work", n.d.)

Besides these, there are a few land mark programmes in the credit of Video SEWA like- KanyaRatna, A home of her own, I am Shakti, A Journey from 7 Rs. To 4 lakhs, SEWA Movement, Invisible Hands, Tees Karodkahanhai which got remarkable impact from the community. Video SEWA was honored by Feldafest award (for uneducated women's efforts in video production) in Germany, 1989.

A film on women's empowerment 'A Women's Alternative' was selected for Festival International De Films De Femmes in Paris, 1992. 'A Journey from Rs 7 to Rs 4 lakh' won international recognition at the UN Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. The produced video footages by Video SEWA are also well appreciated and accepted by private serial producers and by BBC for broadcasting. The heartfelt endeavor of Manjulaben results the success of Video SEWA as well as she has been able to give a new facet to women empowerment (*ibid*).

#### *Dristi*

We all know that films mirrors the reality of a society in the finest mode. But now it has been proved that making films can haul a change in the reality of a society. Dristi always inspires and instigates the community video programmes. The organization with nine members always backs the emerging trend of community video unit (CVU) to make the community gain the in depth knowledge on film making journalism and through them to encourage the process of rural development as a whole.

Drishti was founded in 1993 by a team of media professionals eager to use their skills and passion to cultivate awareness of gender justice, grassroots development, and human rights in India. Drishti's earliest work began with documentary film making to help people/communities articulate their resistance to structures of oppression, to communicate an alternative vision, to put forth their stories, experiences and aspirations. In the film making process, Drishti implemented participatory communication strategies which enable communities to get involved in conceptualizing the films contents, writing the scripts, acting, making edit selections with a sense of ownership production process. The participatory communication process continues to be applied in Drishti activities as a tool for empowerment.

Drishti films have been screened and recognized at prestigious national and international festivals. This includes award winning films, *India Untouched*, on un-touchability and *When Women Unite: The Story of an Uprising*.

In twenty years of work, Drishti has entered into over 60 short-term and long-term strategic partnerships with community organizations to execute projects in key program areas: Community radio and video, film production, theater, public arts, campaign creation and development communication trainings for social action groups. Following the motto 'Movements led by song, dance, art and the creativity of the people will flourish', Drishti has several videos like India Untouched - Stories of A People Apart, Swarajyachya Vaatevar, I Dalit, Kutch LokjiVaani – Voices of Kutch, Play Peace, Chaluya Swawlambanechya Vatevar, Winds of Change, Aa Varas Nahi Rahe Taras / This Year There Will Be No Thirst! and many more ("Film Features | Promoting Rights Through Media And Arts", n.d.)), four community radio programmes, designed over a dozen rights based campaigns, and conducted over 200 trainings on theatre and audio-visual production. The community produced films are full packages of information (on environment, gender, democracy, cast, and religion) and entertainment.

The statistics shows that more than 100 community members from five states of India are engaged with the film making of more than hundred. Those are used to screen not only in the national platform but also in the international platform. The films are used by 5000 organizations ("Film Features | Promoting Rights Through Media And Arts", n.d.). Along with reaching the community root, Dristi has taken the challenge to get success in their motto by using the low cost technology and local media ("Community Video | Promoting Rights Through Media And Arts", n.d.).

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### *Video Volunteers*

Video Volunteers received the award ‘Challenge, 2008’ to train 100 Indians as the Community Video Producers. Not only that the organization is honoured by Manthan Award South Asia in 2009, King Baudouin Foundation (of Belgium) International Development Prize in 2008, the Award of Echoing Green in 2007, Global Social Benefit Incubator in 2007, Development Gateway Award, December in 2006, Laureate of the Tech Museum Awards, 2006 and owned Business Plan Competition in 2007.

Video Volunteers is an international community media organization. It is engaged with the development of common people in underdeveloped areas. Training on video journalism skill and preparing them to fight against poverty, injustice and inequality are continuously helping the grassroots level people to self-sustain. The organization preambles on locally owned and managed media related production and ability. The organization always keeps involve to strengthen the community members in knowledge sharing process considering local and global perspective (“What is Video Volunteers?”, n.d.)

Already Video Volunteers has been able to train 300 community producers. Excluding more than thousand online viewers, 300000 people attended 2200 time community video screening programmes. Several partners at local, national and international strata have engaged in the mission of the organization (“Recognition and Awards”, n.d.)

*A few Major Activities-Community Video Units (CVU) produces video news magazine in every six weeks emphasizing- community news, local success stories, relevant legal advice, promotion of local culture and music, local humor/ jokes/ skit trends. Videoshala started in 2007 is continuously concentrating the school dropout children problem.*

For this they are giving training to the community members for educational video production incorporating values of democracy, diversity and citizenship in video kits (“Videoshala E-CVUs”, n.d.). With the association of Global Fund for Children (CFC) Video Volunteers started a project named ‘Video Girls’ in 2009. The aim was to intensify the voice of the community through audio visual media. The target audience was young girls. There were three amplifying areas- learning digital storytelling, video production as well as sharing the skills and cultivation of self reliance, self confidence through community participation programmes (“Videoactive Girls”, n.d.). Sustainable Community Media Research Programme was commenced as the joint venture of Video Volunteers and IIM Ahmadabad aiming to explore the financial strength and its sustainability for the community media. The collaboration with mainstream media and other NGOs keeps extending the help very significantly (“SCMRP”, n.d.).

Besides these there are a few major activities of Video Volunteers like- Video Volunteers Media Units for Arts and Culture: Bahia, Brazil (*Partner Organization: Rhythmic Uprising*), Child marriage Community video project: Andhra Pradesh, India (*Partner Organization: Velugu*), NGO Media Unit for Women’s Empowerment: Gujarat, India (*Partner Organization: ANANDI*), Video Training for Environmental Campaigns, Mexico and UK (*Partner Organization: RARE Conservation*), NGO Media Unit for Bhopal Gas Disaster Victims: Bhopal, India (*Partner Organization: Sambhavna Clinic*), Human Rights Documentation Unit: Gujarat, India (*Partner Organization: Center for Social Justice*), Native American Water Rights (*Partner Organizations: Northern Arapaho Tribal Council and Watershed Resources, Inc.*), AIDS Prevention: Rwanda and Uganda (*Partner Organization: FXB*),

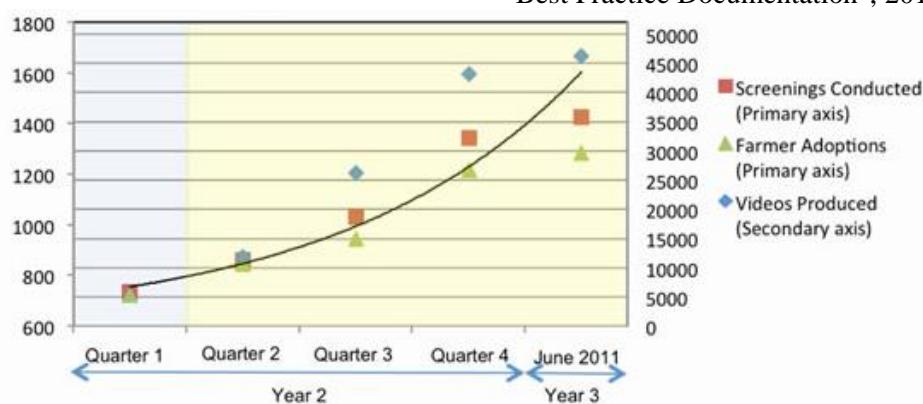
Refugee Education: Kenya (*Partner Organization: Film Aid International*), Homelessness: New York (*Partner Organization: The Jericho Project*), Cultural Documentation: Brazil (*Partner Organization: Viva Favela*), Blindness prevention: Madurai, India (*Partner Organization: Aravind Eye Hospital*), Blindness prevention: Madurai, India (*Partner Organization: Aravind Eye Hospital*), Fundraising: Mumbai, India (*Partner Organization: Akanksha*), Advocacy: Assam, India (*Partner Organization: I-CARD*), Girls' health and education: Rajasthan, India (*Partner Organization: Veerni project*), Training/Empowerment: Gujarat, India (*Partner Organization: SEWA*) ("Other Projects", n.d.).

#### *Digital Green*

The clear intention is to empower as well as to improve livelihood of rural communities especially in farming sector by engaging the grass root level people in the participatory communication. Though the concept of participatory communication is not very new, but the participation in digital platform like producing participatory localized videos through human mediation can be considered a new paradigm for rural development. The videos are produced 'by the community'. The subject or theme of those audio visual materials is based on various problems and prospects 'of the community'.

The videos are screened 'for the community'. Digital Green, a nonprofit international organization has made it possible to push the civilization into a different dimension. With the help of local public , private, civil society organizations and of course with the association of local communities, Digital Green has produced over 2,800 videos in more than 20 languages, reached 3,000 villages and over 330000farmers. Emphasizing on the knowledge proliferation on extension and practice of upgraded and contemporary agriculture, livelihoods, nutrition and health, the organization has selected eight states (Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Bihar etc) of India and a few areas of Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique and Tanzania in Africa in association with 20 partners ("Digital Green", n.d.).

Though India has the second largest number of extension workers and the pitiable situation is changing gradually, but it cannot be ignored that due to the age old practice in agriculture and increasing trend of debts, the farmers sometimes become bound to sell their land in loss cannot find any option to run the family smoothly other than taking the extreme decision of suicide. Taken into this consideration Digital Green came into existence with the ideas to patronize the cultivation culture through proper training, problem solving consultancy, direction for suitable marketing as well as technological knowledge proliferation to the concern community ("Digital Green Best Practice Documentation", 2011).



Source: "Digital Green - Annual Report 2010-11: Our Progress", n.d.

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### 4. OTHER COMMUNITY VIDEO UNITS' INITIATIVES:

*Deccan Development Society*, a Hyderabad based non-government organization, is one of the oldest community video producers, who began a series of video workshops for rural women in January 1998. In 1997, the Society took up the task of working on community controlled media as part of a UNESCO project called Learning Without Frontiers (Satheesh, nd.).

*Apna TV* is founded in 2006 by Akshara, a non-profit organization based in Mumbai that works for the rights of women. The tag line of Apna TV is ‘na ETV, na Zee TV, na CNN, na Star Plus, Yeh hai hamara Apna TV...’ Apna TV focuses on the youth of their community engaging them in the production process (Our Partners. n.d.).

*Khobore Aamra* is founded in 2009 by Child in Need Institute (CINI) based in Kolkata that helps mothers and children in India break free from the cycle of poverty. The community is embracing the opportunity to share its own stories, experiences, and struggles through film. Each screening brings together diverse populations for critical conversations that have rarely happened in an organized setting before (ibid.).

*Hamaru Raibar* is a community video project founded in 2008 by Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust based in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Hamaru Raibar actively shoots and screens the videos on livelihoods, health, water, and traditions in 25 villages (ibid.).

*Manyam Praja Video* is a community video unit founded in 2006 by Laya in East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh. Laya is a non-profit organization working with tribal communities to secure access and control of their land and to promote sustainable livelihood. Manyam Praja Video is made up of 14 young, dynamic community members who overcame the limitations of illiteracy, as well as the diversity of customs and languages, to educate their community about important social issues through film (ibid.).

*Apna Malak Maa* is a community video unit founded in 2006 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat by Navsarjan, which is a grassroots Dalit organization dedicated to ensuring human rights for all. Apna Malak Maa is an all Dalit team working to bring together the people of 25 villages, irrespective of caste concentrates on the public distribution system, health, land rights and manual scavenging (ibid.).

*Aina* is a Jaipur based community video unit founded in 2009 by Pravah, which is a Delhi based, non-profit organization helping expand young peoples' understanding of social justice through participatory learning and active citizenship. Aina aims to bridge the gap between marginalized and middle class youth in Jaipur through video (ibid.).

*Samvad*, this community video unit was founded in 2006 by Saath in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Saath is a non-profit organization working to improve conditions for the city's marginalized communities. Samvad's producers live in four slum areas around Ahmedabad. They use the CVU to raise issues, stimulate discussion, and share stories to promote improvement and education in their community (ibid.).

*Sangli Talkies* was founded in 2009 by a voluntary organization Sangram that works with the grassroots women in prostitution and sex work from South Maharashtra and North. The unit has producers of different ages, professions, sexual orientations, and castes working together to create videos for the Sangli community. They are using community media to give their community a voice that is distinctly theirs (ibid.).

*Hamari Awaaz* is a Mumbai based community video units founded in 2006 by YUVA (Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action) a non-profit human rights organization. Hamari Awaaz empowers marginalized youth from the slums of Mumbai to voice their stories. This 5-member team continues to shed light on the causes of social problems as keenly observed by the very people who suffer because of them (ibid.).

*Sakshi Media* was founded in 2006 at Panchmahals, Gujarat by Yuvshakti a non-profit organization working to inspire new generation of youth in Gujarat. This team works tirelessly to promote harmony and reconciliation by engaging young people across different religions and castes (ibid.).

*Apna Disha TV* is a project of Hope Foundation in Kolkata, founded in 2011. Nineteen volunteers of the community video project work for 35 slums of Kolkata and Howrah with the objectives to create alternative platform for advocacy building (Sarkar, P.D. Personal Communication; 10.06.2014).

*Community Communicators* is an organization based in Guwahati, Assam and since 2004, the organization has been involved in different participatory communication among rural and ethnic people of Sivasagar district of Assam with its' earlier name Sristi Kalyan Parishad. The organization has started community video production in 2013.

## 5.COMMUNITY VIDEO

### APPROACHES IN INDIA

There are many approaches exist in producing community video in India. The approach of Video Volunteer is more activist in nature than a participatory one. On the other hand, the Digital Green's approach is participatory based on co-learning objective. SEWA Video has a permanent unit and not much participatory in nature. Before going to discuss on the approaches in a structured models of community video production, we may look into two approaches of Dristi and Digital Green.

#### *Approach of Dristi:*

Over 100 community members have created 100s of films being screened to audiences in India and worldwide. CVUs of Dristi work to premiere a new magazine (film) every one to two months, depending on the unit. These films explore different social issues and are screened in the local bastis /villages to large audiences of eager community members. The following are the step wise production process of the videos (Dutta, D. Personal Communication. 19.06.2014).

In the first step, the community editorial board comprising of people who live and work within the community, is convened each month. They discuss possible ideas for the next magazine and brainstorm how the community can use these films as a force of change. In the second step, the community producers (CPs) meet with the board and discuss ideas for the next film. When the two parties come to a consensus, the CPs draft a brief for the film. After the brief is created, the producers start to connect with people in the community, research their stories, and identify solutions in the third step.

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Fourth step starts with scripting and story board preparation. After collecting all the necessary information, the CP's create a script and storyboard to help structure their filming.



The last step is screening. Screenings are core responsibility of the Community Producers and often the hardest part of the process. Prior to screening, marketing materials are generated, screening sites are identified, and the necessary equipment is organized. Feedback forms tailored to the particular magazine (film) are generated and a schedule of showings is finalized, before the CPs take their film to the community. After screening the film, the CPs facilitate a lively discussion and community expresses a *call to action*.

There is a great emphasis placed on listening and responding thoughtfully to concerns raised by community members. The feedback forms are distributed among the members present to capture their remarks on the overall quality of film, issue selected and possible call to action suggested.

### *Approach of Digital Green:*

The organization involves into three phases of their activities- Initiation, Production, and Diffusion.

**Initiation:** This is basically the stage of background research and training. It includes mobilization, situation analysis, capacity building. In this stage, the preliminary work is – to select the village, to choose the workers for the activity, to prepare a project according to plan. At first the key message is decided through the group discussion procedure. The selected message is conveyed to the selected group and group leaders of the village. Socio-economic background and village profile help the strategy a lot.

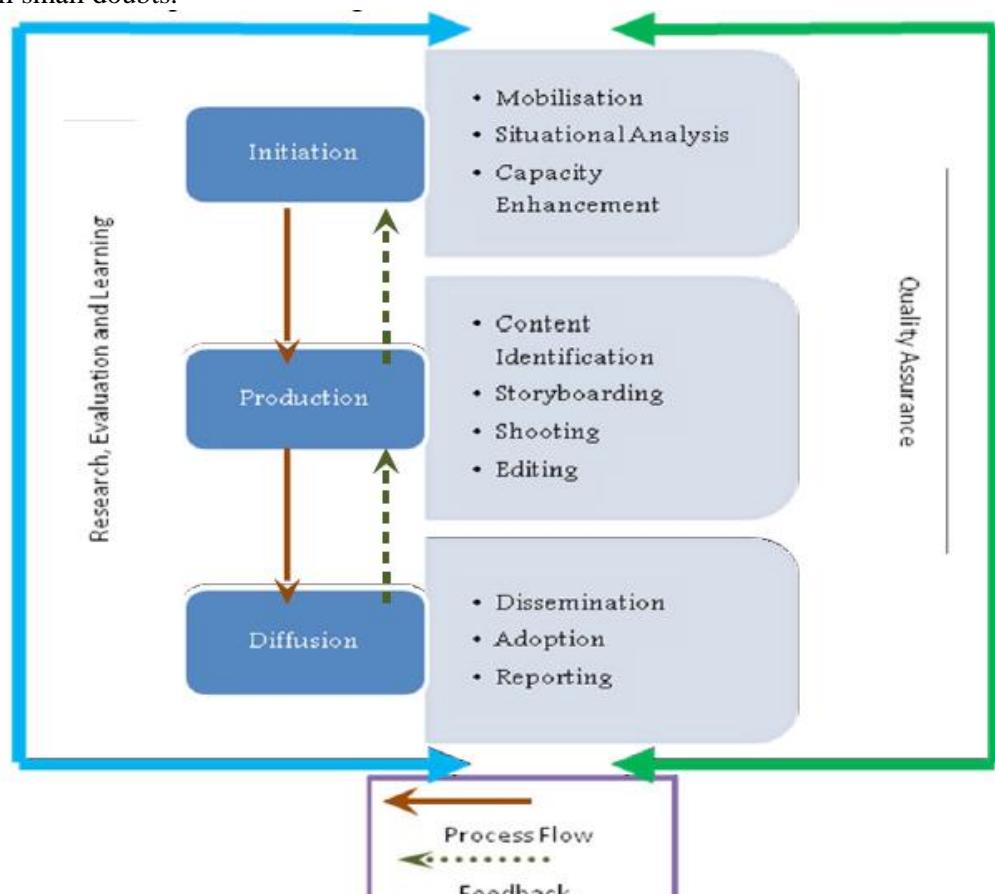
They decide who will speak on camera, what will be said, the order of the interviews, and the overall visual for how all their research will be presented in an entertaining, short feature. Production is the fifth step and editing is the sixth.

After that training on video production, dissemination of the information and data management are done for local community based on various pre-determined criteria. They are taught- how to handle camera, what should be the topic/ theme, how to write story board, simple editing process, how to handle projector, various skills of facilitation, data capturing and adoption verification. On the other hand they learn the data management system. It includes the common comprehension of reporting system (connect online, connect offline), Analytics Dashboard, Video search page and Farmer book. In this course of time, a few members from the community are selected and trained as intermediaries ("SOP", n.d.).

**Production:** This phase includes content and actor generation, story board writing, shooting, editing. Based on expert opinion, local relevancy, need of the community and scientifically appropriateness, the content is decided for the final production. The community members willingly participate there. A few engage as actors. A theme with exposition crisis and resolution is converted into a very simple storyboard format. It includes story line, visual panel and adoption points. After that the video production crew completes their assignment by shooting the required footage of the story. Then with the help of simple editing software, the footages are placed sequentially. Various shots become a garland of final video film. Finally Subject Matter Specialist (SMS) approves it for the farther procedure.

**Diffusion:** This stage comprises various steps like dissemination, adoption, reporting and feedback. The produced videos are screened in front of the community (sometime in front of a group) through a projector. Most of the time self help groups, common interest groups and village development committees are targeted. Again an informal but intimate group discussion is encouraged for all kinds of required interaction to clear the small small doubts.

The viewers are instigated to learn and adopt the already communicated message for their development related issues. The feedback is received and the reporting system (COCO) by the mediators. The quality of the community interest and the level of participation, the quality of produced video and information dissemination and the level of adoption are continuously assessed in the system ("SOP", n.d.)



Source: Digital Green, 2013

#### *Approach of Video Volunteer*

Video Volunteer works with Community Video Units (CVUs) to create platforms for communities to dialog and find solutions, and empower people to take decisions on local issues. A Community Video Unit (CVU) is a local production unit run by 8-10 community members who are trained in all aspects of video production. They work full-time and get a salary.

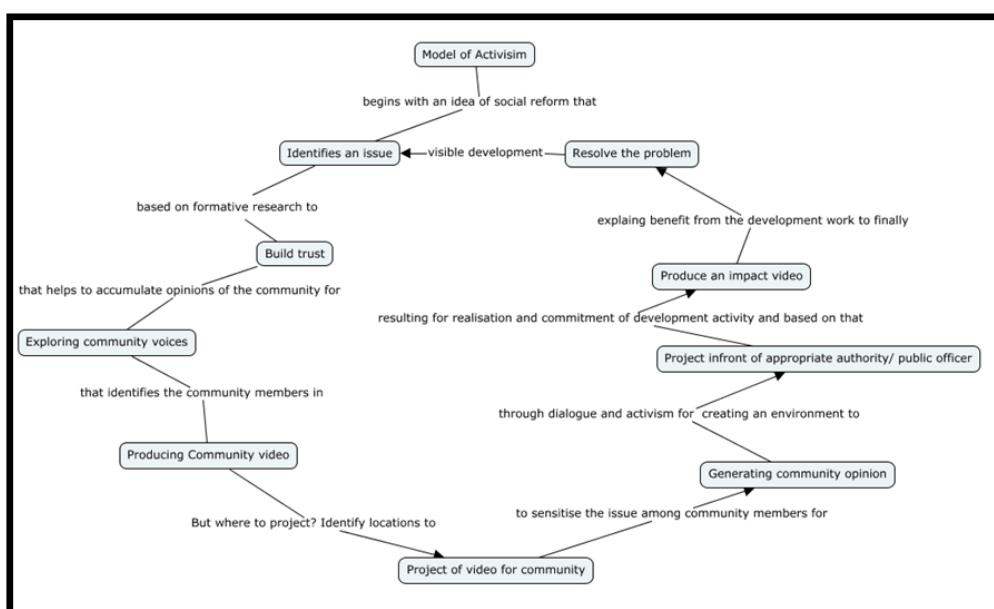
Each CVU has digital video cameras, computers for editing, a TV, and a wide screen projector and sound system for outdoor screenings. Producers are trained full-time, on-site for 12-18 months by a professional filmmaker. CVUs are local production entities, created by Video Volunteers in partnership with different NGOs, that are run by up to 10 community members trained in all aspects of video production and distribution.

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These community video producers make films on issues decided by community editorial boards, that they then screen back on widescreen projectors to thousands of people in the community (Community Media Models, n.d.).

The CVU produces one video magazine every eight weeks on different social issues. Topics are selected by an editorial board of community members, the CVU team and the NGO. One video magazine is screened every eight weeks month in 25 villages or

Bastis (slums) and finishes off with calls for action. With an average of 200 people at each screening, the video reaches around 5000 people in community settings alone. The screenings foster participation and ownership by the community. At present, Video Volunteer has 250 Video Activists in 220 Districts of 23 States and already produced 1500 Videos and 1700 People Taking Action(Stalin, K. Personal Communication, 25.03.2014).



## 6. EXISTING APPROACHES OF COMMUNITY VIDEO PRODUCTION IN INDIA

Based on different approaches of community video production and delivery mechanism, the researchers have tried to identify five models. These models are fundamentally based on the motive or objective of video production and its' process of production and projection.

### *1. Model of activism for development*

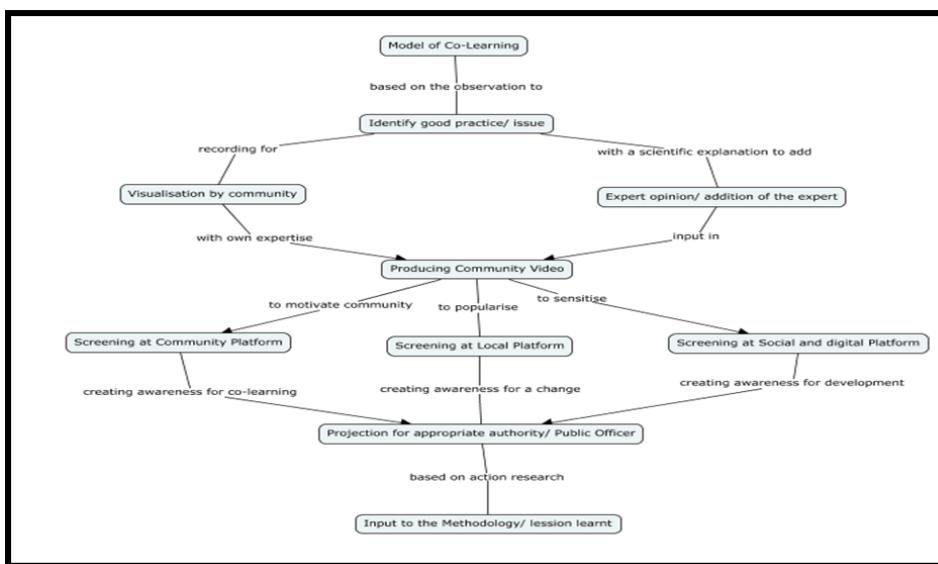
This is one of the complex models of community video production. In this model the volunteers or community video producers identify a problem or an issue and try to address the same with visual images.

The basic objective of this model of video production is to use the video as a vehicle for development. The produced video is shown in front of the appropriate public authority and encourages community conversation on a common platform with common issue based on common interest. Utilising the community opinions and movement, the volunteers try to convince the public authority to initiate development work and resolve the problem. An impact video is produced after completion of the development work and the problem is also resolved. Video Volunteers has lots of experiences in solving problems with community video. The above graphical presentation will help to comprehend the processes involved in.

### *2. Model of Co-learning/ participation for community empowerment*

Maria Celeste H. Cadiz (n.d.) has given a few elements of communication for empowerment. These are - provision of access to information, putting users/beneficiaries and local people in control, building local people's capabilities in communication, emphasis on small and appropriate media, learning

with partners, working as a collective, capitalizing and building on felt needs, making it enjoyable, giving them hands-on experience, sharing resources (pp. 150-151). This model is based on the objective of co-learning among community practitioner aiming self-empowerment. The following graphical presentation will help to understand the process in community video production-



### *3. Model of establishing identity*

Identity crisis among the small communities, more particularly in the ethnic communities is a great problem in social development. Most of the anti national and insurgency problems have been arisen from the issue of identity crisis. The medium of video can play a significant role in establishing the identity of the small or minority communities in the common social dias.

### *4. Model of development process archiving*

Archiving is an important objective of community media. Developmental activities and other good practices are recorded for future reference and encouragement. Community producers can record the process of development

initiatives, which can be utilized for replicating the same initiatives in different places.

### *5. Model of access to information*

Still we have several villages, where the communities are deprived from all modern communication tools. No newspapers or magazines distributed in these villages and because of having no electricity, electronic media are also not available. To access the information, community video can be the best alternative in parallel to the traditional folk media. Even the community video can be utilized in both rural as well as urban areas for providing information on different issues related to that particular community.

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### 7.CONCLUDING REMARKS AND A PROPOSED MODEL OF COMMUNITY VIDEO PRODUCTION IN INDIA

It has been noticed that sustainability is the biggest challenge for the community video producers in India. Video Volunteer engages volunteers on the salaried basis. Unlike the commercial media, nobody can expect a good revenue generation from producing community videos. Again as Maria Celeste H. Cadiz (n.d.) says on the components of communication for empowerment, a huge cost is involved in training, planning and strategizing, communication media design and production, communication technology, communication utilization center, communication archiving/data banking, communication evaluation etc(pp. 155-156). Considering the issues, a new concept of community video journalism can be a good solution in sustainability of community video sector in the developing nations. The researchers would like to elaborate the methodology of this model of community video production.

Investment is required for capacity building and establishment of community centres as the model developed by UNESCO. Without having a community centre community video production is also possible. The methodology is that (a) the pre-production should be based on the need identification, (b) production and post production will be done by the community under the supervision of experts, if needed, (c) dissemination and

delivery will be of three tier- screening at community places, through networking of NGOs and using New Media that includes social media platforms. The volunteers will not be salaried and they may be known as community video journalist and will work as stringers. For a vibrant community, a community studio can be established and a community gate keeping system can be adopted to check by the videos recorded by the community video journalists for editing. The produced videos will be exhibit at community hall or common place of the community and simultaneously should be uploaded in the social media platforms for worldwide exposition. A very limited or a minimum external funding is required, which can be arranged from the local Panchayets or government and from non-government organisations.

The main advantage of this medium is that literacy is not a bar. It is a very cost effective model. The impact is influential and instant and more than that of any other mainstream media. There is huge scope for social change where no government policy is required. For a democratic nation, community video can play a significant role in providing a platform for sharing knowledge ideas, arranging a ladder for discussing problems, preserving culture, inculcating temperament, receiving education and updating themselves with information. This may be one the best solutions for eradicating digital divide in the country like India.

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