

International Year of Family Farming

Topic: Women are driving Family Farming in Asia

Duration: 8 minutes

Language of production: Telegu

Subject: Role of community radio in promoting family farming in South Asia

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Brief description: This radio program is about a dalit farming campaign being run by the Sangham Community Radio in South India for promoting role of women in agriculture and for facilitating local agriculture through indigenous means of farming.

1. Studio Presenter:

Though 25% of the world's population is composed of women farmers, majority of rural women still have limited or no access in the making of decisions that impact on farmers' lives.

Women are heading most rural households in South Asia. Men often migrate in search of work. Women look after their families; tend their farmlands and ensure food on the table.

Despite this, women are not heard when it comes to making policy decisions. Sangham, a small community radio run by women in the Machnoor Village, in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India is working to change this situation.

In this program, we are going to tell you about how Sangham Radio is making a difference in the local agriculture scenario by promoting women run family farms and indigenous methods of farming.

2. Short musical break

3. Field presenter 1: (with natural field sound in the background):

Hello, I am Erupala Poolamma and reporting for you from Radio Sangham.

Women farmers are responsible for 60% of the work in agriculture but policies, strategies and inclusion and even technology often evades us.

Sangham radio is established and designed to reach out to the women farmers. Our programs are produced by and participated by women farmers in the community.

I often travel to the farmlands and agriculture fields of the community to meet the farmers. I talk to them about their crops, problems, solutions and life in general of the farmers.

Farmers and especially the women farmers are very keen to talk to me and other producers from Sangham Radio. They know that the radio belongs to them and therefore we are treated as family members.

4. Short musical break; folk song (recorded outdoor)

5. Field presenter 2: (with natural field sound in the background):

Hello, I am Algole Narsamma. I am one of the program producers of Radio Sangham and I am going to tell you a little bit about the history of Radio Sangham.

The Deccan Development Society or DDS established radio Sangham in October 2008. DDS has been working with over 5000 dalit, the so-called untouchable women in the Medak district of Andhra Pradesh State for the last two decades. Its work has gradually focused upon a string of sovereignty issues: food sovereignty, seed sovereignty, autonomy over natural resources, market sovereignty - all of them pointing towards an autonomous media owned and controlled by the dalit women from the marginalized sections of the community.

A majority of these women are illiterate. Because of this, they were deprived of information and had no acceptance among the conventionally educated. The DDS helped the women to form village associations, called sanghams, encouraged them to share micro experiences and then helped them to learn how they could articulate their traditional information base and expand it using community radio. Three women, General Narsamma, Algole Narsamma and Sukkamma on a daily basis, manage this station.

The DDS has taught the women to take up tasks traditionally done by men in that region and has also helped them with improved knowledge of agricultural techniques through interaction with farmers and agricultural experts.

6. Studio Presenter:

You have already listened to Erupala and Algole, talking about the background of Radio Sangham.

Our programs are designed in the magazine format, usually with a timely focus as seasons are important to agricultural communities. If it is the ploughing season there could be a discussion among farmers on the merits and demerits of deep ploughing. With the onset of sowing season, there could be another discussion on the exact karti or the rain-bearing star in which to sow a particular crop. Each of these discussions, talks, interviews are interspersed with folk and traditional songs that relate to the particular farming activity, or to social issues such as gender, education and childcare.

Let me now take you deeper into the fields to talk to the women who till the soil and to listen to them about what they have to say about Radio Sangham.

7. Field interview 1:

Woman farmer: We have been farming for generations. But the way of farming is changing rapidly because of Radio Sangham. We are learning new methods and getting new ideas. The Sangham Radio is to celebrate agriculture and the deep ecological knowledge embedded in those communities. DDS farmers are deeply committed to ecological farming. We use only biological manures on their fields & protect their soils from Chemical inputs. We never buy Seeds from the Market.

8. Field interview 2:

Woman farmer: Today, every woman in DDS communities has become a seed keeper. In every Village a Community seed Keeper conserves and supplies all the seeds they need. Thus DDS women have liberated themselves from the Market Tyranny over seeds. Behind every seed she saves is hidden a phenomenal Knowledge carried out from generations.

9. Field presenter: (with harvest song playing in the background):

Hello listeners, I am Alagole Narsamma once again. I wanted to tell you that weeding is a collective celebration for women. Many weeding songs reflect this joy, solidarity and Celebration. Sangham Radio captures all these in its programmes. It is the same case with harvesting. When women harvest they sing, talk to each other and build a dialogue. Another Staple for Sangham Radio. Harvest songs are a treasure trove of music, intricate ecological Knowledge.

9. Studio Presenter:

Dear Listeners, women leaders of the community come to Sangham Radio and regularly talk about these issues and strengthen their confidence in their knowledge systems. Sangham Radio producers, who are from the same Communities, facilitate this exchange of knowledge. The songs which the Sangham Radio regularly records and broadcasts cover these issues. At the beginning of every farming season, the women also discuss the problems they might encounter and come up with community solutions for them. Sangham Radio reporters also go out regularly and bring back the issues the farmers are concerned with. Sangham Radio has thus archived Thousands of hours of these Programmes.

10. Music interlude

11. Studio presenter:

Where knowledge flows, food grows. And knowledge flows when there is communication. Nothing epitomizes this better than community radios working with family farmers in small hamlets and villages. More and more community radio stations are needed to serve family farmers and rural communities. I hope you liked this program about Sangham radio and the community women.

10. Closing music mixed with the following announcement:

This is an initiative of FAO and AMARC on the occasion of the International Year of Family Farming 2014.